

# REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2013 MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 42:7

Scripture Versification 5-4:2, 6

*Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

Psalm 48:1

**Confession of faith:** Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

**Amen.**

*After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 51:4*

Law

Psalm: 51:4

**Prayer:**

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

**Amen**

Psalm 89:1

**Scripture reading: Genesis 14:18 – 20 and Hebrews 7**

**Scripture text: Hebrews 7:1, 2a**

**1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"**  
(Hebrews 7:1, 2a)

In order of understanding this revelation of the Old Testament we look at this passage under the following two headings:

- 1. The rule and reconciliation of the priest king to Abraham.**
- 2. The reconciliation of the Priest-King and us.**

**1. The rule and reconciliation of the priest king to Abraham.**

We read about Melchizedek for the first time in Genesis 14:18-20

- This passage is the history of how Abraham pursued the King Chedor Laomer and the kings who were with him as far as Dan and defeated them. This was done in order to free Lot.
- When Abraham returned after his victory Melchizedek the king of Salem, who was a priest of God the Almighty came to meet him with bread and wine.

This passage brings you to the realization: Out of the blue there is a priest king of God the Almighty. Abraham is thus not the only believer – as we tend to believe!

When you read this passage quickly for the first time it might seem as if king Melchizedek could have feared that he would also be attacked and therefore he came to meet Abraham bearing bread and wine.

- The truth however is that Melchizedek did not fear an attack.
- He acted with great dignity.
  - He went to meet Abraham in the Name of God the Almighty in the Valley of the Kings near Jerusalem.
- The Priest king of the Almighty lived in a city called “Salem”
  - This means the city of “peace”. It is the same place we know as Jerusalem. In the Amarna documents we read that Jerusalem was already an ancient city when the Israelites entered Canaan.

In a sense it is as if Abraham here attained a high point in his return because he is at Jerusalem, the capital city of the land, which the Lord would take his descendants to.

- The city of peace, which implies that the peace reigning here, was the peace of God.
- Therefore the meeting between Abraham and the priest king of this city is indicative to the peace of God. The name Melchizedek means: “King of Justness”

- Even though he is a king, he is a servant of a King far greater than himself – the Lord.

This meeting changed Abraham.

- He returns from war as the victor.
- Even though he was victorious, he still did not have the true peace.
- The true peace he only attained when at the city of peace he humbled himself to his God – with him stands God's redeemer and ruler.

He bowed to him and bestowed on him a tenth of everything as due to the Lord. He offers. Abraham's subjection is thus to the Almighty.

- Melchizedek is senior to Abraham. He receives tenths for God the Almighty from the hand of Abraham.
- Melchizedek is the means used by God in getting Abraham to comply with his obedience of faith – and also to at the same time encourage Abraham!

In Melchizedek we have the fusion of two things:

- He is both priest and king. In other words we have in him the foreshadowing of both the atonement and sovereignty of the Lord.
  - The atonement comes from the priestly function.
  - And the sovereignty comes from the kingship.
- The Lord thus reigns over us so that we may be reconciled with Him in order to abide in His presence.

The history teaches that Bera, the king of Sodom was also present when Melchizedek negotiated with Abraham.

- It is noteworthy that Bera filled a very minor position. He had to patiently wait until Melchizedek had finished with his negotiations.
- There is something symbolic in that the king of Sodom stood next to Melchizedek and had to pay tribute to Abraham.

Consider the responsibility resting upon Abraham!

- He cannot receive tribute from both.
- The one represents God and the other represents Satan!

The responsibility rests with us to know whose tribute we will accept in life and to whom we will be the lesser!

- Therefore Abraham is the senior against the king of Sodom.
  - He does not want to (and cannot) accept anything from him.
  - That would mean that Abraham also recognizes the kingship outside the Kingship of God!

It is important for the revelation history to note that ages later there again was a king with the descriptive term "zedek" in his name in Salem. (Joshua 10:1)

- This king was Adoni-zedek. His name means: my Lord is just. But he did not know the Lord.

- There is an allusion to that the original state of grace given to us by God, was lost.
- Therefore the Saviour of mankind returns to the same place to repair the glory of God in Jerusalem.

