

**Melchizedek Podcast**  
**Literary structures**

**1) Understanding the Literary Context**

**a) Based on the Silences of Genesis**

- i) The writer of Hebrews is interpreting **Melchizedek as he appears in Genesis 14**, where he briefly blesses Abraham. In that account:
  - (1) No genealogy is given.
  - (2) No record of birth or death is mentioned.
  - (3) No succession or priestly line is traced.
  - (4) This *lack of recorded origin or conclusion* is **not** because Melchizedek is eternal, but because **Genesis simply does not include those details**. This omission becomes significant in the typological argument of Hebrews.

**2) Typology, Not Ontology**

- a) The author is making a **literary and theological point**—Melchizedek, by virtue of **how he appears in Scripture**, is a type or symbol of Jesus:
  - i) Jesus, like Melchizedek, is a priest not by **genealogical lineage** (like the Levitical priesthood), but by **divine appointment**.
  - ii) Melchizedek's priesthood is **presented as timeless** in the Genesis narrative—not because he *is* timeless, but because the narrative **constructs him that way**.
  - iii) This is why the writer says: **“he resembles the Son of God”** (Hebrews 7:3)—he is not the Son, but a figure **made to look like him in literary pattern**.

**3) Ancient Jewish Literary Technique**

- a) This type of interpretation was **common in Second Temple Judaism**. It's called **midrashic interpretation**—drawing theological meaning from what is both said and unsaid in Scripture. Hebrews follows this method by drawing meaning not only from what Genesis says, but from what it *omits*.

**4) Contrast with Christ**

- a) To further clarify, note the structure:
  - i) Melchizedek: **“resembles the Son of God”** (v. 3)
  - ii) Jesus: **truly is** the eternal Son, whose priesthood is confirmed by **divine oath** (v. 21) and whose resurrection life is proof of an **indestructible life** (v. 16)
- b) So the logic is this:
  - i) Melchizedek's lack of genealogy **foreshadows** Jesus' priesthood, which is *not* based on lineage (as with Levi).
  - ii) Jesus, unlike Melchizedek, **actually is** eternal.

**5) Summary of the Argument**

- a) **Melchizedek's Genesis account omits origin and death**.
  - i) Hebrews uses this omission **as a literary device** to establish a symbolic picture of eternal priesthood.
  - ii) He is **not eternal in reality**, but functions as a **type** of the eternal Christ.
  - iii) Jesus **fulfills** this type—He truly is the eternal high priest, not symbolically, but in substance.

**6) Why This Matters**

- a) Misreading Hebrews 7:3 as saying Melchizedek was literally eternal or a divine being can lead to confusion, such as:
  - i) Claiming Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (a Christophany)—which the text does **not** say.

