

I. THE GOVERNMENTAL LAYOUT OF CREATION

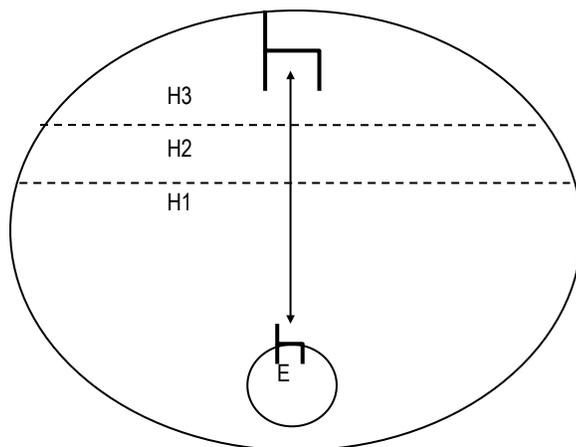
A. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The heavens and the earth make up His kingdom, over which He sits enthroned as Sovereign King.

¹*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (NIV Gen. 1:1)*

¹*Thus said Jehovah: The heavens are My throne, And the earth My footstool, Where is this--the house that ye build for Me? And where is this--the place--My rest?(YLT Is. 66:1)*

¹⁹ *The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*

² *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out*



of the body I do not know—God knows. (NIV 2 Cor. 12:1-2)

B. Before God created the earth, He had created a class of cosmic powers angels called the “sons of God” or the morning stars. These cosmic powers were present and watching when He created the earth. It seems that Satan was one of these before he fell.

¹*Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. ⁴ “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God (LXX – angelos=angels) shouted for joy (Hebrew parallelism→ morning stars=the sons of God=angels according to LXX)? (ESV Job 38:1-7)*

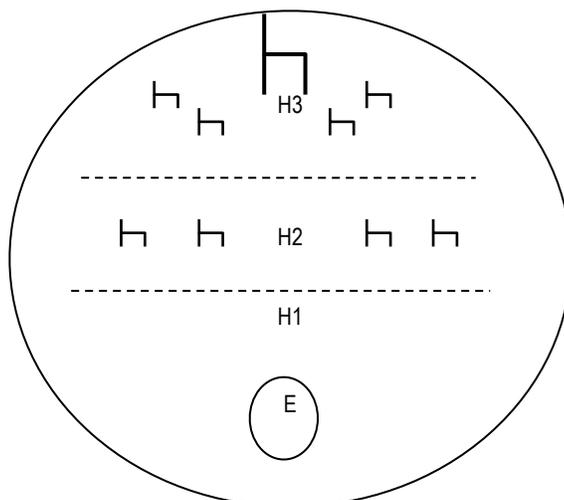
¹² *How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (ESV “Daystar;” NLT – “O shining star”; NKJV – “Lucifer”; Heb. haylayle – Strong’s - “1 shining one, morning star, Lucifer”; Lucifer= “light bearer”), son of the dawn (cf. Job 38:7; i.e. was there at the earth’s beginning, the “morning”)! You have been cast down to the earth (cf. Lk. 10, Rev. 12), you who once laid low the nations (cf. Ps. 82)! (NIV Isaiah 14:12-15)*

C. The Scriptures reveal that when God created the universe, He chose to administrate facets of His government and rule in the cosmos *through* delegated authorities. As with human governments, positions of authority in God's cosmic government apparently varied in type, degree, sphere, domain, assignment, etc. Principalities are territories governed by *princes*.

¹⁹ ***The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*** ²⁰ ***Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word*** (NIV – “his bidding”), ***obeying the voice of his word!*** ²¹ ***Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!*** ²² ***Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!*** (^{ESV}Ps. 103:19-22)

¹⁹ ***Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.*** ²⁰ ***And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’ ‘One suggested this, and another that.*** ²¹ ***Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’*** ²² ***“By what means?’ the LORD asked. “ ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. “‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’*** ²³ ***“So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.”*** (^{NIV}1 Kings 22:19-23)

²⁰ ***So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince*** (LXX – Gk- archon; cf. Jn. 14:30, 16:11, Eph. 2:2 where applied to Satan) ***of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;*** ²¹ ***but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince*** (LXX – “archon”) (^{NIV}Dan. 10:20-21)



D. It seems that some angels/powers were given delegated authority/responsibility over the management of the various elements in creation.

¹***After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds*** (^{NIV}Rev. 7:1)

⁴***The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*** ⁵***Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say*** (^{NIV}Rev. 16:4-5)

¹² ***The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. ...*** ¹⁶ ***While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one***

who has escaped to tell you!”¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” (NIV Job 1:12, 16-19)

⁷ *In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.” (NIV Heb. 1:10, quoting LXX Ps. 104:4)*

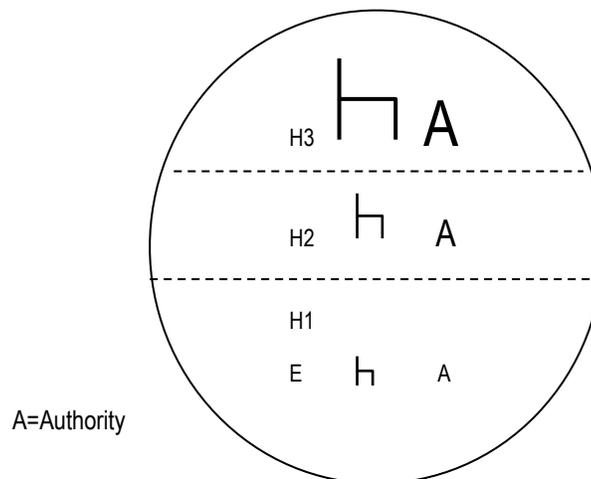
E. Human beings were originally given charge over the earth.

