

WHO IS MELCHIZEDEK?

[As to Jesus.] being designated by God and High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:10)

For as those experiences Jesus ... came into the earth, the first that were of the sons of God to enter flesh, there the first and only begotten of God. Again, as names would say, Enoch walked with God, became aware of God in his movements-still that entity, that soul called Jesus-as Melchizedek, without father, without mother, came-still the soul of Jesus; the portion of God that manifests.

... this entity [Jesus] was that one who had manifested to father Abraham as the prince, as the priest of Salem, without father and without mother, without days or years, but a living human being in flesh made manifest in the earth from the desire of Father-God to prepare an escape for man ...

Again there may be drawn to self a parallel from the realm of spiritual enlightenment of that entity known as Melchizedek, a prince of peace, one seedling ever to be able to bless those in their judgments who have sought to become channels for a helped influence without any seeking for material gain, or mental or material glory-, but magnifying the virtues, minimizing the faults in the experiences of all ...

Melchizedek is an interesting, yet enigmatic, Biblical figure

He is first mentioned in the 14th chapter of Genesis after a miraculous victory by Abram (before God renamed him Abraham) and his household over King Chedorlaomer and the numerous armies which he commanded. The king of Sodom along with Melchizedek, king of Salem, went out to meet the returning and victorious Abram and to offer thanks for his deliverance.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:18-20)

The phrase "God Most High," or El Elyon in Hebrew, is one of the terms used for God at that time. A typical characterization was that El Elyon was "maker of heaven and earth." After paying tithes to Melchizedek, Abram accorded Melchizedek further respect by addressing the Lord in these terms as "God Most High, the maker of heaven and earth." (Genesis 14:22)

Melchizedek is involved with two acts which later became very important Judeo-Christian and religious rites: the payment of tithes and the symbolic use of bread and wine as in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. He received the first Biblical tithes and was the first in the Biblical accounts to symbolically use bread and wine. We know from the Dead Sea Scrolls the Jewish Essenes had a ritual using these elements which Jesus may have borrowed!

In the Canon of the Mass, the Catholic Church has further carried forward the pre-eminence of Melchizedek receiving tithes. The Church prays that the Father will accept its offering as He accepted "the sacrifice that Your high priest Melchizedek offered." Some Christian theologians have argued that Melchizedek's name is placed where Jesus' name should be in the Mass, for it was Jesus who sacrificed his life to God and is considered the mediator between us and God. In view of the special relationship the early Church found between Jesus and Melchizedek, as we shall see later, the substitution of Melchizedek's name for Jesus' may have been purposeful.

The only other Old Testament reference to Melchizedek is in Psalm 110, a prophetic psalm which makes promises about the messiah: "The Lord has sworn, and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'" (verse 4) God thus, under oath, states that the messiah will be linked eternally with the Melchizedek priesthood. This psalm, in the quoted and subsequent verses, uses the term "Lord" to describe both God and the messiah. It is therefore important to Christianity because it provides a validation of the Deity of the messiah and authorizes the title of "Lord" for Jesus.

Melchizedek is next mentioned in the New Testament book of Hebrews. He is described as having been: "Without father, or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever." (Hebrews 7:3)

The author of Hebrews goes into great detail to link the Melchizedek priesthood with Jesus. Chapter 7 acknowledges that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, "and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests." (verse 14) The author examines the priesthood of Levi, which had been established by Moses when he named Aaron and his descendants (the tribe of Levi) to minister to the people and to keep charge of the tabernacle of witness. (See Hebrews 8:2.) They were to offer sacrifices for their own sins and the sins of the people, but Hebrews 10:4 points out: "For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Hebrews therefore emphasizes the inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood; a new and better covenant was needed between God and man. "For he finds fault with them, when he says: 'The days will come, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.....' (Hebrews 8:8) This superior covenant is found through the Melchizedek priesthood in Christ Jesus, "Who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but the power of an indestructible life." (Hebrews 7:16)

The pre-eminence of the Melchizedek priesthood is arrived at in yet another manner:

One might even say that Levi himself who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor, when Melchizedek met him. (Hebrews 7:9-10)

By this rationale of Levi paying tithes to Melchizedek and by Melchizedek being more than a mere representation between God and man of carnal sacrifices, Melchizedek is recognized in the New Testament as a priest of a higher order than that of Levi. His is a priesthood of sufficient rank to accommodate the Son of God.