- ii) Confusing typology with identity.
  - b) But understanding the **literary context and method** keeps us grounded:
    - i) Hebrews reads Scripture typologically—especially the silences.
    - ii) It shows how **the structure of biblical narrative itself** points to Christ.
    - iii) It teaches that **Jesus alone is truly eternal**, while Melchizedek is a *shadow* that helps us see Him more clearly.
- 7) Linguistic and Grammatical clues
- a) **"ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος" – "Without father, without mother, without genealogy"**
    - i) These rare Greek terms are:
      - (1) ἀπάτωρ (*apatōr*) – "without father"
      - (2) ἀμήτωρ (*amētōr*) – "without mother"
      - (3) ἀγενεαλόγητος (*agenealogētos*) – "without genealogy"
        - (a) These words **do not imply that Melchizedek never had a father or mother in real life**, but that his **genealogy is not recorded** in Scripture.
        - (b) These terms are used **rhetorically** to describe how Melchizedek appears in the Genesis narrative—not as a metaphysical statement about his being.
        - (c) In ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, to be "without genealogy" often meant **your ancestry wasn't recorded or emphasized**, not that you had none. This is especially significant since **Levitical priesthods were deeply genealogical**, but Melchizedek's priesthood **is not**—a key contrast the author is highlighting.
  - b) **Present tense verb: "μένει" (menei) – "he remains a priest"**
    - i) "But resembling the Son of God, **he remains a priest perpetually.**" (Hebrews 7:3)
      - (1) The Greek verb μένει (*menei*) is present tense—"he remains." This tense is commonly used to describe **what is presented in the biblical text**, not an ongoing reality outside the text. In other words:
        - (2) Melchizedek **"remains" a priest** in Scripture because we never see his priesthood end.
        - (3) The author is **commenting on the literary presentation**, not claiming that Melchizedek is currently serving as a priest in heaven.
        - (4) This use of the **historical present** (a common narrative device in Greek) supports a typological, not literal, interpretation.
  - c) **"ἀφομοιωμένος" (aphomoiōmenos) – "Made like" or "Resembling"**
    - i) This participle appears in:
      - (1) "But **resembling** the Son of God, he remains a priest forever." (Hebrews 7:3)
        - (a) ἀφομοιωμένος (*aphomoiōmenos*) comes from *aphomoiōō* – "to make like," "to resemble."
        - (b) This verb implies a **likeness**, not **identity**.
        - (c) In other words, **Melchizedek is made to resemble Christ in how the story is told**, not in being or nature. If the author wanted to say that Melchizedek *was* the Son of God, a different construction (such as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν) would have been used. But instead, the resemblance is **one-directional and literary**.
  - d) **Contextual Linguistics: Midrashic and Typological Style**
    - i) The entire argument in Hebrews 7 uses **Jewish midrash-style reasoning**, which often:
      - (1) **Draws significance from omissions or narrative patterns.**
      - (2) Emphasizes **how Scripture presents a figure**, not necessarily who that figure actually was

- (3) This approach is consistent with Jewish interpretive methods of the time. Hebrews is using a **literary analogy**, not asserting a metaphysical identity or eternal being in Melchizedek.

## 8) Literary Devices in the Bible: Figurative Language and Structures

- a) The Bible often speaks in metaphorical and symbolic language. For instance, Psalm 18:2 says “The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer.” A strictly literal reading would imagine God as an actual rock or castle, but every Israelite knew this was *metaphorical*—a way to express God’s strength and protection. Similarly, Jesus’ parables and teachings frequently use figures of speech. A faithful interpretation asks, “What did the original author mean?” rather than insisting on the most obvious literal image. Misreading genre and device can lead to absurd conclusions (e.g. thinking God physically has a hand and mustered armies of burning fire), whereas understanding figures of speech preserves the intended meaning.

### b) Hyperbole (Exaggeration for Emphasis)

- i) Definition: Exaggerated statements used to make a strong point.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Matthew 5:29–30 – *“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off...”*

(2) Explanation:

Jesus is using hyperbole to stress the seriousness of sin and the need to remove sources of temptation. It’s not a literal command to mutilate oneself, but a forceful way of saying “Take sin seriously.”

### c) Metaphor

- i) Definition: A figure of speech where a word or phrase is applied to an object or action not literally applicable.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) John 6:53–56 – *“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you...”*

(2) Explanation:

Some took Jesus literally, leading to confusion (John 6:60–66). But this metaphor refers to internalizing Christ—his life, teaching, and sacrifice—not literal cannibalism. The language points to spiritual union, especially through faith and communion.

### d) Anthropomorphism

- i) Definition: Attributing human characteristics to God.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Genesis 6:6 – *“And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth...”*

(2) Explanation:

God is described as “regretting” or “repenting” to help humans understand divine actions. God doesn’t change his mind like a human (Numbers 23:19); this is literary accommodation—describing God in human terms to express sorrow over sin.

### e) Symbolism

- i) Definition: Using symbols to represent deeper spiritual truths.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Revelation 13:1 – *“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea...”*

(2) Explanation:

Apocalyptic literature is filled with symbolic imagery. The “beast” isn’t a literal sea creature—it symbolizes a powerful, oppressive empire or ruler. Taking this literally distorts the prophetic nature of the book.

