

Session 25 – THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND IT'S POWER

I. THE KINGDOM IN LUKE 4:16-21 | 11Q MELCHIZEDEK– PART II

- A. The Second Temple Period was a time of development of Biblical thought that impacted most if not all of the New Testament authors. Among the most influential was the community at Qumran, located in the Dead Sea Region. Whether these were a sectarian Essene group or not doesn't change the fact that a large group of people denounced the corruption in Jerusalem, especially within the priesthood and decided they would leave or form a group of people who sought to obey Torah and the Prophets.
- B. In turn, they also began to write their own commentaries and develop theology using the material they had access to in their library. This included an old Hebrew text of the Old Testament (older than both the LXX Translation and the Masoretic Text). It also included material from 1 Enoch, and others. They also wrote extensively and added their own material to their library. Among these was a scroll found in Cave 11 called today 11QMelchizedek. This was written approximately 100 years before Jesus' incarnation.
- C. This is the text of 11QMelchizedek or 11Q13 Column II which is mostly, completely intact; remember, this is before any New Testament Gospel or Letter had been written:

Col. ii 1 [...] ... [...] 2 [...] And as for what he said: Lev 25:13 «In [this] year of jubilee, [you shall return, each one, to his respective property]», concerning it he said: Deut 15:2 «Th[is] is 3 [the manner of the release:] every creditor shall release what he lent [to his neighbour. He shall not coerce his neighbour or his brother, for it has been proclaimed] a release 4 for G[od]. Its interpretation] for the last days refers to the captives, who [...] and whose 5 teachers have been hidden and kept secret, and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, fo[r ...] ... and they are the inherita[nce of Melchize]dek, who 6 will make them return. And liberty will be proclaimed for them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities. And this [will] [happen] 7 in the first week of the jubilee which follows the ni[ne] jubilees. And the d[ay of aton]ement is the e[nd of] the tenth [ju]bilee 8 in which atonement shall be made for all the sons of [light and] for the men [of] the lot of Mel[chi]zedek. [...] ... over [the]m ... [...] accor[ding to] a[ll] their [wor]ks, for 9 it is the time for the «year of grace» of Melchizedek, and of [his] arm[ies, the nat]ion of the holy ones of God, of the rule of judgment, as is written 10 about him in the songs of David, who said: Ps 82:1 «Elohim will [st]and in the assem[bly of God,] in the midst of the gods he judges». And about him he sai[d: Ps 7:8-9 «And] above [it,] 11 to the heights, return: God will judge the peoples». As for what he sa[id: Ps 82:2 «How long will you] judge unjustly and show partia[lity] to the wicked? [Se]lah.» 12 Its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot, wh[o ...] turn[ing aside] from the commandments of God to [commit evil.] 13 But, Melchizedek will carry out the vengeance of Go[d's] judgments, [and on that day he will fr]e[e them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of his lot.] 14 To his aid (shall come) all «the gods of [justice]; and h[is] is the one w[ho ...] all the sons of God, and ... [...] 15 This [...] is the day of [peace about whi]ch he said [...] through Isa[iah] the prophet, who said: [Isa 52:7 «How] beautiful 16 upon the mountains are the feet [of] the messen[ger who] announces peace, the mess[enger of good who announces salvati]on, [sa]ying to Zion: your God [reigns.]] 17 Its interpretation: The mountains [are] the prophet[s ...] ... [...] for all ... [...] 18 And the messenger i[s] the anointed of the spir[it] as Dan[iel] said [about him: Dan 9:25 «Until an anointed, a prince, it is seven weeks.» And the messenger of] 19 good who announ[ces salvation] is the one about whom it is written that [...] 20 «To

comfo[rt] the [afflicted], its interpretation:] to instruct them in all the ages of the wo[rld ...] 21 in truth ... [...] ... [...] 22 [...] has turned away from Belial and will re[turn ...] ... [...] 23 [...] in the judgment[s of] God, as is written about him: [Isa 52:7 «Saying to Zi]on: your God rules.» [«Zi]on» i[s] 24 [the congregation of all the sons of justice, those] who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking [on the pa]th of the people. And «your God» is 25 [...] Melchizedek, who will fr[e]e them from the ha[nd] of Belial. And as for what he said: Lev 25:9 «You shall blow the hor[n in] all the [l]and of..

- D. The following is from the Journal of Biblical Literature, Merril P. Miller titled: The Function of Isa 61:1-2 in 11Q Melchizedek:

The fragmentary text designated 11Q Melch first published by A. S. van der Woude...has attracted attention because of the light it sheds on the eschatology of the Qumran community, particularly the central role ascribed to Melchizedek. There is, however, another interesting feature of the text which merits special comment and evaluation. It is the important function of Isa 61 1-2 in these fragments from Cave 11.

Citations from the Torah (Lev 25 13, Deut 15 2), the Prophets (Isa 52 7), and the Writings (Pss 82 1-2, 7 8-9) are quoted and commented upon in our document. In each case, the interpretive comments are related to Isa 61 1-2. Though it is never quoted at length, this latter passage stands behind our document and appears in the form of Stichworter [Cw: *headword, key point, key word/point, cue, cue*] at crucial points. In this way, it enables the community to attest the unity of the Scriptures which, in turn, find their meaning in the destiny of the community at the end of days.¹

The writer of the scroll gives his interpretation, presumably an indication of what of the community thought or was part of the discussion. His interpretation is related to *Leviticus 25:13* which is part of the greater Jubilee context of *Leviticus 25:1-22* which also speaks directly to the Sabbatical Land rest every 7 years. The 11Q Melch author also brings in *Deuteronomy 15:2* which also speaks of the Seventh Year release of debt. *At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother, because the LORD's release has been proclaimed.*

The pictures or *motifs* of release, restoration, ending of debt, and return to their land are placed in the context of the end of days or the end of the age which is described as the tenth and final jubilee. The captives to whom the final jubilee restoration is proclaimed are those referred to in *Isaiah 61:1-2*. This is shown in 11QMel line 6: *will make them return. And liberty will be proclaimed for them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities.*

This line is taking both *Leviticus 25:10* and *Isaiah 61:1* and connecting them to the key point: the eschatological theme of the jubilee year. This deliverance, ending of exile, release from debt, and return to the land is guaranteed by the defeat of Yahweh's enemies *Belial* (a Second Temple name for the Adversary Satan) and his *spirits*. This is the declaration from *Psalms 82:1-2* and *Psalms 7:8-9*. The one *standing in the midst of the gods* is (for this author of 11Q Mel) none other than Melchizedek himself.

¹ Miller, Merril P., The Function of Isa 61:1-2 in 11Q Melchizedek; *Journal of Biblical Literature*; Dec., 1969, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Dec., 1969), pp. 467-469

Additionally, jubilee, salvation and judgment are presented within the frame of “the year of the LORD’s favor” and “day of vengeance of our God.” Line 9 expressly states, “it is the time for the «year of grace» of Melchizedek, and of [his] arm[ies, the nat]ion of the holy ones of God”. Notice the writer says of Isaiah 61:1-2 that the *year of Yahweh’s favor* is recast as *the year of grace of Melchizedek*. So it is Melchizedek that is brining this End of Days Final Jubilee and execution of judgment on the enemies of Yahweh – Belial and his spirits.

The use of Isaiah 52 concerns the regathering of the exiles from the nations, specifically Babylon, which is set against the backdrop of the exile in Egypt and the return to the land of Promise in the Passover and is the New Exodus. Isaiah 52:7 is clear that this New Exodus is going to follow the message of *good news*, the one who declares *Your God Reigns!* Isaiah 52 and 61 are complementary of each other because the *One* declaring *good news* is the *One* who says, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor”, is the same *One* who said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke seemed to believe this was Yeshua the Messiah, King Jesus.

- E. This brief overview of 11Q Melchizedek (11Q13) shows what the historical and cultural background and thinking was concerning the themes of Isaiah 61, the Proclamation of the final Jubilee and the defeat of all of God’s enemies, which *sounds* like the core of Jesus’ Kingdom Message and the power/anointing and authority to do just this.

The Qumran author seemed to think it would be someone *other than* Yahweh Himself that would perform this proclamation and demonstration of end of days judgment and power over Belial/Satan and his spirits/angels. The only candidate sufficient from the Old Testament was found in Psalm 110:4 and Genesis 14:17-21 was Melchizedek.

- F. This is not without warrant because the one David saw in the Prophetic Oracle of Psalm 110 was greater than himself, seated at Yahweh’s right hand, a king that would rule and defeat the enemies of Yahweh and Israel. There was then *another* Person in heaven, at Yahweh’s Throne, Ruling and Reigning as King. This *other Divine Person* is cast in the *manner of* the Priest King Melchizedek. The author if 11QMel made the leap and said it *was* Melchizedek himself. He had the theology correct, just the wrong person.
- G. The 11QMel author also uses Daniel 9:25 to identify the messenger and one who defeats Belial. This is an obvious case for Daniel as a part of the Old Testament Canon with an early date.²

Therefore, the 490-year period is a “liminal” time, in which the city, sanctuary, and people experience a partial fulfillment of the divine promises and live in anticipation of the final fulfillment to come. In sum, the message of Gabriel responds to Daniel’s prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and its temple by

² There is a controversy on the dating of Daniel. Because of the supreme accuracy of events described in chapters 7-12, many liberal scholars date it *after* the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek empires into the Second Temple Period, around 165 BCE. This would put it around the same time as the Qumrani author citing that material. While it does not necessarily mean that is the only reason to discount the late date (they also cited 1 Enoch, written around the same time), the use of Daniel’s *timeline* for the end of exile was in focus as a truth well established. They knew the 70 years prophecy and the 490 years to complete the full experience of Atonement and the Final Jubilee. If it was the late date, perhaps that idea would be a matter of debate rather than a matter of source material to point to the Messianic Figure who would defeat Satan at the End of Days. Further, the use of Daniel 9 with Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy 15, Isaiah 52 and 61, Psalm 82 and 7, with other canonized Torah/Prophets Scriptures. - Cw

revealing the time frame during which God would fulfill the promise of Jer 29:10–14 to “restore the fortunes” of the Jerusalemites. Daniel’s urgent plea for the return of God’s favor to the city and sanctuary receives mixed consolation in Gabriel’s reply: the restoration would indeed take place, but over 490 years, i.e. ten jubilees. At the end of that period a brief but terrible crisis would directly precede the inauguration of the eschatological era.³

The fact that the “seventy weeks” of years may be interpreted as ten jubilee cycles has been widely recognized... (1) the passage is universally recognized as speaking of “weeks” of years, and the most explicit biblical precedent for the concept of a “week of years” is found in Lev 25:8, which concerns the calculation of the jubilee year, (2) the author also seems to assume the interpretation of Jeremiah’s “seventy years” as missed sabbatical years as per 2 Chron 26:21, which establishes a link with Lev 25:1–7 and 26:34–35,64 and (3) the Day-of-Atonement imagery in the text, such as the reference to “atonement for iniquity” (Dan 9:24), is also relevant, since the jubilee was proclaimed on [the day after] the Day of Atonement... Ten jubilees constitute a period of quintessential completeness: ten, somewhat like the number seven, symbolizes wholeness, completeness, integrity.⁶⁸ It may be significant that the Day of Atonement, on which the jubilee was proclaimed, fell on the tenth day of the seventh month. At the end of the period of ten jubilees, then, all will be complete: sin will be finished, iniquity atoned for, and “eternal righteousness” ushered in (Dan 9:24).⁴

H. Bergsma continues,

Finally, one must note that in Dan 9, as in Isa 61, the coming of the eschatological jubilee is associated with the coming of a messiah. Several different aspects of Dan 9:24–27 lend themselves to messianic interpretation. For example, the climactic infinitive phrase describing the purpose of the “seventy weeks” in v. 24 is “to anoint a holy of holies.” While [Heb. word] is usually taken to mean the temple, the phrase is ambiguous and could be taken to refer to a messianic figure.⁷² Furthermore, vv. 25–27 mention one or two messiahs: if one follows the readings of the ancient versions, then a messiah appears after sixty-nine weeks (v. 25) and is soon “cut off” in the desolation of the seventieth week (v. 26).⁷³ According to the mt, a messiah appears after seven weeks (v. 25), i.e. at the end of the first jubilee; and a presumably different messiah is cut off after 62 weeks (v. 26a).⁷⁴ Under either reading the “cutting off” of the messiah is an important event in the seventieth week, the desolations of which usher in the eschatological jubilee year. What happens to the messiah after the seventieth year is not said, but presumably he is restored or replaced in the ensuing restoration of the nation.

Thus, we see the association of messiah and jubilee in Dan 9, just as was seen in the texts of Isaiah explored earlier. William H. Brownlee, in fact, suggests that Dan 9 reflects a certain reading of Isa 52:13–53:12, particularly 52:14–15, according to which there is a play on the words (“anointed”) and (“marred” or “destroyed”).⁷⁵ It is striking that Dan 9:26 can be read: “The messiah will be cut off and have nothing; and the city and sanctuary will be destroyed (in Isa 52:14) [together] with the coming prince [i.e. the messiah].”⁷⁶ If the Isaianic “servant of the Lord” is identified with the “anointed one” of Isa 61 (facilitated by e.g. Isa 42:1), and Isa 52:14–53:13 is read together with Isa 61:1–9, one is struck by the similarity of themes to those of Dan 9:24–27: a messiah who suffers and/or dies, atonement for sin,

³ Bergsma, John S. (2006), *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation*. Brill. p. 225

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 225–227

restoration of Jerusalem, the overcoming of “desolations,” and an eschatological jubilee for God’s people.⁷⁷ It seems that Brownlee may be correct in suggesting that Dan 9:24–27 does display some reflection on relevant Isaianic passages concerning the “servant of the Lord”/“anointed one”; but even if such reflection was not in the mind of the author of Daniel, the exegetical associations between Daniel and Isaiah were ripe and ready to be picked by later readers, as we shall see in our study of 11QMelch...

I. He summarizes his point here:

In Dan 9, the prophet Daniel is portrayed as “understanding” the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the “seventy years” of Babylon’s dominance and Jerusalem’s “desolation.” Seeing that Babylon’s dominance is over, and thus that the seventy years must be at or near their end, the prophet offers a prayer of repentance to God in fulfillment of the requisite conditions for the restoration of Jerusalem as stipulated in Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer 29:12–13) and the relevant passages of the Torah (Lev 26:39–42, Deut 30:1–4). In response to his prayer, the angel Gabriel appears to inform Daniel that the promised restoration of the city and its people will take place over a period of “seventy weeks” of years, or ten jubilees. Possibly after the first jubilee, a messianic figure will appear, and near the end of the tenth, one will be “cut off.” The seventh or “sabbath” week of the tenth jubilee will witness a “sabbath rest” of “desolation” on the city, people, and messiah. Their ensuing restoration in the 491st year (i.e. year of the eschatological jubilee) is not described but is implied by the hopeful descriptions of the “seventy week” period in v. 24.

Daniel 9, like certain passages of Isaiah (e.g. Isa 61), associates the coming of a messiah with the inauguration of a jubilee for Jerusalem and its people. The “cutting off” of the messiah in Dan 9:26 accords well with readings of Isaiah which identify the “anointed one” of e.g. Isa 61:1 with the suffering “servant of the Lord” of Isa 52:13–53:12. These parallels would be exploited in later Second Temple exegesis.⁵

- J. What does all of this mean then? 11Q Melchizedek means what to us? It is clear a group of people gathered in a community to fast and pray. They had recognized the state of the priesthood in Jerusalem was not what was found in Torah. The Priesthood was corrupt beyond reform, so the people formed a community in the Dead Sea and created a place to study and pray. The caves of Qumran served as a library and a place to read, study, meditate, pray, etc.
- K. This was one-to-two hundred years *before* Jesus’ ministry and His proclaiming Jubilee to His people. Before the Great Yom Kippur in His sacrificial atonement. Before He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at His Father’s right hand, thus fulfilling Psalm 110, at least in part.
- L. We see then the development of a theme within the 2TP where a group of literate and prayerful *theologians* began to see truths running through the Biblical narrative that would end with a Melchizedek figure (in their case, Melchizedek himself!) ending the exile in a New Exodus, defeating Satan and his angels at the great eschatological end of days war. This corresponded with 1QM, the War Scroll, *The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*⁶ (see Matthew 13:36–43 for another clear influence on New Testament authors (Matthew and Mark))

⁵ Para H., I., *ibid.* pp. 230–231

⁶ <http://web.tusculum.edu/church/pdf/tir/2016/Important%20Texts/War%20Scroll.pdf>