¹⁶ *The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.* (NIV Ps. 115:16)

²⁶ *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (NIV Gen. 1:26)*

F. One key assumption for understanding the priesthood of Melchizedek: the geographical/spacial arrangement of the heavens and the earth, *indicates the governmental hierarchy of authority in the created order.*

¹⁹ *and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (ESV Ephesians 1:19-21)*



G. At some point, a number of angels/sons of God/morning stars/cosmic powers rebelled against God. When they did this, they began to use their assigned authority and power not for the well being of human beings, but to draw them away from God. This began in the Garden when Satan tempted Eve. Human beings have been under the assault and deceptive influence of Satan and fallen powers ever since.

¹*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden,*

and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”⁴ **“You will not surely die,”** the serpent said to the woman.⁵ **“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also **desirable for gaining wisdom**, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (NIV Gen. 3:1-7)

¹ **God** (Heb. elohiim) **has taken** (singular verb) **his place** (the highest place) **in the divine council; in the midst of** (indicating plurality; cf. vs. 6) **the gods** (Heb. elohiim) **he holds judgment:** ² **“How long will you judge unjustly** (misuse of authority) **and show partiality to the wicked?** ³ **Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.** ⁴ **Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”** ⁵ **They** (the fallen “gods” or “sons of God” in the council) **have neither knowledge nor understanding** (no fear of the Lord, cf. Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7, Prov. 9:10), **they walk about in darkness** (without light, without direction, blind and unable to instruct); **all the foundations of the earth are shaken** (in the day of the Lord; their wickedness and folly actually leads the nations to judgment, cf. vs. 8, Is. 24). ⁶ **I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High** (i.e. immortal, cf. vs. 7), **all of you;** ⁷ **nevertheless, like men** (NIV – “like mere men”) **you shall die** (first Sheol, then second death lake of fire; cf. Is. 14:15; Is. 24:21-23; Rev. 20), **and fall like any prince** (cf. Is. 24:21-23).” ⁸ **Arise, O God, judge the earth** (shaking of vs. 5); **for you shall inherit all the nations** (who shall be brought out from under the influence of these fallen sons of God)! (ESV Ps. 82)

¹³ **No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.** (NIV 1Cor. 10:13)

¹³ **When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.** (NIV Lk. 4:13)

⁴⁴ **You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.** (NIV Jn. 8:44)

H. The fallen powers seem to have their “headquarters” in the second heaven.

⁷ **And there was war in heaven** (Gk. the heaven). **Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.** ⁸ **But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven** (the heaven). (NIV Rev. 12:7-8)