Hebrews also recognizes Jesus as the Messiah described in Psalm 110. In first referring to the Levitical priesthood, it is said:

For they were made priests without oaths; but this one was made a priest with an oath, as it was said concerning him by David, The Lord was sworn, and will not lie, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. All these things make a better covenant because Jesus is its surety. (Hebrews 7:21-22; Lamsa translation)

Verse 21 contains an actual verbatim quote of Psalm 110:4, discussed earlier.

There are a number of interesting parallels between Melchizedek and Jesus:

I. Both were characterized as priests ordained specifically by God, rather than by man. Neither was eligible under Jewish law and tradition to be considered priests: Melchizedek was a Gentile, and Jesus

was not of the priestly tribe of Levi. Both represented a dimension above the law with divine ordination.

2. King of Salem means King of Peace, and Jesus was heralded and proclaimed the Prince of Peace.

3. Melchizedek was both a priest and a king. Jesus' priesthood is documented in Hebrews, and he was known by the sign on his cross as "King of the Jews."

4. In giving his blessing to Abram, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine, traditional memorials of offering and sacrifice. Similarly Jesus, in blessing his disciples before his trial and crucifixion, offered bread and wine as symbols of his body and blood and of the sacrifice he was to make.

5. In tablets excavated at Tell el Amama dating back to 1400 B.C., Jerusalem is referred to as Uru-Salem, and in Psalm 76:2 (a psalm written by Asaph, who incidentally the Cayce readings say was another incarnation of the Master soul) Jerusalem is simply called Salem. Most scholars have concluded, as did first century Jewish historian Josephus, that Jerusalem was originally known as Salem. If so, then Melchizedek was king of the city where Jesus eventually was crucified and ended his ministry. Jesus' lamentation over the error of Jerusalem's ways and its imminent destruction thus takes on special and poignant meaning:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken and desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:37-39)

6. Two Biblical stories stand out as tales with profound symbolic significance for the spiritual evolution of humanity. Each is considered a masterpiece of allegory and esoteric meaning and a complete sermon within itself One is the parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament; the other, the Old Testament story of Job. The prodigal son parable, of course, belongs to Jesus, and, according to Cayce, Melchizedek wrote the Book of Job. Cayce also says that Job was not an actual, historic person, but a symbolic figure-as is the case with the prodigal son. While modern scholars are unsure of the authorship of Job, some do place the book in the historical period of the patriarchs and the Abrahamic covenant-and thus in Melchizedek's time.

Three chapters in the Epistle to the Hebrews (5, 6, and 7) discuss at great length the equality and similarity of Jesus and Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews stops short of saying they were one and the same entity, but he does hint at a mystery. Hebrews 5: 10 and 11 states that, although Jesus was "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek," there is more to be said, but it is difficult" seeing ye are dull of hearing." The author continues: For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food; for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

This same language also appears in I Corinthians 3:1 and 2, where Paul indicates his audience is not ready to hear the full story.

In a similar vein, Cayce stated that the belief in previous lives of people, or reincarnation, was dropped by the early Church to create a "shortcut." This deletion was apparently aimed at simplicity and mass

acceptability. The "babes" were not ready for "solid food" and the learning of the mysteries of the soul.

Some early Christians did apparently understand the full implication of the connection between Melchizedek and Jesus. A footnote to Genesis 14:17-26 in the Jerusalem Bible states that several of the early Church Fathers "even held the opinion that Melchizedek was a manifestation of the Son of God in person.¹¹²

The name "Melchizedek" has generally been translated, from Josephus to modern scholars, to mean King or Lord of Righteousness.¹ With this meaning in mind, the following messianic prophecy by the great Hebrew prophet Jeremiah becomes very significant:

In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

(Jeremiah 23:6)

Is not Jeremiah identifying the anticipated messiah as Melchizedek? "The Lord is our righteousness" is the actual, literal meaning of the name "Melchizedek."

According to esoteric Jewish literature, Abraham received directly from Melchizedek original teachings, which were then passed on to subsequent generations as the Hebrew Kabbala.⁴ Melchizedek would thus be the first author of these venerated teachings.

