

Welcome to week 2 of Easter Eggs. No, we're not talking about dying eggs or filling plastic eggs with candy. No, we're talking about a different kind of Easter egg, little clues hidden in plain sight in a movie, video game or in music that points us to something else.

Last week, I gave you a famous movie Easter egg, so this morning I want to share a famous Easter egg from the world of music. This one is courtesy of the Beatles in their song Strawberry Fields Forever. During the song's outro, just before the music fades out completely, many fans thought they could hear John saying faintly, "I buried Paul."

When this apparent Easter egg was combined with several other supposed hidden messages, the Paul is dead conspiracy theory was born. The story goes that on November 9th 1966, Paul McCartney was tragically killed in a car crash on his way home from the studio. The Beatles decided to conceal the truth and replaced Paul with the winner of a lookalike contest. However, they began leaving clues to the truth throughout their music.

However, if you listen to a quality release of the song played on good HiFi equipment, it is revealed that what John really says is "cranberry sauce." But people loved a good conspiracy even in the 60s before the internet. What John actually whispers at the end of Strawberry Fields is still hotly debated, but Paul McCartney is still very much alive.

The Bible also contains Easter eggs. The Old Testament is filled with thinly veiled signs that point to Jesus. God foreshadowed His plan. Jesus even acknowledges this, explaining to his disciples in Luke 24:44 *"Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."* One kind of Easter egg that we find in the Bible are prophecies, and the Old Testament contains around 300 messianic prophecies that are all fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus. We looked at one of those last week.

Type Casting

This morning, we're going to look at a different kind Easter egg called a type. A type is a particular kind of prophetic symbolism, found in the scriptures where a character or event in the Old Testament corresponds with a counterpart, called the antitype, found in the New Testament. A type is a case of a picture being worth a thousand words. Just as a typewriter leaves an impression of a letter on the paper, a biblical type leaves an impression the person and work of Jesus.

Understanding these types and their respective antitypes is a field of study called typology. Typology isn't bible scholars making stuff up or finding things that aren't really there, like hearing "Paul is dead", when really what it says in "cranberry sauce." It's a concept that comes right out of the Bible.

It comes from the Greek words *tupos* and *antitupon* – type and antitype. In Romans 5:14, Paul declares that Adam was a *pattern*, or *tupos*– a type of the one to come. 1 Peter 3:21 tells us

that baptism corresponds, that is *antitupon*, literally the antitype of Noah's flood water.

The book of Hebrews which contains references to multiple types says in Hebrews 10:1 that these Old Testament types are *"only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves."* Hebrews 8:5 tells us that the tabernacle in the Old Testament *"is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven."* Paul writes in Colossians 2:16-17 referring to Old Testament rituals, *"These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however is found in Christ."* The New Testament contains the substance. The Old Testament contains the shadow.

The Story of Melchizedek

The Bible has a number of these types and their corresponding antitypes. This morning we want to look at one of these types found in the book of Genesis, and how it points us to Jesus. Melchizedek is one of the most mysterious figures in the Bible. He appears very briefly in the story of Abraham. We know very little about him. We don't know where he came from, or where he went. As quickly as he appears in Genesis 14, he just as quickly disappears.

This story happens after Abraham has moved to the land of Canaan with his nephew Lot. Abraham and Lot had a bit of a disagreement. Both were wealthy men. Together, they formed this huge entourage, with all their flocks, tents and employees. Lot's people started fighting with Abraham's people. Your sheep are drinking our water. Your goats are eating our grass. Genesis 13:6 says, *"But the land could not support them while they stayed together."*

So Abraham gives Lot first choice in the land he wants and Abraham will go the other direction. Lot selfishly chooses what looks like the better land and he settles in a fertile valley near the Dead Sea. Abraham instead heads for the hill country of Canaan.