## f) Poetry

i) Definition: Artistic expression often using parallelism, imagery, and emotion rather than strict literal meaning.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Psalm 91:4 – *"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge..."*

(2) Explanation:

This poetic metaphor portrays God's protection like a bird shielding its young. It's not saying God literally has feathers but evokes the tenderness and security of divine care.

## g) Parables

i) Definition: Short stories with symbolic meaning.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Luke 16:19–31 – *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus*

(2) Explanation:

Some interpret this as a literal description of heaven and hell. But it's a parable using common imagery to teach about justice, reversal of fortune, and the danger of ignoring the poor—not a doctrinal map of the afterlife.

## h) Idioms

i) Definition: Culturally specific expressions not meant to be taken literally.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Matthew 19:24 – *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle..."*

(2) Explanation:

This idiom emphasizes the difficulty of a rich person entering the kingdom of God due to attachment to wealth. While some suggest "needle's eye" was a gate, most scholars affirm this is an intentional exaggeration to make a moral point.

## i) Prophetic Language

i) Definition: Vivid, symbolic, and poetic language used to describe divine judgment, hope, or vision.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) Isaiah 13:10 – *"The stars of heaven... will not show their light. The sun will be darkened..."*

(2) Explanation:

This cosmic language often signifies the fall of a kingdom or divine intervention, not literal astronomical events. It's a prophetic metaphor, not an astrophysical prediction.

## j) Irony and Sarcasm

i) Definition: Saying the opposite of what is meant, often for effect or rebuke.

(1) Misunderstood Example:

(a) 1 Kings 18:27 – Elijah mocks the prophets of Baal: *"Shout louder! Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling..."*

(2) Explanation:

This is sarcasm used to ridicule idolatry. Taking it literally would miss the prophetic boldness and satire aimed at exposing false worship.

## k) Poetry and Parallelism

i) Much of the Bible (Psalms, Proverbs, prophetic oracles) is written as poetry. Hebrew poetry especially often employs *parallelism*: repeating or contrasting ideas in successive lines. This is **not** a series of independent statements, but a single poetic thought expressed twice. For example:

(1) *Isaiah 2:4* – “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks.” The second line restates the first in different words (synonymous parallelism). Taken literally, one might wonder if countries must literally convert weapons into farming tools. Actually, it’s poetic imagery: war is turned into peace.

(2) *Proverbs 10:1* – “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.” The first half and second half mirror each other (antithetic parallelism). Together they contrast wisdom and folly.

ii) As Wikipedia notes, the *distinguishing feature* of Biblical poetry is this rhythmical balancing of thought. In practice, recognizing parallelism prevents double-counting ideas or inferring unintended details. For instance, Psalm 23:4 – “the valley of the shadow of death” – is a poetic way to say “the darkest dangers,” not a literal valley named Death. Also, imagery in poetry (shepherds, storms, vineyards) often symbolizes spiritual truths. Misreading poetic lines literally (as if they were prose history or law) obscures the lesson. Thus, interpret Hebrew poems by comparing the linked lines: their redundancy or contrast highlights the core message. When poetry uses vivid images (e.g. “wings of eagles” in Exodus 19:4), we seek the analogy (God’s caring protection) instead of looking for actual eagles.

## 9) Narrative Structure: Chiasm

### a) What is Chiasm?

i) A **chiasm** (from the Greek letter **chi (χ)**, resembling an “X”) is a literary device where ideas are presented in a particular order and then repeated in reverse order to highlight a central point.

(1) **Basic Form:** A – B – C – B’ – A’

(a) Think of it like a sandwich: the bread (A/A’), then meat/cheese (B/B’), and the **filling** or center (C) is the focus.

### b) Historical Background

i) Chiasms were common in **ancient Semitic literature**, especially Hebrew storytelling and poetry.

ii) They served both a **mnemonic function** (easy to remember orally) and a **thematic function** (emphasizing the core message).

iii) The structure shows up in **Mesopotamian texts, Ugaritic poetry**, and especially in the **Hebrew Bible**, which was composed in a high-context oral culture.