- M. Within the Second Temple Period Jesus was born (the 2 Temple was standing during His ministry). It was destroyed within a generation of His Resurrection and Ascension. (33 CE (AD) – 70 CE (AD), some 37 years). This was a clear picture of Yahweh's divine intervention of removing the earthly pattern because the real had now come. This influenced the write of Hebrews to write extensively about the comparison between Jesus and Melchizedek. With one major difference: ³...*but resembling the Son of God* (Heb. 7:3).
- N. Hebrews 7 brings together the scope of 11Q Melchizedek and Luke 4 and the Inauguration of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. It bridges the gap between Genesis 14, Psalm 110 and the New Testament and provides the theological basis for Matthew, Mark, and Luke's accounts of Jesus behaving in a way that is cast in the mold of the *Other Person* found in the Old Testament that acted, looked like, spoke for, and appeared as Yahweh Himself. The 2TP Qumrani author thought it was Melchizedek. The New Testament reveals Him to be none other than Jesus the Messiah.

Jubilee Cycles	Regular Year Weeks Actual year ranges in italics: (1-7) Jubilee years in bold: 50						Sabbath Weeks
1	Week 1 <i>(Yrs. 1-7)</i>	2 <i>(8-14)</i>	3 <i>(15-21)</i>	4 <i>(22-28)</i>	5 <i>(29-35)</i>	6 <i>(66-42)</i>	7 <i>(43-49)</i>
2	8 <i>(50-56)</i>	9 <i>(57-63)</i>	10 <i>(64-70)</i>	11 <i>(71-77)</i>	12 <i>(78-84)</i>	13 <i>(85-91)</i>	14 <i>(92-98)</i>
3	15 <i>(99-105)</i>	16 <i>(106-12)</i>	17 <i>(113-19)</i>	18 <i>(120-26)</i>	19 <i>(127-33)</i>	20 <i>(134-40)</i>	21 <i>(141-47)</i>
4	22 <i>(148-54)</i>	23 <i>(155-61)</i>	24 <i>(162-68)</i>	25 <i>(169-75)</i>	26 <i>(176-82)</i>	27 <i>(183-89)</i>	28 <i>(190-96)</i>
5	29 <i>(197-203)</i>	30 <i>(204-10)</i>	31 <i>(211-17)</i>	32 <i>(218-24)</i>	33 <i>(225-31)</i>	34 <i>(232-38)</i>	35 <i>(239-45)</i>
6	36 <i>(246-52)</i>	37 <i>(253-59)</i>	38 <i>(260-66)</i>	39 <i>(267-73)</i>	40 <i>(274-80)</i>	41 <i>(281-87)</i>	42 <i>(288-94)</i>
7	43 <i>(295-301)</i>	44 <i>(302-8)</i>	45 <i>(309-15)</i>	46 <i>(316-22)</i>	47 <i>(323-29)</i>	48 <i>(330-36)</i>	49 <i>(337-43)</i>
8	50 <i>(344-50)</i>	51 <i>(351-57)</i>	52 <i>(358-64)</i>	53 <i>(365-71)</i>	54 <i>(372-78)</i>	55 <i>(379-85)</i>	56 <i>(386-92)</i>
9	57 <i>(393-99)</i>	58 <i>(400-406)</i>	59 <i>(407-13)</i>	60 <i>(414-20)</i>	61 <i>(421-27)</i>	62 <i>(428-34)</i>	63 <i>(435-41)</i>
10	64 <i>(442-48)</i>	65 <i>(449-55)</i>	66 <i>(456-62)</i>	67 <i>(463-69)</i>	68 <i>(470-76)</i>	69 <i>(477-83)</i>	70 <i>(484-90)</i>
<i>Year 491, the 50th Year of 10th Jubilee Cycle: The Tenth or “Eschatological” Jubilee and the inauguration of the final age</i>							

Figure 7.1. Daniel's Seventy Weeks of Years in Jubilary Perspective

Each row above is a jubilee cycle, a "week of weeks." The seventh "week" of each "week of weeks" is in a certain sense a "sabbath" week. It is on the tenth "sabbath" week, i.e. the seventieth week, that the ultimate "desolation" is poured out on Jerusalem and its people (Dan 9:26).⁶⁹ We would argue that there is a certain appro-