In the Jewish Encyclopedia, Melchizedek is "placed in the same category [of importance] with Elijah, the Messiah ben Joseph, and the Messiah ben David."⁵ Christians, of course, recognize Jesus in these messianic references.

Another interesting commentary on Melchizedek is contained in a quote from the Ethiopian Book of adam and Eve.

... Noah tells his son Shem before his death to take "Melchizedek, the son of Canaan, whom God has chosen from all generations of men, and to stand by the dead body of Adam after it had been brought from the ark to Jerusalem as the center of the earth and fulfill the ministry before God." The angel Michael then took away Melchizedek, when fifteen years of age, from his father, and after having anointed him as priest, brought him to (Jerusalem) the center of the earth, telling his father to share the mystery only with Shem, the son of Noah, while the Holy Spirit, speaking out of the ark when the body of Adam was hidden, greeted Melchizedek as "the first-created of God [Author's italics]⁶

The words, "whom God has chosen from all generations of men," are the kinds of phraseology generally reserved for Old Testament statements about the messiah and New Testament descriptions of Jesus. And the phrase, "the first-created of God," would seem necessarily to be a reference to Adam. All the wording, of course, pertains to Melchizedek and would appear to identify him as both Adam and the messiah. Although the narrative would differ from both the New Testament and Cayce in seemingly giving Melchizedek an earthly father, it is noteworthy in the above narrative that Melchizedek was taken to stand by the dead body of Adam. According to Cayce, Melchizedek thus would have been standing by the body his soul had previously inhabited. Possibly that was the significance intended by Noah.

The Encyclopedia Judaica claims there are other Judaic references to the messianic functions of Melchizedek and that rabbinical sources mention Melchizedek "among the four messianic figures allegorically implied by the four 'smiths' of Zechariah 1:20 and 21.117

Manuscripts of the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch (2 Enoch)

were discovered in recent years in Russia and Serbia. As indicated in the Enoch chapter, it is thought to have been written during the early Christian era and was probably based upon earlier Jewish tradition.

Some of these Slavonic Enochian manuscripts contain a story about Melchizedek having been born miraculously and being in the care of Nir, Noah's brother. An angel appeared to Nir and told him that the archangel Michael would take Melchizedek to Eden, the former paradise of Adam, and that Melchizedek would become the priest to all holy priests. He is to become the head of a line of priests from which the promised messiah will descend. The messiah, who is to be both a priest and a king, is expected also to be an eschatological Melchizedek.

And afterward, in the last generation, there will be another Melchizedek, the first of 12 priests. And the last will be the head of all, a great archpriest, the Word and Power of God, who will perform miracles, greater and more glorious than all the previous ones. He, Melchizedek, will be priest and king in the place Akhuzan, that is to say, in the center of the earth, where Adam was created, and there will be his final grave. And in connection with that archpriest it is written how he also will be buried there, where the center of the earth is ... (2 Enoch 71:34-36)

Jerusalem was traditionally known as the center of the earth, and the quotation seems clearly to identify the last appearance of Melchizedek as that of the messiah. Melchizedek's final grave at Jerusalem would be correct if he did, in fact, come back as Jesus. The references to Adam are also intriguing and were referred to in the Adam chapter.

The Gnostic Christian manuscript, Pistis Sophia, dating from the fourth or fifth centuries A.D., contains mysteries purportedly given by Jesus to the disciples and certain elect after the resurrection and before his ascension. It makes numerous references to Melchizedek as part of the hierarchy of the mysteries and godhead of which Jesus was a part.⁸

Probably the strongest case for corroborating Cayce's statements that Jesus had previously incarnated as Melchizedek is the Bible itself. There are a number of Biblical references, including one of its most quoted verses, John 3:16, which refer to Jesus as the "only begotten Son" of God. Webster defines "begotten" as "to bring into being" or "procreate." Cayce gave a rather obvious definition of "begotten of God" as "those who have entered into flesh without that act which man knows as copulation." (1158-5) Jesus is not the only Biblical son who entered flesh without the act of copulation. Adam, of course, was created by God rather than by a human being, and Melchizedek was, according to Hebrews, without earthly father or mother. Unless Adam and Melchizedek are the same soul entity as Jesus, as Cayce said, then the Bible would appear to be contradictory in saying that Jesus is the only begotten son of God.