Before long, Lot finds himself embroiled in regional politics. There was an Elamite king named Kedorlaomer that was oppressing the region, raiding the various city states and forcing them to pay taxes and tribute. Finally, several of these vassal kings had had enough, so they allied together and went to war with Kedorlaomer and the kings still allied with him. Two of the five cities involved in this uprising will sound familiar. They were Sodom and Gomorrah.

Of course, Sodom was where Lot settled with family. In this battle of the nine kings, Sodom, Gomorrah, and friends got their rear ends handed to them by Kedorlaomer. It was a complete rout. Their armies turned and fled. A bunch of them fell into tar pits, what literally in the Hebrew is called the pit pits. The rest fled into the hills of the surrounding wilderness.

In the midst of all the pillaging and plundering that took place in the aftermath of this great stampede, we read the following in Genesis 14:11-12:

The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

One of the men who escaped capture, came and reported what happened to Abraham. Now, Abraham is surely a better man than I, because after what Lot had pulled earlier, I would be tempted to say, "That sure stinks for him. That'll teach him." He could have left Lot to suffer the consequences of his selfish choices, but he didn't.

Abraham takes it upon himself to go rescue Lot. He gathers a force of 318 trained men and they take off after those who had captured Lot. They pursued the enemy as far as 240 miles in one direction, clear to the other end of the country. That's further than from here to Tulsa, all on foot.

Abraham divides his troops and executes a surprise attack in the middle of the night. His tactic works and he overwhelmingly defeats the four kings, chasing them as far as Damascus in modern day Syria. Not only do they rescue Lot and all of the captives from Sodom, he recovers all their stolen loot as well.

Abraham then comes back to return all the people and plunder to the king of Sodom, when this mysterious figure of Melchizedek appears. Here's what we read in Genesis 14:17-20:

17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying,

*"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.*

*20 And praise be to God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand."*

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

More to Melchizedek than Meets the Eye

That's it. His name is only mentioned once. He appears out of nowhere, serves bread and wine (does that sound familiar?), speaks two sentences, receives a tithe and then disappears. He has no other part in the story. We know almost nothing about him. By all rights, he should be a final question in Bible jeopardy. He would be an almost complexly forgotten footnote in the pages of the Bible if it were not for two things.

Melchizedek in the Psalms

A thousand years after Abraham, David is inspired to write Psalm 110. It's significant because it is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. Verse 1 alone is quoted 7 times. Altogether Psalm 110 is referenced 27 times. It's a messianic Psalm that foretells of the ascension of Jesus who sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father and his return at the end of the age. Jesus himself quotes this Psalm and applies it to himself.

Right in the middle verse of Psalm 110's 7 verses we read this, "*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'*" Whoa! Wait a minute. What does that mean? Jesus will be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek? Melchizedek is a guy that appears for 3 verses in the first book in the Bible. He's not mentioned for another thousand years, and now he suddenly pops up again! What makes him so special?

Melchizedek in Hebrews

Melchizedek doesn't get mentioned again for another thousand years. This time it's in the New Testament book of Hebrews where he's mentioned nine times in three chapters and he is compared directly to Jesus. The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were tempted to go back to their Old Testament ways. It was written to convince them that Jesus and this new covenant of grace was superior in every way to the Law of Moses.

In Hebrews, the Holy Spirit makes the case that Jesus is greater. Jesus is greater than the angels. Jesus is greater than Moses. Jesus is greater than Abraham. Jesus provides a greater rest. Jesus gives us a greater covenant. Hebrews makes the case for all these things. In the heart of the letter, Hebrews tells us Jesus is a greater kind of priest who offers a greater sacrifice.

Some of you may have grown up in faith traditions that had priests of one sort or another. I don't know what you think of when you think of a priest, whether it's someone with a funny color, or the Old Testament kind of priest that wore a breast plate with precious stones and a funny hat. But think of the essence of what a priest is. A priest is someone who serves as a go-between, a mediator between God and people. We need a priest because we need someone to build a bridge to God. A prophet represented God before the people. A priest represented the people before God.