### c) Examples

i) Genesis 6-9

A. God resolves to destroy humanity (6:10–13)

B. Noah builds the ark (6:14–22)

C. The flood begins (7:11–16)

D. Waters prevail (7:17–24)

E. GOD REMEMBERS NOAH (8:1) ← CENTRAL POINT

D’. Waters recede (8:2–5)

C’. Earth dries (8:6–14)

B’. Noah leaves the ark (8:15–19)

A’. God promises never to destroy again (8:20–9:17)

ii) **Matthew 6:24–34** – Trusting God with Anxiety

A. No one can serve two masters (v. 24)

B. Do not worry about your life (v. 25)

C. Look at the birds (v. 26)

D. Can you add a single hour? (v. 27)

C'. Look at the lilies (v. 28–30)

B'. Do not worry saying 'What shall we eat?' (v. 31–32)

A'. Seek first the kingdom... Don't worry about tomorrow (v. 33–34)

iii) **Amos 5:4–6** – A Call to Seek the LORD

A. Seek me and live (v. 4)

B. Do not seek Bethel/Gilgal/Beersheba (v. 5a)

C. Gilgal will go into exile (v. 5b)

B'. Do not seek Bethel (v. 5c)

A'. Seek the Lord and live (v. 6)

d) **WHY CHIASM MATTERS**

i) **Emphasizes the Core:** In Hebrew thought, the **center is the climax**, not the end.

ii) **Aids Oral Memory:** In a largely oral culture, structure reinforced retention.

iii) **Reveals Authorial Intent:** Recognizing chiasm uncovers **deeper theological points** that may be missed in Western linear reading.

10) **All you need is the Holy Spirit no other training or study...**

a) **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Illumination, Not Exhaustive Interpretation**

i) **Key Text: John 16:13**

(1) *"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth..."*

ii) **Contextual Note:** Jesus is speaking to His disciples about the Spirit's future role in revealing the truth about Himself and God's plan.

(1) **Exegetical Insight:** The Greek word for *"guide"* (*ὁδηγήσει*) implies leadership **on a path**, not instant transmission of full knowledge. This speaks to **progressive understanding**, not exhaustive clarity.

(2) The Spirit **does not replace the need for learning or communal interpretation**, but assists in rightly applying the truths revealed in Scripture.

b) **Scripture Itself Requires Interpretation**

i) **Key Text: 2 Peter 3:15–16**

(1) *"...Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters... His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort..."*

(2) **Exegetical Note:** Even **Spirit-filled believers** in Peter's day struggled with Paul's writings.

(3) Peter acknowledges the **difficulty** in interpreting some parts of Scripture.

(4) The **danger of distortion** lies with those who are *"ignorant"* (*ἀμαθεῖς*) — those without proper learning or training.

(a) This implies the **need for teaching, training, and care in interpretation**, not just Spirit-led intuition.

c) **The Biblical Pattern of Teachers and Preachers**

i) **Key Text: Ephesians 4:11–12**

(1) *"And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints..."*

(2) The Spirit **gives gifted teachers** to the church.

(a) If the Holy Spirit were sufficient *on His own* for all understanding, **teachers would be unnecessary**.

(b) The existence of the teaching office implies that the Spirit works **through human teachers**, not independently of them.

d) **Biblical Examples of the Need for Help in Understanding**

**i) Key Text: Acts 8:30–31**

- (1) *“Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?”*
- (a) The Ethiopian eunuch is reading **Isaiah**—a Spirit-inspired Scripture.
  - (b) Despite being a devout man, he needs **Philip (a Spirit-led believer)** to help him interpret.
  - (c) The Spirit led **Philip** to the eunuch, not the eunuch to solo interpretation.