Even Jesus seemed to imply that he may have been Melchizedek when he said: Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:56-58)

These quotations become meaningful in light of the Cayce information that Jesus was also Melchizedek who, as we know from the Bible, met and blessed Abram or Abraham. Abraham thus "rejoiced" to see his (Jesus') earlier day, and he saw 'it' and was "glad."

Scattered among Christian liturgy are a few prayers which are thought to be remnants of Jewish synagogal prayers; they are contained in Books Seven and Eight of the Apostolic Constitutions.⁹ One of these, dating from around A.D. 200, contains the following cryptic wording in a supplication to God:

You are the one who delivered Abraham from ancestral godlessness,
and appointed him heir of the world, AND SHOWED TO HIM YOUR CHRIST;
the one who appointed Melchizedek a high priest in your service ...

The above emphasized words are thought to be Christian interpolations. A reasonable interpretation of the entire quotation is that it identifies Melchizedek, who was shown to Abraham, as the Christ.

Most of the documents found in recent years near the Dead Sea at Qumran are books of the Old Testament and related materials of the Old Testament period as seen through the eyes of the Essenes. Cayce provides the interesting insight that the Essenes grew out of the teachings of Melchizedek as propagated by prophets, such as Elijah, Elisha, and Samuel. (254-I09) From the documents at Qumran, we know there was much interest in Melchizedek among these Essenes. This Melchizedekian influence could be the result of traditions dating back through the school of prophets to Melchizedek himself. We also now know that the Qumran Essene priesthood was modeled after that of Melchizedek." The Essenes' preoccupation with Melchizedek may also be the basis for the detailed discussion of him in Hebrews.¹²

A number of Essene documents referred to a Teacher of Righteousness. In the Essene Commentary on the Book of Habakkuk, the Teacher of Righteousness is referred to as one "to whom God has made known all the mysteries of His servants the prophets."¹³ This Teacher of Righteousness was expected to return and usher in the Messianic Age and, according to Jewish tradition, to be Elijah or Phinehas or Melchizedek.¹⁴ At least one respected Dead Sea Scroll authority has stated that Jesus in these documents "appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness."¹⁵

Not all of the documents found at Qumran have yet been translated or at least been made available to the public. But at least one treatise now publicly available bears directly on the question of Melchizedek's relationship to the promised messiah.

The Lost Jubilee. A Sermon "Melchizedek Texts" (also known as "I IQ Melchizedek Text" or "I I Q Melchizedek"), found at Qumran and considered a part of what is commonly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, refers in messianic terms to a future King of Righteousness. In the text, this King of Righteousness is described as passing judgment in the time of the tenth or last Jubilee on Belial and his followers. After the judgment in heaven comes the destruction of those who have followed Belial rather than God. The text states that "the one designed, by God's favor, for the King of Righteousness (which is what, by his very name, Melchizedek prefigures) will come into his dominion." The time of his coming "into his dominion" is identified as the period which Isaiah termed the year of favor (or "acceptable year of the Lord"):

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn ... (Isaiah 6:1-2)

It should be noted here that when Jesus made his first appearance in Nazareth after beginning his public ministry, he spoke at the synagogue there, and the book of Isaiah was handed to him. Luke records that he then found and read the two verses quoted above (Luke 4:17-19), but stopped after the phrase "the year of the Lord's favor" in verse two. Biblical analysts have concluded that by suspending reading without referring to God's day of vengeance, Jesus was distinguishing between his present ministry of grace and the second advent when he would carry out God's judgments. On the other hand, his stopping after that phrase may have been for the purpose of emphasis, for it truly was the "year of the Lord." After Jesus had concluded his reading, verse 21 adds: "And he began to say unto them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing!'"

Thus in Luke 4:21, Jesus seems to identify himself as the one promised by Isaiah "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" when he said, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And the Melchizedek Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls identify Melchizedek as the person who will fulfill that prophecy.