## 2. The reconciliation of the Priest-King and us.

Against Melchizedek Abraham stands as the lesser to whom he has to pay his tenths.

The meaning:

- Abraham stands there for the church that is in the beginning of its road to grace.
- The church must always subject herself to the eternal priest king of God.
- It also indicates the end of the road: Salem or Jerusalem: Our road ends in eternal peace under the justness of God.

We do not have an earthly city of Salem, but we do have the eternal city of God, the New Jerusalem that will descend from heaven. And we also have a Priest-king, Jesus Christ.

- He is God's eternal High Priest. Melchizedek was a style-type of Jesus Christ. Therefore the Bible very clearly teaches that the Lord of David, Christ, will forever be Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
  - The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4)
  - And called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," (Hebrews 5:10)
- He is also eternal King over everything existing: King of the Church and King of the universe, King over all that is and was and will be.
- NB: Not that in Abraham himself the priesthood is also present because from his descendants, Levi, the tribe of priests was born. But there is a great difference between the priesthood of Levi and that of Melchizedek.
  - Levi is the priesthood of atonement.
  - Melchizedek is the priesthood of dedication to God going hand in hand with justness and peace. This reminds about relationships from the times prior to the Fall when man, in his garden, was priest of his Creator.

Now carefully observe where the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ fits in: He was also priest, but not born from the tribe of Levi.

- Therefore He does not atone according to the high priesthood of Levi, in other words not according to the high priesthood of Aaron.
  - Aaron's high priesthood was instituted to be symbolic and to be inherited.
  - Therefore it ended and was finished by the arrival of Christ.
- The high priesthood of Melchizedek was supposed to be once off. In other words it could not be inherited.
  - God Himself instituted his priesthood. It is meant to be everlasting.
- The priesthood of Aaron does not conform to the normal norm.
- The priesthood of Melchizedek is the one instituted according to the normal rule of God. With God the normal is the everlasting.

Let us now again look at our Priest-king: He is High Priest Jesus Christ that in certain instances was similar to Melchizedek.

- In Hebrews 7:3 it is written that Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.
  - Of course he was a human who also had a father and a mother.
  - But they were not priests or kings and therefore had no genealogy showing his descent as priest king.
  - In this instance he was without father or mother but certainly called by God.
- By this the Lord predicted the arrival of His Son, our Priest King. He would also become via the extraordinary way Priest King. He works as uniquely as Melchizedek does. But He surpasses Melchizedek because after His ascension He still is Priest and King.
- He atoned us to God so that we may have everlasting peace. But He did it in a different way than Melchizedek.
- He does not, like in the case of Abraham, just ask for our humbleness and tithes.
- He gave up His own body to be crucified. That was His offer with which He bore all the punishment and pain, separating us from God so that we may receive the eternal peace from God.
- Therefore the peace we received is so much different as the one of Abraham. He grants us the peace of God's love.
- The Priest King of God is also the Judge that judges over those already dead and over those that are still alive when He comes in the clouds.
  - By this judgement the power of God's love comes to the foreground when we, by His redemptive sacrifice, are absolved from the punishment we deserve,
  - And we are pronounced just, so that we may enter into the Kingdom of God.
- It is the peace of God's grace that He forgives us our sins.
- He grants us the peace of eternal life where we, perfectly recreated, and rejoined by body and soul will live in the Kingdom of God.
- It is a peace giving us access to a city of permanent peace: the New Jerusalem. A city where the true Priest King is living: Jesus Christ.

This Priest King called all of us to His service.

- Some of us not only to believe, but also to be elders, deacons and ministers.
- Therein Melchizedek is an example of how we must execute our service. We must execute it fully and without fear.

We all are Christians, which means that we share in the priestly kingship of Jesus Christ. What kind of priests are we?

- We are priests according to the order of Melchizedek, because our priesthood is not atoning by nature.
- Our priesthood is to eternally present ourselves in service to God. (Catechism question 32 and also compare Hebrews 3:7)

There is also something in the conduct of Abraham that we must take into our account, and that is the honest submission by which he puts himself and his property to the disposal of God.

- You can thus only experience the true peace should you in your position/service give everything you have to God.
- Let us live for Christ!

**Amen.**

**Closing prayer.**

**Closing Psalm: 103:10**

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

**Amen**

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