**e) Scripture Commands Diligent Study**

**i) Key Text: 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)**

- (1) *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
- (a) The word *“rightly dividing”* (ὀρθοτομοῦντα) means **to handle accurately**—a skilled activity.
  - (b) Paul doesn’t say, *“Pray and wait for the Spirit to explain everything.”*
  - (c) He commands **disciplined learning and correct interpretation**, which assumes a process of **learning, correction, and study**.

**f) Church History and the Danger of Private Interpretation**

**i) Key Text: 2 Peter 1:20–21**

- (1) *“No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation...”*
- (a) The passage emphasizes that Scripture is not a matter of **private insight**.
  - (b) God spoke through prophets, and by implication, **Scripture is interpreted best in community**, not solo reliance on the Spirit.
  - (c) The early church councils, creeds, and orthodox teaching were all **Spirit-led communal discernments**, not individual revelations.

**g) What about 1 Jn 2:27?**

**i) Contextual Analysis of 1 John 2:27**

**(1) John is Addressing False Teachers (Antichrists)**

- (a) In the broader context (vv. 18–26), John is warning against **false teachers**, whom he calls *antichrists* (v. 18).
- (b) These individuals were **trying to deceive believers** (v. 26) and lead them away from the true teaching of Christ.
- (c) Thus, John’s point is **not a blanket statement against all teaching**, but a reassurance that the believers do **not need new or secret teachings** from these deceptive figures.

**(2) “You Have No Need That Anyone Should Teach You” Is Polemical, Not Absolute**

- (a) This phrase is **not an anti-teacher declaration**; it’s a **contrast** between the **true gospel they’ve already received** and **new deceptive teachings** being introduced.
  - (i) John is essentially saying:
  - (ii) *“You don’t need these new teachings from false teachers—you already have the truth through the Spirit’s anointing and the apostolic gospel.”*
  - (iii) In other words, **you don’t need new teachers to replace the truth you already know** through the Spirit and apostolic witness.

**(3) The Role of the “Anointing” Is to Confirm Apostolic Teaching**

- (a) “Anointing” (χρίσμα, *chrism*) refers to the **indwelling Holy Spirit** (cf. 1 John 2:20).
- (b) The Spirit helps believers **discern truth from error, not to bypass all instruction**, but to **remain in the truth** they’ve already been taught (see v. 24).

(c) The phrase “*abide in Him*” (v. 27) ties directly back to remaining in Christ and His original gospel message.

## ii) Theological Synthesis

(1) The **Spirit teaches** in the sense of **illuminating and confirming truth**, not **originating new revelation** or eliminating the need for **biblical teachers**.

(a) 1 John 2:27 is not a **rejection of all teaching**, but a **rejection of false teaching** in contrast to the **true gospel**.

(b) Ironically, **John himself is teaching them in this very letter**—which would be contradictory if no one needed to teach them.

## iii) Harmonization with the Broader New Testament

(1) **Ephesians 4:11–12** — Christ gives *teachers* to the Church for its edification.

(2) **2 Timothy 2:2** — Paul commands Timothy to pass on teaching to *faithful men who will teach others*.

(3) **Hebrews 5:12** — Rebukes believers for not progressing to become teachers, implying the necessity of *being taught* first.

(4) Thus, **1 John 2:27** must be understood as a **specific polemic against deceptive teaching**, not a denial of the value of Spirit-gifted teachers or diligent study.

## iv) Summary Application:

(1) **1 John 2:27 affirms the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit to guard the believer from deception, not to make biblical teachers or study irrelevant.**

## 11) Conclusion: The Spirit Illuminates, But Does Not Eliminate Study

a) The Holy Spirit is essential in helping believers **receive** the truth of Scripture, but **He does not make grammatical, historical, or contextual study unnecessary**.

b) To claim that “all I need is the Holy Spirit” to understand Scripture risks **prideful isolation, misinterpretation**, and ignores the **biblical pattern of Spirit-empowered teachers**, community discernment, and diligent study.

c) The Spirit helps us **apply and love** the truth, but we must still “**study to show ourselves approved.**”