The Qumran Melchizedek Texts contain several comments which seem clearly to identify the King of Righteousness as the promised messiah. They discuss the role of this future King in overthrowing Belial and executing God's avenging judgment and clearly state that this King will be "Melchizedek redivivus" (or reincarnated). One scholar has summarized the document thusly-

In this fragment, written in Hebrew, Melchizedek appears as an eschatological saviour who has a heritage. His mission is to bring back at the end of days the exiles to announce to them their liberation ... and the expiation of their sins.¹⁶

A similarity between Melchizedek and Enoch (Metatron) has also been noted:

A number of clear parallels between the heavenly Melchizedek of Qumran and the Metatron of 3 Enoch at once suggest themselves: both figures hold exalted, if not pre-eminent, positions among the angels; both are heavenly judges ... and both, apparently, had earthly lives prior to their exalted, heavenly states.¹⁷

This parallel from ancient documents adds credence to the Cayce proposition that Enoch and Melchizedek are the same soul.

One of the documents found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt in the late 1940s is a text entitled Melchizedek. Little is known about its authorship or significance in early Christian theology, but at least one Gnostic sect named itself after Melchizedek. The following quote is from this text

And you crucified me from the third hour of the Sabbath-eve until the ninth hour. And after these things I arose from the dead. My body came out of the tomb to me. [] they did not find anyone greeted me [] They said to me, Be strong, Melchizedek, great High Priest of God Most High [. . .] [Brackets indicate missing fragments or illegible wording.]¹⁸

There can be little doubt that this quote and the related material-from a group of early Christians-are referring to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

In commenting on the above text, noted authority Birger A. Pearson states, "Furthermore, the tractate's apparent identification of Melchizedek with Jesus Christ ... is also documented elsewhere in early Christianity, particularly in Egypt."¹⁹ In the expanded Nag Hammadi Library, Pearson adds:

We are drawn to the conclusion that, in the revelation which the priest Melchizedek has received, he has seen that he himself will have a redemptive role to play as the suffering, dying, resurrected and triumphant Savior, Jesus Christ!

... From what we read . . . it seems that the victory of Jesus Christ is the victory of Melchizedek and that, in fact, they are one and the same.²⁰

In correspondence with the author, Pearson adds: "I did and do understand the (very fragmentary!) text of the first tractate to imply that Melchizedek was prophesied to return again, as Jesus."

This tractate contains other material that may be relevant to the lives of the Master. In one section (I 2, I), which appears to quote an angelic source, there is a list of several Biblical personages. Because parts of the text are missing, it is not clear what this list purports to be. Scholars have added the names of Noah and Abel to the list, but probably because they were included in some other documents, not because they were a part of the legible text. It has been surmised that the list may be of ancient heroes who also functioned as priests. The listing concludes with the name of Melchizedek, who, as indicated, is identified elsewhere in the document as Jesus Christ. The other two legible names on the list are Adam and Enoch. It may easily be deduced that these names are given as other earlier incarnations of the Master.

As we have seen, there is evidence, aside from Cayce, identifying Melchizedek with Jesus. In fact, a prophecy was made before the time of Jesus that the Christ or messiah would be Melchizedek returned; and another, written by early Christians, actually identifies Christ Jesus as Melchizedek. It should be noted that these documents were not available, however, until after Edgar Cayce's death.

Melchizedek was obviously a very advanced soul. One might logically wonder why it was necessary for this soul to incarnate further, as Cayce states, until reaching Christhood as Jesus. Presumably each intervening life was a learning experience, and, even when entering the earth as Jesus, there was more for this soul to learn. Hebrews 5:8 says: "Although he [Jesus] was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered."

Thomas Sugrue wrote the definitive biography of Edgar Cayce, *There Is a River*. In compiling the philosophy section of that book, he obtained direct advice and guidance from Cayce through psychic readings. From this section, we get an additional theory as to why the Master soul again incarnated after the experience as Melchizedek:

The Christ soul helped man. As Enoch, as Melchizedek, it took on flesh, to teach and lead ... Enoch and Melchizedek were not born, did not die. The Christ soul realized after these assumptions of flesh that it was necessary to set a pattern for man, to show him the way back to himself. It assumed this task and was born of woman, beginning voluntarily a new individuality, a new soul record; though behind this new individuality shone the pure Christ soul. But on this the veil dropped, and the Son of God began His pilgrimages. Thus, the Master soul, after incarnating as Melchizedek, apparently assumed the mission of relating directly to humanity and of becoming the pattern for its return to the Creator through fleshly incarnations and births begotten of human parentage. These lives then should offer special significance and meaning to us, the first of which, according to Cayce, was as Joseph who was