II. THE PRIESTLY STRUCTURE OF CREATION

A. When God created the heavens, He stretched them out like a tent or a tabernacle to dwell in.

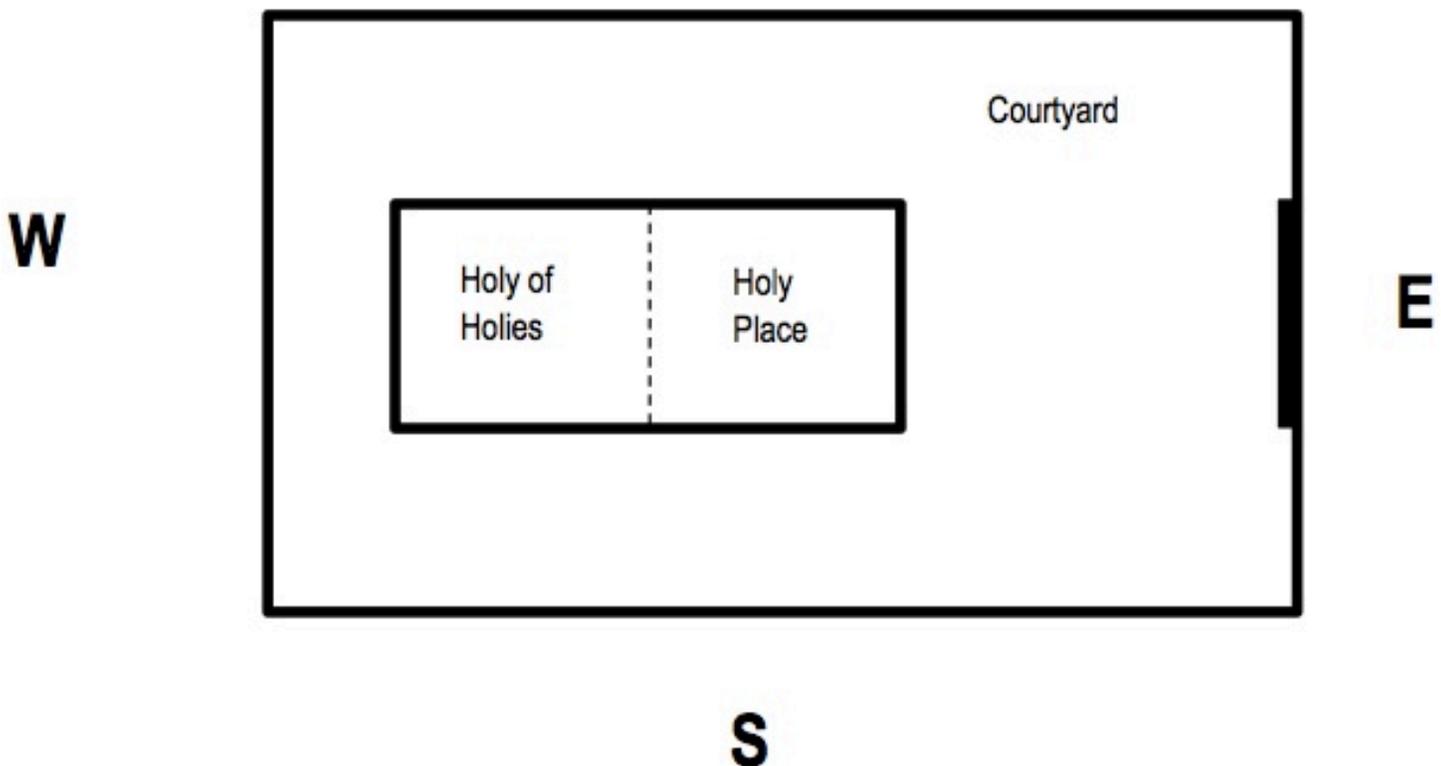
²² **He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent** (Heb. ohel – tent, tabernacle; cf. Ex. 26:9; LXX - skene) **to live in.** (NIV Is. 40:22)

B. The word used for tent here was also one of the words applied to the tabernacle built (especially the tent inside the larger tabernacle structure) by Moses and the Israelites according to the instructions given on Mount Siani. The tabernacle/tent of Meeting was center of worship for the Israelites in the wilderness. It was where the Leviticus priests carried out their priestly duties. God had Moses design the tabernacle according to a three-part structure: the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Courtyard.

⁹ Join five of the curtains together into one set and the other six into another set. Fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent (Heb. ohel; KJV – “tabernacle”) (NIV Ex. 26:9)

⁹ Make this tabernacle (Heb. mishkawn – tabernacle; “dwelling,” cf. KJV Ps. 87:2; “habitation,” cf. KJV Ps. 132:5) and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. (NIV Ex. 25:9)

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C. This tabernacle was designed and patterned after the tabernacle that God had originally built in the height of the heavens at creation. It also seems that the heavens themselves were created according to a similar three-fold pattern. All creation is structured for the praise and worship of Yahweh, the only Creator!

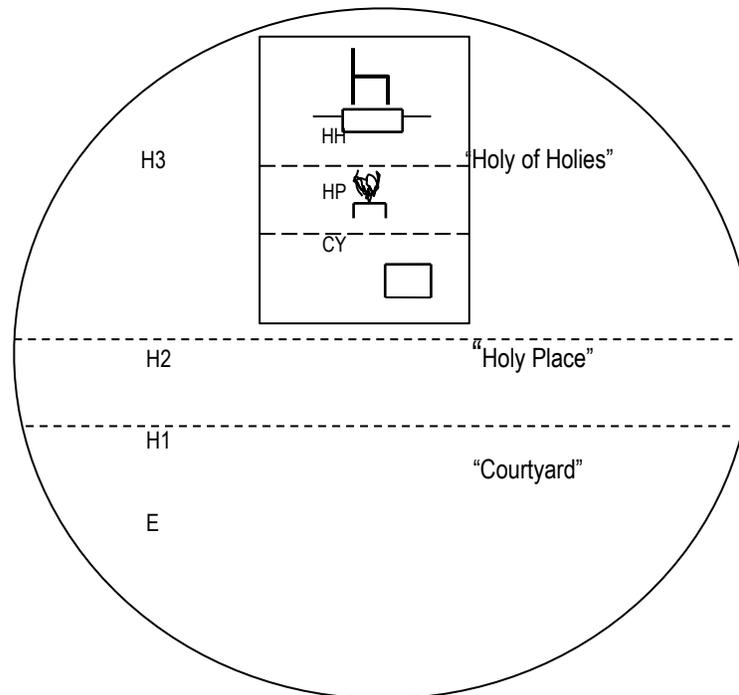
¹Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ²a minister in the holy places, in the true tent (ESV note – or tabernacle; Gk. skene, cf. LXX Is. 40:22) that the Lord set up (KJV – “which the Lord pitched”; i.e. in the beginning when He created the heavens and the earth), **not man**. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” (ESV Heb. 8:1-5)

¹⁹ Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. (NIV Rev. 11:19)

⁸ **And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (NIV Rev. 5:8)**

⁹ **When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. (NIV Rev. 6:8)**

⁵ **After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. ⁶ **Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. (NIV Rev. 15:5-6)****



D. Notice that the Temple, the center of priestly activity in the created order, is also located geographically in the place of greatest governmental authority in the created order.

