Hebrews 7:3 and the Relationship between Melchizedek and Jesus

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Abstract

Hebrews 7:3 is a pivotal verse in the book's presentation of both Melchizedek and Jesus. The verse can be read as stating that Melchizedek lacks a human genealogy—thus implying that he is an eternal, heavenly figure—or else that he merely lacks a Levitical priestly genealogy. The former is the more appropriate interpretation, especially since a similar portrait of Melchizedek as an angelic figure is found in the Qumran literature. Thus the major similarity between Melchizedek and Jesus stressed here is that both hold an eternal priesthood.

The author of Hebrews goes to great lengths to explain Jesus’ role as heavenly high priest in light of Melchizedek’s priesthood. The author offers tantalizing hints of their relationship by commenting three times (5:6; 5:10; 6:20) that Jesus is priest “according to the order of Melchizedek”—or even high priest, thanks to the prominence of Day of Atonement imagery in Hebrews, and he lays the exegetical groundwork for this correlation by reading Ps 2:7, Ps 110:1, and Ps 110:4 together in Heb 1:5-14 and 5:5-6.¹ It is not until Heb 7:1-10, however, that the author finally explains this relationship, then he promptly drops Melchizedek from further discussion after 7:15. Though this occurs only about midway through the 13-chapter book, the author apparently is convinced that Melchizedek has served his purpose, and he does not mention him again in the final six chapters of the book.

As the title indicates, the present study focuses on Heb 7:3, though it also addresses the broader context of Heb 7:1-10 and considers the

presentation of Melchizedek in Hebrews in light of portraits of the figure found in other Second Temple period literature. The major question issue addressed here is how the author of Hebrews understands Melchizedek, which in turn will indicate what the author intends by relating Melchizedek and Jesus in his discussion of Jesus as priest.

1. Melchizedek in Heb 7:1-10

The author of Hebrews makes several surprising comments about Melchizedek in Heb 7:1-10. The passage commonly is identified as a midrash; the Melchizedek of Ps 110:4 is already in view, and now the additional passage of Gen 14:18-20 is evoked to allow further discussion. While retelling the Genesis account of the encounter between Melchizedek and Abraham, the author of Hebrews confuses certain parts of the story or else adds details absent from Genesis but paralleled elsewhere in Second Temple Jewish discussions of the encounter.

The author of Hebrews grounds his discussion of Melchizedek in the account from Gen 14 about the figure’s encounter with Abram, but he refers to the patriarch anachronistically as 'Αβραάμ, or Abraham, matching the Septuagint’s spelling in subsequent chapters of this changed name. In Heb 7:1, one reads that Melchizedek met Abraham

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3 This is common in accounts of this meeting by writers in the Second Temple period, as evidenced by the similar habits of Pseudo-Eupolemus ('Αβραάμ) and Josephus ('Αβραμος). Philo does not call the patriarch by name in his accounts of the encounter with Melchizedek, but his normal practice is to use 'Αβραάμ. On the other hand, the authors of *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon* preserve versions of the earlier name Abram for their retellings of this meeting. It should be noted that most extant Ethiopic manuscripts of *Jubilees* lack mention of Melchizedek and have a lacuna at 13:25 where his encounter with Abram is expected. Context, though, makes it clear that such once stood in the text, and a few minor manuscripts of *Jubilees* do have some remaining mention of the figure, even if only in marginal notes. It has sometimes been argued that that mention of Melchizedek was suppressed in the scribal tradition; for discussion of this view, see Richard Longenecker, “The Melchizedek Argument of Hebrews: A Study in the Development and Circumstantial Expression of New Testament Thought,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd* (ed. R. A. Guelich; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 161-85, esp. 164-65.; followed by Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 160; a similar theory is implied by James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the
as he was returning from war and blessed him. However, in Gen 14:17, it was the king of Sodom who went out to meet Abraham. One easily excuses the author of Hebrews for this minor error. In his defense, in Gen 14 Abraham does indeed encounter Melchizedek at some unspecified place, a blessing is pronounced, and a tithe is paid. The awkward nature of the Genesis account, in which the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram but Melchizedek instead encounters him first, prompted multiple explanations in the Second Temple period. The author of the Genesis Apocryphon, for example, sought to smooth over the disjuncture, perhaps even implying that the two kings rendezvoused first and then traveled together to meet Abraham (1QapGen ar XXII 13-14).

As for the tithe, the Hebrew of Gen 14:20 actually is ambiguous about who pays whom, though most readers no doubt assume that priests are on the receiving end of tithes. The author of Hebrews, like Josephus (Ant. 1.181), Philo (Congr. 99), the author of the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen ar XXII 17), and numerous modern Bible translation committees (including those of the NRSV, NIV, and NAB) confidently asserts that Abraham pays the tithe, though Pseudo-Eupolemus (Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.17.6) may possibly preserve an alternate tradition. Perhaps surprisingly, especially in light of Hebrews’ emphasis on the discontinuity between the priesthood of Melchizedek and the later Levitical line, Philo and the author of Jubilees (13:25) use this passage to support the practice of tithing in the Levitical system, though Philo as expected allegorizes the tithe.

Melchizedek is identified in Gen 14:18 as priest of יִשְעַיִן, and his own name literally means “my king is Sedek.” Though assimilated into the Pentateuch as a priest of Abram’s God Most High, modern scholars

4 Admittedly the author does not explicitly state that the two kings traveled together, but the king of Sodom is said to travel to Salem, home of Melchizedek, and both kings subsequently encounter Abram, who was camped in the Valley of Shaveh. Michael C. Astour, “Shaveh, Valley of,” ABD 5:1168, notes that several ancient writers located this valley near Jerusalem.