Of course, Israel had a line of priests who served in the tabernacle and later the temple. This was an inherited role, something passed down from Moses' brother, Aaron to his descendants through the generations. They offered sacrifices. They performed various rites around the temple. They led the people in prayer, and taught them God's law.

But this priesthood often fell far short of what they were supposed to be. Even Aaron himself helped lead the people in building a golden calf to worship instead of God. Other priests offered improper sacrifices. Later priests even allowed idols to be set up in the holy sanctuary.

But Jesus is a better kind of priest. All human priests, whether the descendants of Aaron or the priests of any church are inadequate because of their own sin. They are failed and flawed priests. Only a perfect priest can truly stand before a perfect God. The author of Hebrews says that Jesus is our great high priest, our ultimate go-between who intercedes for us before God. He quotes Psalm 110 saying Jesus was a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, and he expands on that idea in Hebrews 7:1-4,

This 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, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” 3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

A King and Priest

Hebrews draws meaning from the few things we know about Melchizedek, and from what we don't know. First is that Melchizedek was both a king and a priest at the same time. Kings in Israel were not also priests. Those were two separate offices. God never intended Israel to have a king except for himself. The priesthood of Aaron had no political authority or power. They were spiritual leaders not civil authorities.

Later, when God did concede to Israel having an earthly king, the king got in real trouble if he tried to fill the role of a priest. When King Saul dared to offer a sacrifice, the kingdom was stripped from him. Centuries later, King Uzziah, an otherwise good king, allowed his pride to get the best of him, and he entered the temple to burn incense. That was a duty specifically given to the priests. King Uzziah was confronted by the High Priest Azariah and 80 other courageous priests. It's not right for you to be doing this. Uzziah got so angry he was going to throw the smoldering incense burner at Azariah, but God struck him with leprosy before he could do so.

Kings and priests had separate roles. They were to stay in their own lane. But we have this mysterious figure who is both the King of Salem and a priest of the Most High God. Jesus, like Melchizedek, is both king and priest. He is the King of Kings who reigns on the throne of thrones. As declared by every creature in heaven in Revelation 5, *“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”* He is the final authority. He is the ultimate power. He is the first in line and has the last word.

But he's not just the King. He is our faithful high priest who understands us on every level and loves us enough to represent us before God. He knows what you're going through, because he's been through it himself. He's suffered. He's been teased and taunted. He's had friends abandon him. He knows what it's like to be lonely, to be tired, to be hungry, to be anxious, to be afraid. He's faced all of that and more. And yet now He sits at the right hand of the Father, and He pleads our case before God. He is our ultimate high priest who opens the way to God.

Abraham Gives a Tithe (10 Percent)

The second thing Hebrews makes a big deal about is that Abraham offers Melchizedek a tithe, a tenth of all the plunder. Interestingly, the King of Sodom, offers to let Abraham keep the plunder for himself as long as he returns all the people, but Abraham refuses, insisting that he swore an oath to God to take nothing that didn't belong to him, but Abraham does give a tithe

to Melchizedek. This means Abraham recognized that Melchizedek represented a higher authority, and the plunder belonged for to Him, before it belonged to the King of Sodom.

Ultimately the offering is given to God. It's an acknowledgment that God gave him the victory. Just like when you give your tithes and offerings at church. Ultimately it's a gift to God. At least that's what it should be. You're not just giving to an organization. It's more than a charitable 501c3 contribution. It's not about supporting a particular ministry or project, or a measure of my job approval. The focus of your heart is to give it to God, to thank Him for His blessings in your life, as an expression of trust that He will take care of you, and to ask Him to do more with it, and with all of our offerings together than we could do separately on our own.

What's In A Name

Next, the author of Hebrews draws attention to the meaning of names and titles. First, the name Melchizedek translates as king of righteousness. Who is the ultimate king of righteousness? Jesus. He is the master of all that is right, that which is true, that which is pure and holy, an expert in all that is good in every way. That's my Jesus! Have you met him?

He is something we could never be on our own. We have such a strained relationship with righteousness— never measuring up. Always falling short. More often than not we bumble even the good things we try to do. The rest of the time we just make a mess of things. But not Jesus.

We are not righteous and we never will be on our own. This is something we know deep down all too well, or it is something we deny long past the point of there being any question. We arrogantly pretend to be better than we are. We disguise our faults as something else. We claim victories never won. Only a King of Righteousness has any hope of turning us around. That's my Jesus!

Melchizedek is also the King of Salem which means king of peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace who now sits on the throne. Jesus promised His disciples and he promises us, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* The apostle Paul assures us in Philippians 4:7 *"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Jesus promises us a transformative, inner peace. It's a peace that doesn't come from the outside, but a tranquility that blossoms from the heart. It's a peace that is beyond description and beyond any words of explanation. It transcends all understanding. It doesn't get any more relevant than this. We live in a world that is defined by a lack of peace. And I'm not even talking about Russia and Ukraine. I don't mean Israel and the Gaza strip. I'm talking about a lack of mental peace that has 50 million of us in the grip of a mental health crisis. I'm talking about a lack of emotional tranquility that's led the American Psychological Association to declare that Gen Z adults and younger millennials are "completely overwhelmed" by stress.

Those of us that are Gen X or Boomers can pontificate and speculate all we want about what's wrong with the younger generations, but the fact is something is wrong. They have no inner peace. It's not just a particular generation. It's even worse in the next generation coming up behind them, and the numbers are climbing in older generations as well. We are losing our ability to handle the stress of ordinary life. We've lost our grip on reality. We're all on meds. We're all labeled with something. We are broken. We are not healthy. We are not happy. Something has gone terribly wrong.

When will we figure out that the ultimate answer is not in more government funding, a new program in our schools, talking about our problems on a therapist's couch, or the development of a new pill. All of these things are Band-Aids at best. They have their place and purpose, but when will we figure out that what we need is the King of Peace. The one who has the power to not only heal our broken relationship with the Father, but also heal all the brokenness within us? Only when we learn to cast all of our anxieties on the broad, strong shoulders of the King of Peace will we ever find the lasting peace that truly satisfies the soul. Have you met my Jesus?

The Eternal One

Finally, the Holy Spirit draws an analogy from Genesis doesn't tell us. We don't know where Melchizedek came from. We have no clue what happens to him afterward. There's no record of his genealogy. We don't know the names of his parents. There is no epitaph. No mention of where he is buried, or even that he died.

Hebrews says this "resembles" the Son of God without beginning of days or end of life. Jesus is the Eternal One. Someone without a tombstone that lists a birth date and a date of death with a dash in the middle. Jesus' life is just the dash – a line that goes on forever. All Jesus left behind was an empty tomb. He has always been and will forever be. That's my Jesus. Do you know Him?

If you're thinking, "Wait a minute! What about Christmas, Bethlehem and the shepherds? Jesus was born." Remember, He was born only in his human form, but the divine Son has existed eternally in heaven before with the Father. As the Bible declares, He is from everlasting to everlasting. In the beginning, He already was there. He is the beginning and the end. He is the alpha and omega, the A to Z. Unlike any other priest or king, Jesus is eternal.

Come to Jesus, the only eternal King that has the power to save you and the only priest who is pure enough to have the right to save you. Jesus is greater than Melchizedek. Jesus is greater than any man. There is no other wise man who can ponder his ways, no guru who can describe his majesty. There is no scholar who can study his wisdom, nor a single scientist who can discover the source of his power. There is no religious leader who can match his purity. There is Jesus and only Jesus. Jesus is better than anyone or anything. Have you met Him? Is He your Lord and Savior? He can be. He wants to be, if you'll let Him.