III. THE REBELLION OF THE NATIONS ON THE PLAIN IN SHINAR

A. In Deuteronomy 32, we learn that in the Tower of Babel event, something more happened than God simply confusing the languages of the nations. For some reason not explicitly stated, the nations decided that they wanted to worship the fallen “gods”/ “sons of God” instead of Yahweh the Creator, and so when God divided up the languages and dispersed the nations, He gave them what they wanted.

⁷ **Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you** (those responsible for preserving and passing down knowledge). ⁸ **When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance** (inheritance= 1. the false gods/or the true God, cf. e.g. Deut. 10:9, Ps. 73:26, Jer. 10:11-16; and 2. land, e.g. Deut. 2:18-19, Ps. 105:11), **when he divided mankind** (at Babel, Gen. 11), **he fixed the borders** (ESV note – or “territories”) **of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God** (Dead Sea Scrolls; Septuagint – “angels of God”; Masoretic Text – “Israel”). ⁹ **But the LORD’s portion is his people** (contrasting to the gods of the nations, who received

the nations as their “portion”), **Jacob his allotted heritage** (God has a portion, and He is His people’s portion; the gods have their “portion”, and they have their “portion”) (^{ESV}Deut. 32:7-9).

¹⁸ **For the wrath of God** (coming judgment in Day of Lord) **is revealed from heaven** (gospel message in the constellations, cf. Ps. 19) **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.** ¹⁹ **For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.** ²⁰ **For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature** (God of Israel, as Creator, set apart from the gods/fallen sons of God), **have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made** (signs in the heavens, cf. Gen. 1, Ps. 19, etc). **So they are without excuse.** ²¹ **For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him** (for sparing them from the Flood?), **but they became futile in their thinking** (like Satan, cf. Is. 14:13-14), **and their foolish hearts were darkened.** ²² **Claiming to be wise** (knowledge and “gnosis” from their gods in exchange for worship), **they became fools,** ²³ **and exchanged the glory of the immortal God** (the Creator) **for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things** (cf. Is. 44; idols=depiction of the gods/fallen sons of God). ²⁴ **Therefore God gave them up** (to those gods/idols, cf. Deut. 32:8; God gave them what they wanted) **in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves** (sexual immorality in worship of the false gods, cf. Gen. 38:21-22, Num. 25:1-3, Deut. 23:17, 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14; Hos. 4:14), ²⁵ **because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature** (fallen sons of God+their images) **rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.** (^{ESV}Romans 1:18-25)

B. The fallen sons of God watched God create the world, and it seems that at least some of them had been put in charge over the elements as stewards of the creation, and therefore possessed significant knowledge about how to manipulate the elements. The Book of Enoch (a non-canonical but highly respected apocryphal book in the early church for the first three centuries AD¹) states that before the Flood, these “gods” or fallen offered the people knowledge/gnosis related to the elements of creation in exchange for worship. Something similar may have happened at Babel: the offer of power and wealth in exchange for worship. The nations “sold themselves to the devil.”

Book of Enoch – “Moreover Azazyel taught men to make swords, knives, shields, breastplates, the fabrication of mirrors, and the workmanship of bracelets and ornaments, the use of paint, the beautifying of the eyebrows, *the use of stones of every valuable and select kind, and all sorts of dyes, so that the world became altered.* Impiety increased; fornication multiplied; and they transgressed and corrupted all their ways. Amazarak taught all the sorcerers, and dividers of roots: Armers *taught* the solution of sorcery; Barkayal *taught* the observers of the stars, Akibeel *taught* signs; Tamiel taught astronomy; And Asaradel taught the motion of the moon, And men, being destroyed, cried out; and their voice reached to heaven.” ²

C. Following the tower of Babel event, it is assumed in Scripture that when there is conflict among the nations or against Israel, both human beings (especially kings) and the fallen cosmic powers are operating together in tandem. This is why Jesus will punish both of them together in the Day of the Lord.

¹² **“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.** (^{NIV}Ex. 12:12)

²³ **And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?** (^{NKJV}2 Sam. 7:23)

• **...to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?”** (^{NIV}2Sam. 7:23, following the LXX and 1 Chron. 17:21)

²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come (unto Alexander the Great’s conquest, cf. Dan. 8:8, 21); ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. (NIV Dan. 10:20-21)

¹ And the dragon (Satan, cf. Rev. 12:9) stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast (the anti-Christ and his empire) coming out of the sea.... The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. (NIV Rev. 13:1, 2b)

²¹ In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. ²² They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. (NIV Is. 24:21-22)

D. This is also why God constantly warns Israel not to enter into treaties with foreign nations for the purpose of gaining protection. To form an alliance with pagan nations was to seek refuge and protection in the false gods of those nations. Usually pagan empires required some form of financial tribute, as well as acknowledgment and worship from dependant vassal states/peoples within their empires (e.g. Dan. 4, 6; Rome). However, this was a deception, because Yahweh, the only true Creator, is the only one who truly has the well-being of Israel and the nations in mind, and He is the only true refuge.