5 Pseudo-Eupolemus states that παρά δὲ τοῦ Μελχισεδέκ...λαβεῖν δώρα, but the identification of these “gifts” and their possible correlation with elements of Gen 14:18-20 are uncertain. Among major modern Bible translations, the editors of the NJPS are most cautious, printing the name of Abram as payee in brackets.
uniformly understand him originally as a character in the service of a Canaanite deity, either Sedek or El ‘Elyon. Most Second Temple period interpreters of Melchizedek followed this biblical example of assimilating Melchizedek into the priesthood of Abraham’s God. Josephus (J.W. 6.428) and likely also Philo (Congr. 99) understood him to be God’s first priest, and Josephus, who explicitly remarks that Melchizedek was Canaanite, nevertheless credited him—and not Solomon—as having constructed the first Temple devoted to the Hebrew God in Jerusalem. In book 6 of the Jewish War, Josephus dates the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians as occurring 1468 years and six months after its foundation, which obviously connects it to Melchizedek rather than Solomon, especially since the time since David’s reign is specified as 477 years and six months (J.W. 6.437-39). Hebrews alone contrasts the priesthoods of Melchizedek and the Levites.

Not content simply to identify Melchizedek by his vocations, the author of Hebrews offers etymological interpretations of the mysterious figure’s name and royal title in Heb 7:2. Thus the name “Melchizedek” is said to mean “king of righteousness,” and as king of Salem he is “king of peace.” These popular etymologies are similar to those of Philo (Leg. 3.79) and Josephus (Ant. 1.180), for whom Melchizedek means “righteous king,” and as in Hebrews, Philo (Leg. 3.79) also sees the figure as “king of peace.” Though not addressed by the author of Hebrews, the identity of the city of Salem was a common topic of discussion in the Second Temple period. Reference has already been made above to interpretations that credit this king of Salem as establishing the first Temple in Jerusalem. A close reading of Genesis in both the Masoretic Text and Septuagint, however, could imply that Salem was Shechem. Also, Pseudo-Eupolemus, a writer often thought

6 See, for example, Claus Westermann, Genesis 12-36 (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 203-04.
7 John Gammie, “Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18-20,” JBL 90 (1971): 385-96, esp. 390-93. Gammie bases his argument largely on Samaritan sources and biblical texts that may associate Shechem with wine rites and El ‘Elyon, but perhaps his strongest point concerns Gen 33:18 (MT רַעְיָה תֵּבְשִׁים עַל קָמִים אַמָּר בֶּן מְדִיב). Whereas most translators understand שָׂלָמ as an adjective or adverb (“safety,” “safely,” etc.; the Samaritan Pentateuch—not mentioned by Gammie—similarly reads שָׂלָמָה, Gammie prefers to translate the relevant part of the phrase as “and Jacob came to Salem, a city of Shechem” (“Loci,” 390). Surprisingly, Gammie fails to mention that the LXX supports his reading with the rendering καὶ ἠλθεν Ιακωβ εἰς Σαλημ πόλιν Σικιμων, ἦ ἐστιν ἐν γῇ Χαναα. Unfortunately this phrase is not extant in the Qumran texts according to Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint, and
to have Samaritan leanings, identified Salem with Mt. Gerizim (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17.5).

Much attention below is given to the thorny issues of Heb 7:3, but for now several comments about Heb 7:4-10 are appropriate. Here the author develops his assertion that Melchizedek’s priesthood is greater than that of the Levitical priests. The author does this with a novel interpretation of Melchizedek’s encounter with Abraham, reading it in a way that is unprecedented in other extant treatments of their meeting. As noted above, some Second Temple period interpreters saw continuity between the tithes received by Melchizedek and the Levitical priests, but here those tithes are contrasted. Whereas the latter receive tithes from descendents of Abraham, Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham himself and blessed the patriarch. Citing proverbial wisdom that only the greater can bless the lesser and contrasting the living Melchizedek with the mortal Levitical priests, the author of Hebrews infers that Melchizedek is superior to Abraham—and thus he also is superior to Abraham’s priestly descendents, who are reckoned as still being in Abraham’s loins numerous generations before their appearance. The exegetical move is clever and bold. As Harold Attridge has noted, “The author seems to admit the artificiality of his playful exegesis with his qualifying remark, ‘so to speak’ (ὡς ἐποιήσες ἐξετάζειν), a common literary phrase outside the New Testament.”

Obviously the major concern here is to demonstrate the superiority of Melchizedek’s priesthood over that of the Levites, the traditional Jewish priestly tribe. Ceslas Spicq summarized Melchizedek’s fourfold superiority over the Levitical priesthood in this manner: (1) he received the tithe; (2) he blessed Abraham; (3) he was the type for a priest who does not die; and (4) he received homage from the Levites’ ancestor.

Melchizedek, then, obviously is extremely important for the argument of the author of Hebrews. Who, though, is Melchizedek for

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this author? How does the author of Hebrews understand the nature and identity of Melchizedek? To address this question attention now turns to Hebrews 7:3.

2. Heb 7:3 and the Nature of Melchizedek

The language of Heb 7:3 is striking, and the Greek is exquisite. Attridge finds in this single verse an "elaborate rhetorical flourish, marked by isocolon, asyndeton, alliteration, assonance, and chiasm."\(^ {11}\)

The elevated nature of Heb 7:3 has prompted numerous scholars to propose that the author of Hebrews has appropriated and redacted a pre-existing hymn, whether originally to Melchizedek himself or to Christ. As with so many hymn theories, however, the reconstructions vary widely, as do theories of what in Hebrews is indebted to the source. Some scholars would propose an underlying hymn stretching back to Heb 7:1 and as deep into the chapter as 7:26, while others find such borrowed language only in 7:3. Though such theories can still be found, they have fewer adherents today.\(^ {12}\)

The sophisticated Greek style displayed by this author elsewhere in Hebrews—such as the 72-word, π-alliterated period in Heb 1:1-4—implies that he certainly was capable of composing the language in Heb 7.\(^ {13}\)

Another troublesome point for such reconstructions is that relative pronouns, typically a telltale sign of hymnic quotations, are absent from Heb 7:3, though a few participles are prominent.

