

Melchizedek and Benedict the 16th

Commentary for January 1, 2011 — A Priest-King and a Pope

What do the priest-king Melchizedek and Pope Benedict the 16th have in common? Actually, they have little in common except that both are subjects of this Commentary.

Melchizedek

Melchizedek is the topic of my article this month that is titled "Who Was Melchizedek?" Read the "[January 2011 Newsletter](#)" before you dig into the article. The scriptural evidence allows us to come to a conclusion as to the identity of this mysterious individual first mentioned in Genesis chapter 14. Then we can know who that individual is today, his name, where he resides, and what his future will be. Even though Melchizedek is first mentioned in the time of Abram in Genesis, his role as a priest-king is of great relevance to us today and in our future.

A king's role is one of service if he rules justly and with righteousness. The role of a priest is one of mediator between deity and man. Melchizedek fulfilled both rolls completely.

Pope Benedict the 16th

The current Pope Benedict presented an unusual message on BBC Radio to the people of the United Kingdom in particular, although its message was intended for all English speaking peoples around the world on December 24, 2010. Read the transcript of his message, and hear his words at the BBC webpage: "[Pope's Radio 4 Thought for the Day message in full.](#)"

This was not the Pope's annual message of blessing the peoples of the world. That came the next day from a balcony at the Vatican in Rome. Nor did he take the opportunity of this broadcast to discuss the scandals that confront the Catholic Church. Neither did he discuss points of the doctrines of how to live as Christians.

What is unusual about his message was that Pope Benedict the 16th taught the doctrine of universal salvation of all mankind through Christ. This indicates a continuing radical shift in Roman Catholic teaching, as the institution stumbles toward at least one biblical truth. Of course, he gave only a 2¾ minute message, but the little he said demonstrated an unmistakable promotion and understanding of universal salvation through Christ.

Note this: **"God is always faithful to his promises, but he often surprises us in the way he fulfills them."** This is certainly a true statement, but this sets the stage for more:

"The child that was born in Bethlehem did indeed bring liberation, but not only for the people of that time and place — he was to be the Saviour of all people throughout the world and throughout history.

And it was not a political liberation that he brought, achieved through military means: rather, Christ destroyed death for ever and restored life by means of his shameful death on the Cross."

This is fascinating, and it is a very strong statement of universal salvation through Christ. Note the important points he makes, that Christ was:

- **“the Saviour of all people”**
- [the Saviour of all people] **“throughout the world and ...”**
- [the Saviour of all people] **“throughout history.”**
- **“Christ destroyed death for ever and ...”**
- [Christ] **restored life ...”**

The Pope said that Christ did this **“by means of his shameful death on the Cross.”** This is only partially true. Jesus’ crucifixion alone did not destroy death, nor did it restore life. The resurrection of Christ did both. True, the crucifixion played an important role in removing the sin of mankind individually and collectively, but removing sin is not enough.

Christ’s resurrection, His righteousness during His time on earth (in flesh and after His resurrection), His role as High Priest and Mediator before God the Father on behalf of every individual, all together form a more complete reason death will be destroyed and life restored for **“all people throughout the world and throughout history.”**

This public statement to the English speaking world reinforces Vatican statements, actions, and publications over the past several decades. It particularly reinforces the book *Jesus Christ: Salvation of All* by Archbishop Luis F. Ladaria.¹ Within the Catholic Church the Archbishop holds the position of Secretary of the Congregation of the Defense of the Faith, an organization known in prior times as “the Inquisition.” When he was elected as Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger was Prefect of the Congregation of the Defense of the Faith. The Pope appointed Archbishop Ladaria to his present position in 2008 and they agree on universal salvation, as evidenced by the Pope’s own words.

As I write in my analysis of Ladaria’s work [see footnote], I believe that the Catholic Church is promoting universal salvation through Christ to try to save the institutional and corporate hierarchical church, which is in danger of collapsing. This may be a tactic for survival. Pope Benedict 16th is possibly the most accomplished doctrinal and biblical scholar to ever hold that high post. He knows exactly what he is saying — every carefully phrased word.

Upon Reconsideration ...

I suppose that there is one concept which both Melchizedek and the current Pope have in common — they both know and understand very well the same biblical information about the destiny of mankind. Both know that the universal salvation of mankind is a major teaching of the Bible, and both seem to understand that universal salvation through the risen Christ is not a mere wish, but a future reality.

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¹ See my analysis of Ladaria’s book in my article [“Modern Recognition of Universal Salvation.”](#)