sold into slavery by his brothers. Scattered throughout esoteric religious writings of the centuries, and even the Bible itself, have been references to the priestly order of Melchizedek, as though it were an order of special and high spiritual attainment. Melchizedek established this order, and it was infinitely higher and more perfect than the priesthood of Aaron. The Aaronic priesthood ended with death, but the priesthood of Melchizedek was a spiritual order whose priests were priests forever. The Aaronic-Levitical priests offered sacrifices for the sins of their people; Jesus gave his life as the sacrifice for his people. By resurrecting his body, he made the Jesus-Melchizedek priesthood eternal. This priesthood, according to the Encyclopedia Judaica's interpretation of Hebrews, "is excellent, superior to that of Abraham's descent, and transcends all human, imperfect orders."²²

The author of Hebrews would use Melchizedek as the standard by which to validate the priestly ministry of Jesus and say of Melchizedek:

See how great he is! Abraham the patriarch gave

In view of such New Testament and early Christian veneration of Melchizedek and the rich messianic tradition about him which we have found, Christians should in no way find it demeaning to link the soul of Melchizedek with that of Jesus. Certainly both individuals were important instruments of God, and each life marks an historic step in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

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6. Two Biblical stories stand out as tales with profound symbolic significance for the spiritual evolution of humanity. Each is considered a masterpiece of allegory and esoteric meaning and a complete sermon within itself One is the parable of the prodigal son in the New Testament; the other, the Old Testament story of Job. The prodigal son parable, of course, belongs to Jesus, and, according to Cayce, Melchizedek wrote the Book of Job. Cayce also says that Job was not an actual, historic person, but a symbolic figure-as is the case with the prodigal son. While modern scholars are unsure of the authorship of Job, some do place the book in the historical period of the patriarchs and the Abrahamic covenant-and thus in Melchizedek's time.

Three chapters in the Epistle to the Hebrews (5, 6, and 7) discuss at great length the equality and similarity of Jesus and Melchizedek. The author of Hebrews stops short of saying they were one and the same entity, but he does hint at a mystery. Hebrews 5:10 and 11 states that, although Jesus was "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek," there is more to be said, but it is

difficult" seeing ye are dull of hearing." The author continues: For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food; for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

This same language also appears in I Corinthians 3:1 and 2, where Paul indicates his audience is not ready to hear the full story.

In a similar vein, Cayce stated that the belief in previous lives of people, or reincarnation, was dropped by the early Church to create a "shortcut." This deletion was apparently aimed at simplicity and mass acceptability. The "babes" were not ready for "solid food" and the learning of the mysteries of the soul.

Some early Christians did apparently understand the full implication of the connection between Melchizedek and Jesus. A footnote to Genesis 14:17-26 in the Jerusalem Bible states that several of the early Church Fathers "even held the opinion that Melchizedek was a manifestation of the Son of God in person.¹¹²

The name "Melchizedek" has generally been translated, from Josephus to modern scholars, to mean King or Lord of Righteousness.¹ With this meaning in mind, the following messianic prophecy by the great Hebrew prophet Jeremiah becomes very significant:

In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

(Jeremiah 23:6)

Is not Jeremiah identifying the anticipated messiah as Melchizedek? "The Lord is our righteousness" is the actual, literal meaning of the name "Melchizedek."

According to esoteric Jewish literature, Abraham received directly from Melchizedek original teachings, which were then passed on to subsequent generations as the Hebrew Kabbala.⁴ Melchizedek would thus be the first author of these venerated teachings.

In the Jewish Encyclopedia, Melchizedek is "placed in the same category [of importance] with Elijah, the Messiah ben Joseph, and the Messiah ben David."⁵ Christians, of course, recognize Jesus in these messianic references.

Another interesting commentary on Melchizedek is contained in a quote from the Ethiopian Book of adam and Eve.