The more important question for most contemporary interpreters concerns exactly what is being affirmed about Melchizedek in Heb 7:3. In other words, what does it mean that he lacks parentage, a genealogy, and both temporal origin and terminus? Clearly the ultimate purpose of this language for the author of Hebrews is to describe the Son of God by extension, yet the words here are presented as pertaining to Melchizedek. Two major approaches are common today, each also finding a different biblical precedent for this stunning language.

Fred Horton, author of the very influential volume *The Melchizedek Tradition*, is a major spokesman for the view that the author of Hebrews understood Melchizedek as a mere mortal priest.\(^ {14}\)

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\(^{11}\) Attridge, *Hebrews*, 189.

\(^{12}\) For a recent survey of proposals for an underlying hymn, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 352-53.


\(^{14}\) Fred L. Horton, Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*
Horton notes that numerous interpreters have argued that the affirmations about Melchizedek in Heb 7:3 were derived from the ancient Jewish interpretative principle *quod non in thora non in mundo*, that what is not specified in the biblical text does not exist. Most interpreters have then argued that the author of Hebrews declares Melchizedek to be without parentage, genealogy, beginning or end, etc., because no data for any of these things can be found in Genesis, hence the silence there actually speaks loudly. Horton rejects this particular exegetical move, noting that numerous figures appear in Scripture without such information being discussed yet are not regarded as otherworldly.\(^\text{15}\) Instead, Horton uses this ancient Jewish interpretative assumption from silence in a slightly different way. Horton notes, as seen above, that both Josephus and Philo seem to derive the idea that Melchizedek was the first priest of God from the silence about any prior priests in Genesis. Horton then asserts that the author of Hebrews has done a similar thing, so it is the lack of a *priestly genealogy*, not a lack of ordinary human ancestry, that is the issue in Heb 7:3.\(^\text{16}\) The exalted language of this verse is in reference to Melchizedek’s priestly office only and says nothing about his ontology.

So, then, for Horton, Melchizedek’s priesthood is a model for understanding Jesus’ priesthood because both lack the expected priestly, Levitical genealogy. Nothing implies anything other than a mortal existence for Melchizedek. The phrase “without genealogy” can only mean the lack of a *priestly* genealogy. This for Horton is clear because Jesus is said to share that quality with Melchizedek, yet just a few verses later Jesus is identified by the author of Hebrews as a descendent of the tribe of Judah (7:14).\(^\text{17}\) Jesus is not a *successor* to Melchizedek; instead “every feature of significance in Melchizedek’s priesthood is recapitulated on a grander scale in Christ’s priesthood.”\(^\text{18}\)

A very different approach to these verses results in the idea that the author of Hebrews was indeed talking about Melchizedek’s ontology in Heb 7:3 and thus considered him to be a heavenly figure, perhaps even angelic. Such arguments have appeared in various forms, including versions presented in a classic mid-1960s article by Marinius de Jonge and A. S. van der Woude in *New Testament Studies* and more recently

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\(^{16}\) Horton, *Melchizedek Tradition*, 156-60.


in Attridge’s Hebrews commentary in the Hermeneia series. Paul Kobelski also takes up this position in his book *Melchizedek and Melchiresa*', a major treatment of Qumran Melchizedek traditions.

Kobelski opposes Horton’s interpretation head-on. Unlike Horton, he accepts the theory—albeit in a restrained form—that traditional hymnic language about Melchizedek has been appropriated by the author of Hebrews. More significantly, Kobelski flatly rejects Horton’s interpretation that Heb 7:3 addresses only Melchizedek’s lack of priestly credentials. Whereas Horton asserted that both Josephus and Philo understood Melchizedek as the first priest based on the silence of Scripture about any predecessors—and thus the author of Hebrews likely did the same—Kobelski argues that Horton has misread Philo, who is more concerned with allegorical notions of Melchizedek’s perfection than his supposed status as the original priest. Instead of basing his interpretation of Heb 7:3 on any variant of an argument from Gen 14’s silence, Kobelski links Hebrews’ talk of Melchizedek’s mysterious qualities with Ps 110:4. Thus the divine oath directed to the Son, “you are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek,” must also mean that Melchizedek himself is eternal. Kobelski adds that speculation on an otherworldly Melchizedek in the Second Temple period confirms and even contributes to Hebrews’ thought, which already is saturated by Ps 110:4; this understanding of an eternal Melchizedek is supported internally by the statement in Heb 7:8 that Melchizedek is “one of whom it is testified that he lives.”

Kobelski finds himself walking the tightrope of appealing to extrabiblical traditions of a heavenly Melchizedek while rejecting the idea that the author of Hebrews drew upon particular texts like 11QMelchizedek, a Dead Sea Scroll that presents Melchizedek as an angelic, eschatological warrior figure. Attridge takes a similar position, stating,

> It seems likely, then, that [the author of Hebrews’] exposition of Gen 14 is not simply an application to the figure of the Old Testament of attributes proper to Christ, but is based upon

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21 Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 120.
contemporary speculation about the figure of Melchizedek as a divine or heavenly being. While lack of parentage, genealogy, and temporal limits are predicated of Melchizedek to evoke the character of the true High Priest, they are qualities probably applicable to the ancient priest as the author knew him.

Attridge is content to survey a variety of speculative treatments of Melchizedek—from Philo’s allegorical and psychological interpretations to Qumran to 2 Enoch to manifold rabbinic, patristic, and Gnostic treatments of the figure—without identifying the tradition most likely shared with Hebrews. Craig Koester goes even further and flatly rejects all notions that Hebrews reflects extrabiblical traditions about Melchizedek, allowing only that Hebrews uses for Melchizedek language that would affirm true divinity in Greco-Roman contexts.

My own position is similar to that of Kobelski, though I am even more willing than he to see shared thought between conceptions of Melchizedek at Qumran and Hebrews’ portrait of the figure. I am neither attracted to nor hostile against theories of an underlying hymn, but given the literary flair of the author of Hebrews, I see no need to assume that he could not be responsible for the chain of alpha-privatives and other exalted language in Heb 7:3. I agree that the notion of Melchizedek’s eternal nature likely is influenced by the author’s meditation on Ps 110:4 but also am not resistant to the notion that the silence of Gen 14 also contributes to Hebrews’ thought. I suspect, though, that these connections were already made in the exegetical tradition for the author of Hebrews, leaving his original contributions as the clever association of Melchizedek and Jesus and his novel interpretation that Melchizedek received tithes from the Levites through their ancestor Abraham. Like Kobelski, I reject Horton’s assertion that only Melchizedek’s lack of priestly genealogical credentials is in view, but I find the strongest internal evidence against Horton’s view in Heb 7:15-17, which cites “the power of an indestructable life” as the common element in the priesthoods of Melchizedek and Jesus, admittedly a view also articulated by Kobelski.

Returning to the idea of extracanonical Melchizedek traditions, I depart from those scholars who assert that Hebrews drew upon such ideas yet are hesitant to identify the most logical extant source with

27 Attridge, Hebrews, 191-92.
29 Kobelski, Melchizedek, 118.
which such traditions are shared. To his credit, Kobelski says much to affirm the significance of Qumran traditions for understanding Hebrews, yet he too places great emphasis on the differences between these portraits of Melchizedek. Almost always left unsaid by those who suggest extracanonical influences on Hebrews without specifying where such are found, however, is the fact that the only Second Temple reflections on a heavenly Melchizedek that can be dated confidently before the authorship of Hebrews are those at Qumran. Similarly, the only Second Temple discussion of Melchizedek outside of Hebrews that appears to draw on Ps 110:4 is found at Qumran. It behooves scholars, then, to take yet another look at the materials there.

3. Melchizedek in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Melchizedek appears in several texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in contrast to his identity in other Second Temple Jewish materials (Genesis Apocryphon, Jubilees, Pseudo-Eupolemus, Philo, and Josephus), at Qumran Melchizedek is a heavenly figure rather than an earthly king-priest.\(^{30}\) Unfortunately the Qumran texts that discuss Melchizedek tend to be in poor states of preservation. Nevertheless, important conclusions can be drawn about his significance in that community.

The name “Melchizedek” is a proposed reading in three small fragments from the cave 4 and 11 manuscripts of Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. Carol Newsom dates the various Qumran texts to no later than 100 B.C.E., but she notes that the origins of the text could lie “sometime in the second century BCE . . . although there is no evidence to preclude an earlier date.”\(^{31}\) Newsom bases her theory of pre-Qumran origins on the text’s geographical distribution, internal evidence, and the possibility that certain texts written at the community show dependence on it.\(^{32}\)

As the title implies, these texts are songs to accompany thirteen Sabbath offerings, and the officiants are angels with priestly roles. The songs chiefly describe the glories of God and the heavenly sanctuary. Relatively little text has survived concerning the nature of the sacrifices

\(^{30}\) Obviously the Genesis Apocryphon was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but it seems not to be a Qumran sectarian text. Its presence there, however, is significant, as discussed below. For a brief overview of critical issues concerning the text, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Genesis Apocryphon,” EDSS 1:302-04.


themselves; one fragmentary line implies burnt offerings by the mention of aroma (נֶבֶר; 11Q13 IX, 4).33

A pns element is clearly preserved in two lines of 4Q401, and in the DJD edition Newsom reads 4Q401 11 3 as מַלֵּל אֵלֶּךָ, בְּעֵדֶה אַל (“Melchizedek, priest in the assembly of God.”)34 If this reading is correct, it is very significant in light of the context of Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice—Melchizedek is here presented as priest in a text “largely concerned with invoking and describing the praise of angelic priests in the heavenly temple.”35 Melchizedek then would be a heavenly, angelic priest in the service of God.

Newsom notes that it would be the only place in the text where an angel is named, and use of the word priest in the singular (רֵיחַ) itself is unusual in Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. Newsom restores the name “Melchizedek” on the basis of a possible parallel with 11QMelch II, 10, where the phrase “assembly of God” (בְּעֵדֶה אַל) appears and Melchizedek is presented as the subject (and first occurrence of אלוהים) of Ps 82:1.36 James Davila further notes that this section of 4Q401 appears to be part of the fifth song, “which describes an eschatological ‘war in heaven.’”37 While this identification is speculative, it would be consistent with the presentation of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek, as will be evident below.

Additional references to Melchizedek in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifices have been proposed, but these are far more speculative.38 It will suffice to say that although lacunae abound, at least one passage in the Songs appears to identify Melchizedek as an angelic priest serving in God’s heavenly temple court; the context may be a discussion of eschatological warfare. This differs significantly from other extant Second Temple period traditions about Melchizedek outside of Qumran, but its perspective is similar to that of other Qumran texts that mention the figure.

33 For the text, see Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, Qumran Cave 11, II:11Q2-18, 11Q20-31 (DJD XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 291.
36 Newsom, DJD XI, 205.
38 Davila, for example, finds other references to Melchizedek in 4Q401 22 3 and 11Q17 II, 7. See Davila, Liturgical Works, 133, 162.
Melchizedek seems also to be mentioned in 4Q Visions of Amram\textsuperscript{b} ar. This Aramaic text from the second century B.C.E. takes the form of a testament and recounts a vision of its namesake, the grandson of Levi.\textsuperscript{39} Amram dreams that two watchers are fighting over him, one evil and the other good, and he inquires about their identities (and presumably their spheres of influence). Though no letters of Melchizedek’s name are preserved, Józef Milik and several subsequent scholars have proposed that 4Q544 3 IV, 3 (using the line numbers of the DJD XXXI edition by Émile Puech) mentions Melchizedek, reading: “[My] three names [are Michael, Prince of Light, and Melchizedek].” This is proposed based on a parallel with 4Q544 2 III, 13: “[And these are his three names: Belial, Prince of Darkness], and Melchireša’.”\textsuperscript{40}

Both groups of names are heavily based on reconstructions, and scholars have proposed the particular names based on conceptual parallels with 1QM and 11QMelch.\textsuperscript{41} The one name completely present in the text is מ族ירא, Melchireša’ or “wicked king,” and extant text in the same line indicates that three names were listed. The passages do seem to be parallel opposites, and the restoration of “Melchizedek” (משיטא ויבש) seems almost certain.

Assuming this reconstruction is correct, Melchizedek is identified with or as the angel Michael and the “Prince of Light.” Michael often appears in Qumran texts as the opponent of Belial and is invoked in the war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness in the War Scroll, a text that may also describe Michael as “Prince of Light” in 1QM XIII, 10-11.\textsuperscript{42} Melchizedek then would be an angelic opponent of

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\textsuperscript{41} For explanations of the reconstructions, see Milik, “4Q Visions,” 85-86; and Kobelski, Melchizedek, 33, 36.

\textsuperscript{42} For a survey of Michael traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Erik W. Larson, “Michael,” EDSS 1:546-48. Larsen asserts that some Gnostic texts identify Michael with Melchizedek. This is not explicit in the texts, though they do correlate Melchizedek and Christ. See Birger A. Pearson, “Melchizedek in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism,” in Biblical Figures Outside the Bible (ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1998), 176-202, and Horton, Melchizedek Tradition, 131-51. Two medieval rabbinic texts identify Michael with Melchizedek, a
Belial in the eschatological war on behalf of God's people. This also appears to be his role in 11QMelchizedek, to which focus now turns.

11Q13, better known as 11QMelchizedek, was discovered in 1956 and was first published in 1965. Despite its fragmentary condition, this text attracted much attention shortly after its initial publication—and prompted bold claims about its applicability to the interpretation of Hebrews—because it presents Melchizedek in an eschatological context that has priestly, prophetic, and judgment themes. As indicated below, the extant portions of 11QMelchizedek—like the other Dead Sea Scrolls texts that mention Melchizedek surveyed above—do not overtly draw upon Gen 14:18-20 or Ps 110:4, passages central to the argument in Hebrews. Equally clear, though, is that the authors of Qumran who do or may mention Melchizedek have a well-developed understanding of the figure with biblical roots; this understanding seems to have been derived in some manner from Ps 110:4, whereas other Second Temple Jewish authors who mentioned Melchizedek (Josephus, Philo, etc.) did so in the context of his encounter with Abram in Gen 14:18-20.

Most readers (ancient and modern) seem to have understood Ps 110:4 as addressed to someone receiving an eternal priesthood like that of Melchizedek apart from the Levitical order, though David Flusser, followed by VanderKam and Kugel, argues that the ambiguity of the Hebrew statement may have allowed it to be read in antiquity as

point sometimes raised in support of reconstructing a similar correlation in 4Q544; see A. S. van der Woude, “Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI,” OTS 14 (1965): 354-73, esp. 370-71; and de Jonge and van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek,” 305. Horton wisely cautions against this, stating that “the medieval evidence . . . cannot be taken seriously in the form in which De Jonge and Van der Woude [sic] present it” and that “there is no more justification for quoting short [rabbinic] texts out of context . . . than there is for similar quotations from Christian writers” (Melchizedek Tradition, 81-82).

Van der Woude, “Melchisedek,” 354-73. The text was published (reflecting minor changes from the editio princeps) with an English translation by de Jonge and van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek,” 301-26. Van der Woude’s editio princeps also served as the base text in Joseph Fitzmyer’s article “Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11,” in The Semitic Background of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 245-67; repr. from JBL 86 (1967). The DJD edition, on which this discussion depends, is that of Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and Adam S. van der Woude, Qumran Cave 11, II:11Q2-18, 11Q20-31 (DJD XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 221-41, Pl. XXVII.
directed to Melchizedek himself. Assuming the author of 11QMelchizedek read Ps 110:4 as stating that Melchizedek possessed an eternal priesthood, he must also be the figure addressed elsewhere in the psalm as enthroned at God’s right hand (Ps 110:1), having dominion over his enemies (Ps 110:1-2), and bringing judgment (Ps 110:5-6). This judgment theme then prompted the author to read Ps 82 (with its similar emphasis) as also about Melchizedek. Melchizedek seems clearly to be understood as נאם אלוהים when Ps 82 is quoted in 11QMelch II, 10, and the text relates this final judgment with periods of jubilee, sabbatical legislation, and the Day of Atonement. This pastiche of themes is justifiable: according to Lev 25:8-10, jubilees (with their accompanying restoration of land and liberty) began on the Day of Atonement, and a significant feature of Gen 14 is Abram’s return of persons and property in the context of his encounter with Melchizedek. As VanderKam notes, “it seems that the writer of 11QMelch used a series of biblical passages and themes that allowed him to connect Melchizedek, the day of atonement, and sabbatical and jubilee periods.”

While multiple proposals for the arrangement of the extant fragments of 11QMelchizedek have been presented, there is consensus that portions of at least three columns have been preserved. Only bits of columns I and III remain. As for col. II, no complete lines remain, but enough material has survived to allow significant reconstruction of this section of the document. The column includes 25 lines of text in various states of preservation. The text likely was written in the late 2nd century B.C.E, with the manuscript 11Q13 dating to the mid-first century B.C.E.

The text essentially is a midrash—or perhaps a thematic pesher—providing an eschatological interpretation of several passages of

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46 VanderKam, “Sabbatical Chronologies,” 175.


This is represented in the following schematic outline of the extant text of col. II:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Scriptural References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lev 25:13, interpreted by Deut 15:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Deut 15:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>Pesher on Deut 15:2 (possibly with Isa 61:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ps 82:1, in conjunction with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Ps 7:8-9 and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ps 82:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Pesher on Pss 82:1; 7:8-9; and 82:2 (possibly with Isa 61:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>Isa 52:7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classification of 11QMelchizedek as a midrash dates back to its original publication by van der Woude, “Melchizedek,” 357. Jean Carmignac argued that 11QMelchizedek is a thematic pesher (“pèshèr «discontinue» ou «thématique»”) because it focuses on a single subject, the deliverance of God’s people from Belial. Such pesharim may draw on related passages from a number of different texts, whereas other Qumran pesharim deal with a variety of subjects arising while interpreting long passages from a particular book of Scripture. See Carmignac, “Le document de Qumran sur Melkisédek,” RevQ 27 (1970): 343-78, esp. 360-62. Timothy Lim agrees and notes, “If the sub-genre of ‘thematic pesher’ describes any text at all, it would be 11QMelch, since there is a prominent theme in the text.” See Timothy Lim, Pesharim (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 3; London: Sheffield, 2002), 53.

The significance of Isa 61 for interpretation of 11QMelchizedek was highlighted by Merrill P. Miller. While recognizing that 11QMelchizedek is not a pesher on Isa 61:1-2 per se, he nevertheless sees it “behind the unfolding pesher material . . . as if it were telescoped in those verses.” See his article “The Function of Isa 61:1-2 in 11Q Melchizedek,” JBL 88 (1969): 467-69, esp. 469.

The DJD editors note that “the preserved text of the column uses an expression from Isa 61:1-3 six times, but nowhere does it quote even a complete hemistich . . . Apparently, Isa 61:1-3 is a key passage that was considered to be commonly known” (García Martínez et al., DJD XXIII, 230). The six expressions are in lines 4, 6, 9, 13, 18, and 20. The editors note that a quotation of several words may be reconstructed in the lacuna of line 4 but consider it “very uncertain.” When discussing line 19, they note that the introductory formula used to introduce other quotations is never used for Isa 61:1-2 in the extant text (García Martínez et al., DJD XXIII, 232). Others, including Milik, Puech, and Kobelski, prefer to view these as quotations of Isa 61. In line 19 the phrase תִּתְנוּ הַדַּעַתּ פְּלֵיָהּ זָלַעַ נָאֵר appears to be a citation formula but is followed by a large lacuna. Józef T. Milik proposes to fill the lacuna

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Much has been written about how the author quotes and uses Scripture. A comprehensive treatment is not appropriate here, and admittedly the author’s practices are not entirely consistent. But in general, God is יְהֹוָה or הָאֱלֹהִים in 11QMelchizedek while Melchizedek is מֶלְחָזֶדֶק, even in quoted passages in which מֶלְחָזֶדֶק clearly is God in the original context. The use of citations here is reminiscent of Hebrews’ practice of applying quotations originally about God or the Davidic king to the Son, i.e. Jesus, in Heb 1:5-14.

Indeed, Melchizedek appears in 11QMelchizedek as the figure carrying out both God’s deliverance and judgment. Deliverance is the theme at the beginning and end of col. II. The author understands history as consisting of ten jubilee units concluding with an eschatological Day of Atonement (line 7). In lines 2-9, Melchizedek

with language from Isa 61:3; see his “Milki-sedeq et Milki-reša’ dans les anciens écrits juifs et chrétiens.” JJS 23 (1972): 95-144, esp. 98, 108-09. Note, however, the caution of Kobelski: “I hesitate to follow Milik, however, because it seems that 11QMelch never introduces citations of Isaiah 61 by elaborate introductory formulas, but rather alludes to this portion of Isaiah in interpreting other scriptural quotations” (Melchizedek, 22).

George J. Brooke stresses the importance of Isa 61 for the text and argues that its use here in connection with the Day of Atonement theme and Lev 25 is influenced by Jewish lectionary practices. See his Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context (JSOTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 319-23.

Puech sees an allusion to Ezek 2:7 in the first two words of line 5, which he transcribes as מִלָּתְאֵה מֵעֶבֶר אֹתָהּ. See Puech, “Notes sur le manuscrit de XIQMelksédeq,” RevQ 12 (1987): 483-513, esp. 488, 493. This section of the manuscript is poorly preserved, however, and transcriptions vary widely; Puech himself later presented a different reading (La Croyance, 523).

Kobelski posits quotations of phrases from Lev 25:10 in line 6 and Lev 25:9 in line 7 (Melchizedek, 8, 14-15), as do Puech (“Notes,” 490) and Milik (line 7 only; “Milki-sedeq,” 103-04).

51 Cf. García Martínez et al., DJD XXIII, 230; Milik, “Milki-sedeq,” 106; and Puech, “Notes,” 497-98.

52 In line 15 Kobelski restores והRegularExpression and understands the term as drawn from Isa 49:8 (Melchizedek, 6, 20). Most scholars instead read והRegularExpression. See, for example, García Martínez et al., DJD XXIII, 232; Puech, “Notes,” 488; and Milik, “Milki-sedeq,” 98.

53 Again see García Martínez et al., DJD XXIII, 232; Milik, “Milki-sedeq,” 108-09; and Puech, “Notes,” 500.

54 See Kobelski, Melchizedek, 49-50, for a brief survey of other Second Temple Jewish literature in which time is divided into jubilees or weeks of years. The division of time into jubilee periods in 11QMelchizedek differs from that in the book of Jubilees as the latter envisions many more jubilee periods; Jubilees narrates events into a fiftieth jubilee period, which spans only the time from
acts to deliver the “captives” (line 4), presumably the same persons as “the inheritance of Melchizedek” (line 5); he proclaims liberty to them and frees them “from the debt of all their iniquities” (line 6). This last phrase has cultic overtones, and the next line mentions the Day of Atonement. Melchizedek appears to be the agent executing God’s pronouncement (lines 3-4). Melchizedek announces liberty in the first week of the tenth jubilee (line 6), but it is unclear if liberation actually occurs at that time or if this is a proleptic announcement of liberation that occurs in conjunction with the eschatological Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth jubilee, when “atonement shall be made for all the sons of light and for the men of the lot of Melchizedek” (line 8; presumably these are two terms for the same group of persons). This Day of Atonement appears to be the “year of grace of Melchizedek” (line 9). Melchizedek is the active figure thus far in the passage; since he is presented as a priest in Gen 14; Ps 110:4; and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, presumably the author of 11QMelchizedek envisions him as the high priest conducting this eschatological Day of Atonement event. Line 9 also speaks “of the administration of justice,” thus creating a link between the Day of Atonement and jubilee years that may already be present in Lev 25:9, where a trumpet call on the tenth day of the seventh month (i.e., the Day of Atonement) announces the beginning of a jubilee year. See his article “Yom Kippur,” in EDSS 2:1001-03, esp. 2:1002. See also the brief survey of the significance of Lev 25 and Isa 61 for 11QMelchizedek in VanderKam, “Sabbatical Chronologies,” 169-72. See a similar suggestion in Kobelski, Melchizedek, 57-59, though his understanding of Melchizedek as priest is based on a very different rendering of II, 5 than that adopted in DJD. See Kobelski, Melchizedek, 5, 13, for his transcription and textual notes. Unfortunately I am unable to verify either Kobelski’s or the DJD reading of the first several words of line 5 using the photographs (printed or electronic) at my disposal. Van der Woude proposed a lacuna in 11QMelch II, 6, which would make the priestly action of Melchizedek explicit (“Melchisedek,” 358; also de Jonge and van der Woude, “11Q Melchizedek,” 302) and was followed by Fitzmyer, “Further Light,” 259. The reading in DJD agrees with that of Kobelski, Melchizedek, 5. For a rejection of the identification of Melchizedek as priest in 11QMelchizedek, see Franz Laub, Bekenntnis und Auslegung: Die paränetische Funktion der Christologie im Hebräerbrief (Biblische Untersuchungen 15; Regensburg: Pustet, 1980), 39. See also an overview of the issue in Anders Aschim, “Melchizedek and Jesus: 11QMelchizedek and the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus (ed. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, and G. S. Lewis; JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 128-47, esp. 139-40.
introducing the theme of judgment. The extant text of line 8 implies that the righteous benefit from this judgment ("according to all their doings," line 8).

This mention of judgment smooths the transition to the quotations of Ps 82:1; Ps 7:8-9; and Ps 82:2 in lines 10-11. Here the emphasis clearly is on God’s judgment of the wicked (with overtones of theodicy in the Ps 82:2 quotation). Both בַּיַּע and מַעֲשֵׂי appear frequently in these lines and their subsequent interpretation in lines 12-14. The overall impression is that Melchizedek is an angelic מַעֲשֵׂי in the heavenly court of בַּיַּע who administers justice (with the aid of other members of the heavenly court, line 14 "all the gods of justice are to his help") on behalf of בַּיַּע against Belial and those of his lot.56

Deliverance is again stressed in lines 15-25. The major text under consideration is Isa 52:7, where a messenger announces peace and salvation and speaks of the kingship of the מַעֲשֵׂי of Zion. The messenger is identified with the prince anointed by the Spirit from Dan 9:25; perhaps the identity of this messenger was further clarified in lines 21-22, but few words remain there. Perhaps also the messenger was correlated with the figure who blows the horn (presumably to announce the Day of Atonement, as in Lev 25:9) in line 25, but the subsequent text has not survived. Admittedly Melchizedek seems to have a role in proclamation in the early lines of the column, leading some scholars to identify him as the messenger.57 Presumably, though, the messenger is not Melchizedek, because the latter likely is the aforementioned מַעֲשֵׂי in lines 24-25 whom the messenger announces.

56 For a similar interpretation, see Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 72; and Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 132-35. Others reject this identification. For the view that Melchizedek is the messiah, perhaps even Davidic, see Paul Rainbow, "Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran," *BBR* 7 (1997): 179-94; for Melchizedek as Yahweh, see Franco Manzi, *Melchisedek e l'angelologia nell'Epistola agli Ebrei e a Qumran* (AnBib 136; Rome: Editrice Pontifico Instituto Biblico, 1997).

57 For Melchizedek as herald, see Miller, "Function," 468-69. Milik ("Milki-sedeq," 126) and Puech ("Notes," 509-10) argue that the messenger is the Teacher of Righteousness himself. De Jonge and van der Woude, followed by Kobelski, understand the messenger as the eschatological prophet of 1QS IX, 11 and 4QTest 5-8. See de Jonge and van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek," 306-08; and Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, 61-62.
4. The Significance of the Qumran Portrait of Melchizedek for Interpreting Heb 7:3

The discovery of the Qumran texts—both those discussing a priestly messiah and an angelic Melchizedek—prompted flurries of interest in the possible relationship of those traditions with Hebrews' presentation of Jesus. Such enthusiasm was relatively short-lived, as rebuttals quickly questioned theories that the recipients of Hebrews were formerly Essenes—even members of the Qumran community.58 Viewed from hindsight, one easily can admit that several early proponents of Qumran-Hebrews ties zealously claimed too much. Recently, however, Anders Aschim has argued that the examination (specifically concerning Melchizedek) should be reopened, and the conclusions reached here also affirm that need.59

Likewise, others have sounded recent calls that the Qumran materials should no longer be treated as representative of (in the words of Charlotte Hempel) "a small group on the fringes of late Second Temple society."60 If, for example, such diverse ancient writers as Pliny the Elder could discuss the Qumran sect and Josephus and Philo could praise the virtues of the distinctive practices of Essenes with reasonable accuracy, might that not also imply that theological tenets of the Qumran community and their fellow Essenes could be known and even shared to an extent in wider Judaism and early Christianity?61

Admittedly no textual dependence of Hebrews on a Qumran document can be produced. What can be considered, though, are hints of shared views in the Qumran texts and Hebrews. Most intriguing is that both traditions associate Melchizedek with the Day of Atonement. Some common stream of thought must be present to explain this.62 Nothing on the surface in Gen 14 or Ps 110 points to the Day of

58 A full discussion is not practical here, but prominent examples of claims for an Essene context for Hebrews include Yigael Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews," ScrHier 4 (1958), 36-55; and Spicq, "L'Épître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumrán," RevQ 3 (1958-59): 365-90. A major critique was offered by F. F. Bruce, "'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'?” NTS 9 (1962-63): 217-32.
59 Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 145-47.
62 Anders Aschim, "Melchizedek and Jesus," 139-40, makes a similar point.
Atonement, yet the author of Hebrews can go so far as to call Jesus "high" priest in the order of Melchizedek. The fact that the Qumran texts also associate Melchizedek with the Day of Atonement would seem to imply that a shared exegetical tradition undergirds both presentations.

Can one reconcile the portrayals of Melchizedek as an angelic, eschatological warrior figure at Qumran with that of the priest who encountered Abraham in Hebrews? It has long been traditional to compare presentations of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek and in Hebrews with the point that the figures vary greatly: Melchizedek in Hebrews is a priest who encountered Abraham and received tithes, whereas Melchizedek at Qumran is a heavenly figure bringing eschatological judgment. The most that is conceded typically is that the portrait of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek bears more similarities to Hebrews' presentation of Jesus than to the latter's discussion of Melchizedek.63

Such arguments overlook the complex presentations of Melchizedek in both Hebrews and the Qumran texts. On the one hand, Melchizedek could be understood at Qumran as an angelic figure, but one must not ignore the presence of more mundane portraits of Melchizedek in other texts the Qumran community prized, including the Genesis Apocryphon and (presuming their copies predated the haplography that plagued later manuscripts) Jubilees.64 One is correct to note a distinction between texts composed at Qumran and simply read there, but Jubilees was viewed at Qumran on a level comparable with Scripture.65 Both of these texts have relatively tame retellings of Gen 14. Thus at Qumran one could find very different discussions of Melchizedek in very significant non-biblical texts.

Likewise, the author of Hebrews could discuss the Melchizedek who encountered Abraham, yet just verses earlier he could describe him as an eternal—presumably angelic—figure. Apparently the author of Hebrews understood Melchizedek's appearance to Abraham as an angelophany, a phenomenon that certainly would not be foreign to the Abraham narratives in Genesis.

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63 See, for example, the comparisons offered by Horton, Melchizedek Tradition, 167; and Kobelski, Melchizedek, 128.
64 Unfortunately the relevant passage is not extant in the Qumran manuscripts of Jubilees.
65 Note the evaluation of James C. VanderKam and Peter Flint, The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2002), 199: "Jubilees was most likely viewed as Scripture by the Qumran community."
As for the judgment responsibilities of Melchizedek in 11QMelchizedek, admittedly these are missing in Hebrews. Qumran's presentation of the angelic Melchizedek had two emphases—he is a heavenly priest, as likely is the case in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and is strongly implied by the atonement themes of 11QMelchizedek, and he is an eschatological warrior akin to the archangel Michael in the latter text and in 4Q Visions of Amram. Clearly the judgment activity is absent from Hebrews' portrayal of Melchizedek, but neither is that an emphasis for Hebrews' presentation of Jesus. Interesting, though, is that other early Christian texts (including Revelation and Jude) could maintain a role (even militaristic) for the archangel Michael—with whom Melchizedek was assimilated at Qumran and later in Jewish tradition—alongside their obvious understanding of Jesus as the ultimate envoy of God. Similarly, the author of Hebrews could have shared certain aspects of thought concerning Melchizedek with the Qumran community without accepting their portrait in toto.

In the end, both Hebrews and the Qumran texts present an angelic, priestly Melchizedek whose status is inferred from Ps 110:4. Both also interweave Melchizedek traditions with Day of Atonement imagery. The texts share a cosmology that includes a heavenly Temple with liturgical services, though Jesus' ministry there is emphasized in Hebrews rather than Melchizedek's. The correspondences are not exact—nor should they be expected to be given Hebrews' commitment to present Jesus as the messiah—but they are similar enough to indicate shared views.

5. The Relationship between Jesus and Melchizedek in Heb 7:3

How, then, does the author of Hebrews understand Melchizedek in Heb 7:3? Melchizedek is a heavenly figure, lacking human genealogy and a beginning or end, and a priest forever in line with Ps 110:4. He also had an encounter with Abraham, consistent with Gen 14:18-20. Though certainly not stated explicitly, it seems that the author of Hebrews understood Melchizedek's appearance to the patriarch as an angelophany. Indeed, the mysterious nature of Melchizedek in Genesis may have fostered supernatural understandings of the figure.

No doubt a potential criticism of this conclusion is that such an understanding of Melchizedek might position him as a rival to Jesus rather than as a subordinate. Such an idea deserves two responses. First, unlike other comparisons of Jesus and figures from the Hebrew

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Scriptures, the author of Hebrews does not imply any need to subordinate Melchizedek to Jesus. Instead, one commonly reads that Jesus is "in the order of Melchizedek" or resembles Melchizedek, and the language of Heb 7:3 is striking by saying that Melchizedek resembles the Son of God. The author's lack of urgency to subordinate Melchizedek to Jesus leads to the second response: the perceived problem that Melchizedek may appear a challenger to Jesus if angelic demands the assumption that worship of angels was a theological error the author of Hebrews consciously sought to correct. Here perhaps old explanations of the purpose for the book, mostly now abandoned, nevertheless linger subconsciously and serve as unnecessary impediments to new insights. Even if angel worship were an issue for the recipients, one might propose that the emphasis on the Son's supremacy to the angels in Heb 1:1-2:4 would have served as inoculation against any potential misreadings of Heb 7. At the other extreme, though, A. T. Hanson's suggestion that the author of Hebrews understood the Melchizedek of Gen 14 as "the pre-existent Christ" is equally unsatisfactory.67

This discussion of the Qumran texts has provided an opportunity to compare similar understandings of an angelic Melchizedek as that apparently held by the author of Hebrews. In conclusion, it seems appropriate then to restate what Heb 7:3 says about the relationship between Melchizedek and Jesus: like Melchizedek, Jesus is an eternal figure with an abiding priesthood whose ministry is superior to that of the Levitical priests.

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67 Anthony Tyrell Hanson, Jesus Christ in the Old Testament (London: SPCK, 1965), 69.