¹“Woe to the obstinate children,” declares the LORD, “to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin; ² who go down to Egypt without consulting me; who look for help to Pharaoh’s protection, to Egypt’s shade for refuge. (NIV Is. 30:1-2)

²² In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the LORD. ²³ He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, “Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me.” But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel. (NIV 2 Chron. 28:22-23)

³⁶ The LORD will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free. ³⁷ He will say: “Now where are their gods, the rock they took refuge in (through alliances with the Gentile nations being governed by those false gods), ³⁸ the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up to help you! Let them give you shelter! (NIV Deut. 32:36-38)

IV. ABRAHAM’S VICTORY THROUGH THE BLESSING OF YAHWEH

A. This provides the background for Genesis 14, where we first see Melchizedek.

¹In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, ² these kings (assumed: under the influence of the fallen powers/false gods) made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). ⁴ Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷ Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim

was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way. ¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them (like Gideon later, a very small number, therefore no boasting before God, cf. Jdgs. 7:2), and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people. ¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom (and by extension his false gods) went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek (name means "king of righteousness," cf. Heb. 7:2) king of Salem (1. Salem means "peace," Melchizedek therefore the king of Peace, cf. Heb. 7:2; 2. Salem=Jerusalem, cf. Ps. 76:2; but, Jerusalem doesn't actually exist as a city yet! It had not yet been inhabited by the Amorites [Josh. 10] or the Jebusites [2 Sam. 5]; at this point, it was only an uninhabited mountainous area, cf. Gen. 22, 2 Chron. 3:1) brought out bread and wine (notice: no meat, no sacrifice) (**He was priest of God Most High.**) ¹⁹ And he blessed him (Melchizedek the source of Abraham being blessing) and said, "**Blessed** (Heb. root – BRK – see below) be Abram by God Most High (i.e. as Creator, enthroned in the highest place of authority above the powers in the second heaven), Possessor (ESV note – or Creator; implying supreme authority over) of heaven (Heb. shamayim, the heavens) and earth; ²⁰ and blessed (Heb. root – BRK – see below) be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" (God's power and blessing alone is what gave Abraham the victory over the kings/powers). And Abram gave him a tenth of everything (acknowledgment of Melchizedek's authority and supremacy, cf. Heb. 7:4-7). ²¹ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand (ESV note – Or "I have taken a solemn oath") to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. ²³ that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' (i.e. Abraham's heart boasting only in God to bring victory; no room for boasting in men, riches, or anything) ²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share." ¹ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." (ESV Gen. 14-15:1)

- B. The consonantal root for blessing is B-R-K. The concept linked to this root is kneeling or other knee-related things. So "barak" is the verb form of "to bless," and can also be translated as "to kneel." "Berek (different vowels, same consonants), means "knees." "Baraka," in turn, means "blessing." Inherent in the concept of blessing, therefore, is servanthood.

Psalm 95:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel (Heb. "barak"; "bless") before the LORD our Maker; ⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Genesis 48:12 (ESV)

¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees (Heb. "berek"), and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

C. Paul's Commentary

¹This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ² and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." ³ Without father or mother, without genealogy (in contrast to Levites), without beginning of days or end of life (i.e. the pre-incarnate Christ who appeared in OT, cf. Gen. 18, 32:22-31, Ex. 3, 14, 23:20-21, Josh. 5:13-15, Jdges. 6, 13, the "Rock" of Deut. 32 [cf. 1 Cor. 10:4], like the Son of God (Warner –

“having become an exemplar to the Son of God”; YLT – “being made like to the Son of God”; ABP – “taking an exact image to the Son of God”) **he remains a priest forever** (Gk. eis to dienekes; only used four times in Bible, all in Hebrews; lit. “unto the carry through,” i.e. until the fulfillment of the rest of Psalm 110, cf. Heb. 10:1, 12, 14). ⁴ **Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!** ⁵ **Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham.** ⁶ **This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.** ⁷ **And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater.** ⁸ **In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living.** ⁹ **One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham,** ¹⁰ **because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.**

V. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

A. Psalm 110 is one of the Old Testament passages most frequently quoted or alluded to in the New Testament (Mt. 22:44, 26:64; Mk. 12:36, 14:62, 16:19; Lk. 20:42, 22:69; Ac. 2:33-34, 5:31, 7:55-56, Rom. 8:34, 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13, 6:20, 7-8, 10:12-13, 12:2, 1 Pet. 3:22). It is the only other place in the Old Testament where Melchizedek is mentioned.

¹ **The LORD** (YHWH – the Father) **says to my Lord** (Heb. adone – Master, Sovereign, Ruler, Lord): **“Sit at my right hand (in the highest heaven/highest place of authority) until (implying an interval of time) I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”**(in the “day of batte,” cf. vs. 3, or the “day of wrath,” cf. vs. 6; i.e. Day of the Lord, cf. Is. 24:21-22, Is. 63). ² **The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion** (NLT – “The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem”; cf. Gen. 49:10, Is. 2:2-4); **you will rule in the midst of your enemies** (i.e. shepherd the nations with a rod of iron, cf. Ps. 2, Zech. 14). ³ **Your troops will be willing on your day of battle** (ESV/KJV/NKJV/NASB – “on the day of your power”; NET – “when you go into battle”). **Arrayed in holy majesty** (ESV – “in holy garments”; NASB – “in holy array”; KJV/NKJV – “in the beauties of holiness”; i.e. resurrected glory, cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-5), **from the womb** (Sheol – in the heart of the earth; cf. Job 26:5, Ps. 63:8, 71:20, 139:15; Is. 26:19; like a mother’s womb, Sheol a place of darkness, cf. Job 17:13, Ps. 139:11-12) , **of the dawn** (the morning, when the light of the age to come – the day – drives back the darkness – the night – of this present evil age, cf. Rom. 13:12, 1 Th. 5:5-7) **you will receive the dew of your youth.** (NIV note – “Or your young men will come to you like the dew”; ESV – “the dew of your youth will be yours”; youth=alive and vigorous, in contrast to dead and decaying, cf. Job. 33:25) ⁴ **The LORD has sworn** (an oath) **and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever** (LXX – “unto the age” (aeon)- i.e. in the interval of vs. 1, to the “end of the age,” cf. Mt. 28:20), **in the order of Melchizedek** (this priesthood producing the fruit of vs. 3 – children worthy of inclusion in the resurrection of the righteous).” ⁵ **The Lord** (Heb. adonay – Master) **is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.** ⁶ **He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers** (Heb. rosh) **of the whole earth** (YLT – “hath smitten the head over the mighty earth”, cf. Gen. 3:15, Is. 24:21-22). ⁷ **He will drink from a brook** (Heb. nachal; used for moving bodies of water of various sizes [cf. KJV Lev. 7:10], or wadi [Num. 34:5]; ESV/KJV – “the brook”; the Eschol? [cf. Num. 13:24]; the Arnon on the border of Moab? [cf. Num. 21:14-15]) **beside the way** (Heb. derek- the ancient eastern trade route known as King’s Way/Highway [Heb. derek, Num. 20:17] that passes through Edom and Moab, East of the Jordan and Dead Sea, cf. Num. 20:17-19, 21:22, 24:17-19; Is. 63); **therefore he will lift up his head** (YLT/KJV – “the head”; i.e. honor the Father by putting down His enemies and then handing the kingdom over to Him, cf. 1 Cor. 11:3, 15:24-28).

B. A Merciful and Faithful High Priest

⁵ **For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.** ⁶ **But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?”** ⁷ **You have**

made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. ⁸**You have put all things in subjection under his feet**” (Ps. 8 – the original destiny of human beings). **For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him** (we see a planet still under the curse and bondage to decay, cf. Rom. 8:21). ⁹**But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels** (when he became a man, he took on a body of death), **for the suffering of death** (punishment for sin=death; therefore, for Jesus to take on our punishment, he had to have a body capable of dying; the incarnation is intimately connected to redemption) **crowned with glory and honor** (i.e. now in resurrected glory), **that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.** (Gk. *huper pas*; literally – “on behalf of all,” i.e. experience death as a substitution; cf. Is. 53:11-12). ¹⁰**For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things** (Gk. *ta panta* – “the whole”) **and by whom are all things** (lit. Gk. *tap anta* – “the whole”), **in bringing many sons to glory** (Israel the firstborn, and also “sons” of Zion from the nations, cf. Is. 42, 49, 53-53, Ps. 87, Rom. 5:12ff), **to make the captain** (NASB – “author”; NET/NRSV – “pioneer”; ESV – “founder”) **of their salvation perfect** (Gk. *teleioo* – complete, to accomplish, see something through to a desired outcome) **through sufferings** (suffering the means by which we are made complete and brought to our intended destiny as outlined in Ps. 8; cf. Php. 3). ¹¹**For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one** (we are one with him through the Holy Spirit, therefore destined to inherit the kingdom as co-heirs in Him, cf. Rom. 8:17), **for which reason** (that that shared in His sufferings unto being completed and sanctified, cf. Ac. 5:41, Rom. 1:16, Php. 3:10, 2 Tim. 1:8,) **He is not ashamed** (because they weren’t ashamed of the cross, Lk. 9:26), **to call them brethren,** ¹²**saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”** (Ps. 22:22; cf. Eph. 1:12, 14) ¹³**And again: “I will put My trust in Him.”** (Is. 8:7) **And again: “Here am I and the children** (the Messiah’s disciples, cf. Is. 8:16) **whom God has given Me** (cf. Jn. 6:37, 39).” (Is. 8:18)¹⁴ **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood** (a body of death), **He Himself likewise shared in the same** (to bear our punishment, cf. Is. 53), **that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,** ¹⁵**and release** (from the prison of Sheol, 1 Pet. 3:19) **those who through fear of death** (cf. the Psalms!!) **were all their lifetime subject to bondage.** ¹⁶**For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.** (Warner – “for doubtless it [i.e. the fear of death] does not take hold of the messengers [angels], but it does take hold of the seed of Abraham¹³”) ¹⁷**Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** ¹⁸**For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted** (temptation and assault by the powers with greater authority=suffering and affliction), **He is able to aid those who are tempted** (through the agency of the powers, cf. Eph. 6). (NKJV Heb. 2:5-18)

¹Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to **represent them** in matters related to God, to **offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.** ²He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵**So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”** (this verse interpreted by Paul as the Messiah’s resurrection, cf. Ac. 13:33) ⁶**And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever** (Gk, “for the age”), **in the order of Melchizedek**” (unto receiving the dew of his “youth”, cf. Ps. 110). ⁷**During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears** (Gethsemane) **to the one who could save him from death** (the Father, Lk. 22:42), **and he was heard because of his reverent submission** (NKJV - “his godly fear”; cf. Is. 11:3). ⁸**Although he was a son, he learned** (experientially) **obedience** (submission of his will and the desires of his body of death to the Father) **from what he suffered** ⁹**and, once made perfect** (suffering unto glory), **he became the source of eternal salvation** (Warner – “perpetual deliverance”) **for all who obey him** (submission of our will and the desires of our body of death) ¹⁰**and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.** (to administer “perpetual deliverance” through the Holy in our time of temptation when assaulted by the powers) (NIV Heb. 5:1-10)

Perfection/Completion

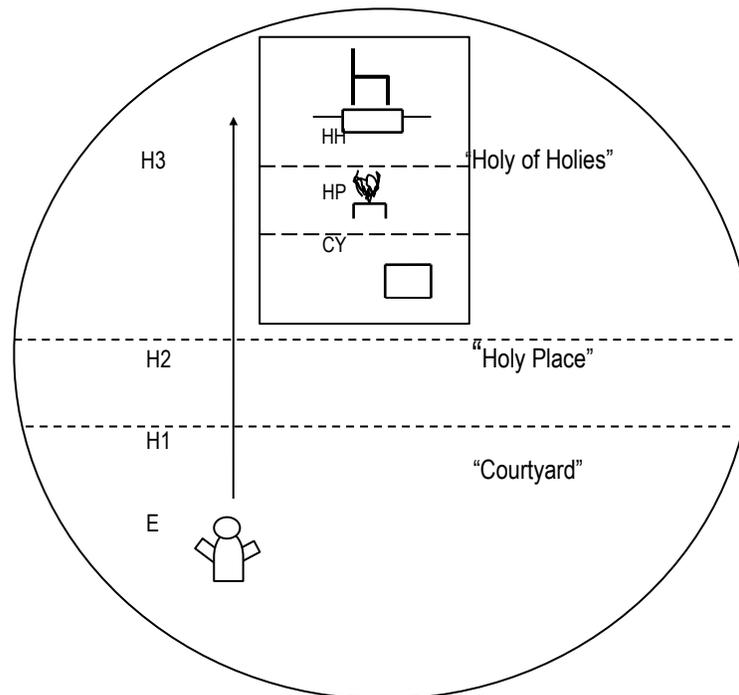
- ¹⁷ **Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** (^{NIV}Rom. 8:17)
- ¹⁰ **I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,** ¹¹ **and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.** ¹² **Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.** (^{NIV}Ph. 3:10-12)
- ¹⁶ **Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.** ¹⁷ **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.** (^{NIV}2 Cor. 4:16-17)
- ³⁰ **Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.** (^{NIV}Prov. 20:30)
- ²³ **Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.** ²⁴ **For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.** (^{NIV}Lk. 9:23-24)

C. A Superior Priesthood Based on Superior Promises

¹¹ **If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?** ¹² **For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law** (Melchizedek’s law/ instruction=the law of Christ [Gal. 6:2, 1 Cor. 9:21]/love [Rom. 13:10]/Sermon on Mount onto purging of inward corruptions). ¹³ **He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.** ¹⁴ **For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah** (cf. Gen. 49:8-9), and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵ **And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears,** ¹⁶ **one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.** ¹⁷ **For it is declared: “You are a priest forever (Gk. “for the age”), in the order of Melchizedek.”** ¹⁸ **The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless** (i.e. unable to impart life, cf. Gal. 3:21) ¹⁹ **(for the law made nothing perfect** (the Mosaic Law couldn’t bring human beings to their intended destiny as described in Ps. 8), and a **better hope** (eternal redemption, cf. Heb. 9:12) **is introduced, by which we draw near to God.** (through the Spirit in Jesus’ name, cf. Eph. 2:18) ²⁰ **And it was not without an oath** (certainly, solemnity)! **Others became priests without any oath,** ²¹ **but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn (oath) and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’”** (Gk. “for the age”) ²² **Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant** (the New Covenant, ratified and put into effect through the blood of Jesus, cf. Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8-10). ²³ **Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office** (don’t have to keep rehashing your struggles to this faithful one!); ²⁴ **but because Jesus lives forever** (ABP – “because of his abiding into the age”), **he has a permanent** (Gk. *aparabatos* – untransferable, inviolable, unchangeable) **priesthood.** ²⁵ **Therefore he is able to save completely** (i.e. complete our redemption, cf. Rom. 8; KJV – “save to the uttermost”; Warner – “complete the deliverance”) **those who come to God through him** (in repentance, for grace and mercy, cf. Heb. 4:16), **because he always lives to intercede for them** (when we stumble, by He brings our repentance before the Father, and presents his “gifts” and “offerings” – His own self, His nail-scarred hands! – before the Father. The Father is overcome, and grants mercy; cf. Heb. 5:1, 1 Jn. 1:9). ²⁶ **Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens** (above the powers who are tempting and trying to seduce into sin). ²⁷ **Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for**

their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, **appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever** (KJV - “but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” – should say “consecrated for the age”). **1The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,** ² and who **serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.** (^{NIV}Heb. 7:11-8:2)

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then **through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)** (i.e. not made from materials coming from the earth, like gold, silver, bronze, etc., used for the Tabernacle, cf. Ex. 25) ¹² **he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.** (^{ESV}Heb. 9:11-12)



For the Law, having a similitude (NKJV – “having a shadow”) **of the impending good things, but not the exact representation of the procedure, those same sacrifices which they are offering accordingly each year are not able to complete the worshippers unto the materialization** (Gk. eis to dienekes; lit. “unto the carry through,” i.e. until the fulfillment of the rest of Psalm 110, cf. Heb. 10:12-14) (^{Tim Warner}Heb. 10:1).

¹¹ And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever (Gk. eis to dienekes; lit. “unto the carry through” or unto the fulfillment/completion), **sat down at the right hand of God,** ¹³ **from that time waiting** (Gk. to loipoy ekdechomai – literally “the rest being received when”) **till His enemies are made His footstool.** ¹⁴ **For by one offering He has perfected forever** (Gk. eis to dienekes; lit. “unto the carry through”) **those who are being sanctified.** (^{NKJV}Heb. 10:11-14)

- **12 Yet He, offering one sacrifice over sins, seated Himself at the right side of God unto the materialization** **13 the remainder being received when His enemies should be placed under His feet.** **14 For by one offering He has**

completed unto the materialization (Gk. *eis to dienekes*; lit. "unto the carry through," or unto the fulfillment/completion)**the ones being set apart.** (Tim Warner Heb. 10:12-14)

¹⁸ **For through him we both** (Jew and Gentile) **have access to the Father by one Spirit.** (NIV Eph. 2:18)

²⁶ **In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.** ²⁷ **And he who searches our hearts** (the Messiah, cf. Rev. 2:23; to test our hearts, expose darkness, and uproot sin unto repentance and mercy; cf. 1 Th. 2:4, 1 John 1:5-10) **knows the mind of the Spirit** (who is probing through soul and spirit, joint and marrow, knowing all about you and communicating it to the Son for intercession, cf. Heb. 4:12-13, Ps. 139), **because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will** (strength for completion/purging/perfection through sufferings). (NIV Rom. 8:26-27)

¹² **For the word of God** (Gk. *logos* – referring to Jesus here) **is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword** (cf. Rev. 1:16, 2:16), **it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart** (cf. Rev. 2:23; "see if there is any wicked way in me," Ps. 139:24). ¹³ **Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight** (cf. Ps. 33:13-15; "where can I go from your Spirit?" Ps. 139:7). **Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes** (i.e. the seven-fold Spirit, cf. Rom. 8:26-27; Rev. 5:6; LXX Is. 11:1-3) **of him to whom we must give account.** (NIV Heb. 4:12-13)

⁵ **Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.** (NIV 1 Cor. 4:5)

¹⁶ **This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.** (NIV Rom. 2:16)

¹ **Since, then, you have been raised with Christ** (referencing coming out of water in baptismal ritual as sign of faith in the resurrection, cf. Col. 2:12), **set your hearts on things above** (set your minds on the power and sufficiency of Melchizedek's priesthood), **where Christ is seated at the right hand of God** (interceding for us to be strengthened in the inner man as we are purged/completed through suffering and difficulty, cf. Eph. 3:16). ² **Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things** (i.e. not on the Old Covenant/Tabernacle of Moses, which couldn't bring completion, cf. Heb. 9:11). ³ **For you died with Christ in God** (being renewed inwardly, but not yet resurrected, cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18). ⁴ **When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory** (no longer hidden, but publicly vindicated by God for the world to see). (NIV Col. 3:1-4)

D. Important point: The priesthood of Melchizedek as portrayed in Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus is not presently dethroning the fallen powers in the Second Heaven. On the contrary, he is using them to purge and sanctify his people (like Job). They will be crushed in the day of the Lord, when the priesthood of Melchizedek will no longer be necessary, because the powers tempting and afflicting human beings will have been removed. The purpose of the priesthood of Melchizedek is to bring in and sanctify the harvest by giving us strength to bear up under trials by the power of Yahweh, who sits enthroned in a greater place of authority.

³¹ **God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.** (Ac. 5:31)

⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (NIV Lk. 24:46-47)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (NIV Mt. 28:18-20)

E. Suffering on Jesus' his behalf as priests to the nations

¹⁵ I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (NIV Rom. 15:15-16)

²⁴ Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. (NIV Col. 1:24)

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch

² Book of Enoch, <http://enoksbok.se/>

³ http://www.oasischristianchurch.org/LGV_Hebrews.pdf; all subsequent quotations from Tim Warner's translation of come from this same website