... Noah tells his son Shem before his death to take "Melchizedek, the son of Canaan, whom God has chosen from all generations of men, and to stand by the dead body of Adam after it had been brought from the ark to Jerusalem as the center of the earth and fulfill the ministry before God." The angel Michael then took away Melchizedek, when fifteen years of age, from his father, and after having anointed him as priest, brought him to (Jerusalem) the center of the earth, telling his father to share the mystery only with Shem, the son of Noah, while the Holy Spirit, speaking out of the ark when the body of Adam was hidden, greeted Melchizedek as "the first-created of God [Author's italics]"⁶

The words, "whom God has chosen from all generations of men," are the kinds of phraseology generally reserved for Old Testament statements about the messiah and New Testament descriptions of Jesus. And the phrase, "the first-created of God," would seem necessarily to be a reference to Adam. All the wording, of course, pertains to Melchizedek and would appear to identify him as both Adam and the messiah. Although the narrative would differ from both the New Testament and Cayce in seemingly giving Melchizedek an earthly father, it is noteworthy in the above narrative that Melchizedek was taken to stand by the dead body of Adam. According to Cayce, Melchizedek thus would have been standing by the body his soul had previously inhabited. Possibly that was the significance intended by Noah.

The Encyclopedia Judaica claims there are other Judaic references to the messianic functions of Melchizedek and that rabbinical sources mention Melchizedek "among the four messianic figures allegorically implied by the four 'smiths' of Zechariah I:20 and 2I.II¹⁷

Manuscripts of the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch (2 Enoch)

were discovered in recent years in Russia and Serbia. As indicated in the Enoch chapter, it is thought to have been written during the early Christian era and was probably based upon earlier Jewish tradition.

Some of these Slavonic Enochian manuscripts contain a story about Melchizedek having been born miraculously and being in the care of Nir, Noah's brother. An angel appeared to Nir and told him that the archangel Michael would take Melchizedek to Eden, the former paradise of Adam, and that Melchizedek would become the priest to all holy priests. He is to become the head of a line of priests from which the promised messiah will descend. The messiah, who is to be both a priest and a king, is expected also to be an eschatological Melchizedek.

And afterward, in the last generation, there will be another Melchizedek, the first of 12 priests. And the last will be the head of all, a great archpriest, the Word and Power of God, who will perform miracles, greater and more glorious than all the previous ones. He, Melchizedek, will be priest and king in the place Akhuzan, that is to say, in the center of the earth, where Adam was created, and there will be his final grave. And in connection with that archpriest it is written how he also will be buried there, where the center of the earth is ... (2 Enoch 7I:34-36)

Jerusalem was traditionally known as the center of the earth, and the quotation seems clearly to identify the last appearance of Melchizedek as that of the messiah. Melchizedek's final grave at Jerusalem would be correct if he did, in fact, come back as Jesus. The references to Adam are also intriguing and were referred to in the Adam chapter.

The Gnostic Christian manuscript, Pistis Sophia, dating from the fourth or fifth centuries A.D., contains mysteries purportedly given by Jesus to the disciples and certain elect after the resurrection and before his ascension. It makes numerous references to Melchizedek as part of the hierarchy of the mysteries and godhead of which Jesus was a part.¹⁸

Probably the strongest case for corroborating Cayce's statements that Jesus had previously incarnated as Melchizedek is the Bible itself. There are a number of Biblical references, including one of its most quoted verses, John 3:16, which refer to Jesus as the "only begotten Son" of God. Webster defines "begotten" as "to bring into being" or "procreate." Cayce gave a rather obvious definition of "begotten of God" as "those who have entered into flesh without that act which man knows as copulation."

(II158-5) Jesus is not the only Biblical son who entered flesh without the act of copulation. Adam, of course, was created by God rather than by a human being, and Melchizedek was, according to Hebrews, without earthly father or mother. Unless Adam and Melchizedek are the same soul entity as Jesus, as Cayce said, then the Bible would appear to be contradictory in saying that Jesus is the only begotten son of God.

Even Jesus seemed to imply that he may have been Melchizedek when he said: Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:56-58)

These quotations become meaningful in light of the Cayce information that Jesus was also Melchizedek who, as we know from the Bible, met and blessed Abram or Abraham. Abraham thus "rejoiced" to see his (Jesus') earlier day, and he saw'it and was "glad."

Scattered among Christian liturgy are a few prayers which are thought to be remnants of Jewish synagogal prayers; they are contained in Books Seven and Eight of the Apostolic Constitutions.⁹ One of these, dating from around A.D. 200, contains the following cryptic wording in a supplication to God: