

## Introduction

- Do you like being told you look like someone else?
  - Agnes and I told we were, recognised by people who knew the other.... but sitting with a mirror we still couldn't see it!!
  - can be helpful in describing new people - "she was like so and so we both knew..."
- Comparison of the known with the unknown is a standard technique for describing things
  - (I'm sure I've talked about this recently - but I couldn't find where!)

### Reminder of Hebrews Structure/Purpose

- Strong pull back to Judaism for Christians
  - especially because it didn't have the outward signs, the ritual trappings, that all other faiths had, but especially that Judaism had
  - so his over-arching argument is that Christianity has a better sanctuary, a better priesthood, a better sacrifice, a better covenant...
- How does he develop that case?
  - he's done some of that in the early part of Hebrews... Jesus better than the angels (chp.1), Jesus a better leader than Moses (chp.3) and Joshua (chp.4), a better Sabbath (chp.4), and the beginnings of his argument about a priesthood in early chp.5
  - interlude in development of that broad argument in 5:11-6:20, where we had those warnings about falling away
  - now we return, in particular to the issue of priesthood, and his fuller development of the argument

## Who is Melchizedek?

- The structure of his argument here is fairly simple:
  - who is Melchizedek?
  - Jesus is like Melchizedek
  - so what if Jesus is like Melchizedek?
- Draw conclusions on the basis of comparisons with someone they (possibly) know something about...

### So, who is Melchizedek?

- Elusive, strange character who appears but once:
  - but is referred back to in Psalm 110, a clearly acknowledged Messianic Psalm
  - (i) Priest of the Most High God
    - claim about his ability to intercede for worshippers to God, to represent God to the worshippers
  - (ii) King of Righteousness
    - claim about his righteousness, about his character, about his worthiness
  - (iii) King of (Jeru-)Salem
    - Salem - salaam - peace - but also Jerusalem, place of the later Temple and throne
  - (iv) Without genealogy
    - argument from silence? but from Ps.110 there seems to have been a recognition of a wider significance, coming from the other facts about him, that permits us to read more significance into this silence... he is from eternity, from outside
  - (v) Very great
    - received homage from the Father of the Nation
  - (vi) Received priests share
    - not just declared a priest, but receiving the acknowledgement of Abraham as priest in the giving of the priest's share... and peculiar argument that since Levi was "already present" in Abraham (his gt-g-father!) the Levitical priests gave to Melchizedek the priestly share - he was like priest to the priests!

- So: **priest and king brought together**
  - (Saul got told off for doing that in 1 Samuel 13:8-11, not waiting for Samuel the priest)
- **Greater in various ways than even the Levitical priesthood**
  - a model of a greater priesthood
- **Righteous in his own character**
  - hint even here that such a priest would not need to offer sacrifice on his own behalf!

## Jesus is like Melchizedek

- Jesus like Melchizedek, and unlike Aaronic priests
  - Problem:**
    - change in priest went with change in law
    - law has changed, Christ has taken our sins... what of the priesthood?
    - Jesus is not a Levite, can't be a priest!
    - except that there is in the Scriptures a justification for this, in the quote from Psalm 110:
      - *"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."* (Heb 7:17 / Psalm 110:4)
- Equivalence made on basis of **indestructible life** and **prophecy**
  - not on basis of genealogy
  - but on the basis of their essential character - what we've seen of Melchizedek already!
- This change replaces something weak, ultimately unable to save, with something strong, endless, oath based
  - Jesus, the guarantee of a better covenant

## So what if Jesus is like Melchizedek?

- (i) Jesus can save **completely** (v.25)
  - every last bit of us is saved!!
  - revel in this... though we will often feel that sin is clinging close, feel we are not clean yet...
  - the reality is that in Christ we are saved completely! Once for all. Done! Sorted!...
- (ii) Jesus can **always intercede** (v.25)
  - never out of the loop!
- (iii) Jesus **meets our need** (v.26)
  - that complete salvation meets exactly the need that we have!

## Conclusion

- No point in going anywhere else!
- Our salvation is complete - not needing added to or perfected
  - not needing kept clean by our behaviour
- We will probably all be familiar with Mobile phone top-ups:
  - buy the phone, but with a PAYG phone you have to keep topping up, adding credit, to make sure it keeps working
  - your phone is never "complete", it never just keeps working forever without adding credit
- Many things work like that: but **NOT** our salvation!
  - there is no need to top up
  - Jesus has completed the task, we are saved completely;
  - he is permanently keeping the lines of communication open with God;
  - he meets our need, exactly our need
- *Praise God!*