

Understanding Romans 5:14

Romans 5:14

But death reigned from Adam until Moshe, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Rom.5:14).

On the surface Rom.5:14 would appear to be a very strange verse because we know that death, being the penalty for sin, was without challenge until Mashiach. It wasn't Moshe who ended the power of death it was Mashiach;

But now revealed by the appearing of our saviour Yahusha Mashiach, who indeed abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the Good News, (2Tim.1:10).

For the Torah of the Spirit of the life in Messiah has set me free from the law of sin and of death, (Rom.8:2).

So what exactly is the apostle saying in Romans? In a sense Rom.2:14 connects with Rev.22:13 and 2Pet.2:5;

I am Aleph and Taw, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Rev.22:13).

*And spared not the old world, but saved Noah **the eighth preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, (2Pet.2:5).*

So what is the connection between Rom.2:14, Rev.22:13 and 2Pet.2:5?

Revelation 22:13

These words of Mashiach provide confirmation of His pre-existence. Those who argue against the deity of Mashiach are actually saying His words are untrue and He is a liar. I wouldn't like to be in their shoes when they have to face Him. When we read this verse in Revelation is Mashiach merely repeating Himself: "I am the beginning and the end, the first and the last" or is there more to His statement than is first apparent? When Mashiach says, 'He is the beginning and the end' He is confirming exactly who He is – Elohim. But when He says He is the 'first and the last' we need to ask first and last what? I believe He is referring to His position as Malkitzedek and this is where we link this verse to Rom.5:14 but first let us look at 2Pet.2:5. This verse is poorly translated in almost all Scriptures today: even those purporting to align with Hebrew roots. The following are abstracts from some common translations,

He never had pity over the earlier world but He kept Noah of the eight, a herald of justice when He brought a typhoon over the wicked ones of the world, (Ancient Roots Translinear Bible).

*And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth **person**, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (KJV).*

And He did not spare the ancient world on the contrary He preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others and brought the flood on the world of ungodly people, (CJB).

And did not spare the world of old, but preserved Noah, a proclaimer of righteousness, and seven others, bringing in the flood on the world of the wicked, (The Scriptures).

With the possible exclusion of the KJV these are all poor presentations because they not only hide what the apostle is alluding to but make any connection with Rom.5:14 and Rev.22:13 quite remote. Most translations have reconstructed 2Pet.2:5 so as to focus on the number of people saved from the flood. This is contrary to what the apostle was alluding to. The apostle was explaining why YHWH chose to save Noah - it was because he was the preacher of righteousness: the Malkitzedek at that time.

Of the above examples the KJV is closest to the truth being honest enough to identify the word 'person' in italics to show it is an addition and not really belonging in the verse. The verse I have used is from the Aramaic - English Peshitta and this is the presentation we are able to make use of. I have highlighted in red the pertinent phrase. Noah was the eighth preacher of righteousness so who were the previous seven? The following tabulation provides the answer,

No.	Name	Age when son was born	Years lived	Years lived after son was born	Sons age when father died	Years as Malki-tzedek	Comments	Order of Malki-tzedek
1	Adam	130	930	800		930		1
2	Sheth	105	912	807	800	112		2
3	Enosh	90	905	815	807	98		3
4	Kanen	70	910	840	815	95		4
5	Mahalal'el	65	895	830	840	55		5
6	Yered-Enoch	162	962	800	830	132		6
7	Enoch	65	365	300	800	-435	Was taken up before his father died	N/A
	Yered-Metushelach	227	962	735	735	227		
8	Metushelach	187	969	782	300	227	Became Malkizedek after Yered	7
9	Lamekh	182	777	595	-5	-5	Died before his father	N/A
	Metushelach-Noach	369	969	600				
10	Noach	500	950	450	600	350		8
11	Shem	?	?	?	450	?	Met with Avraham	9

Although Noah was the tenth in line he was the eighth preacher of righteousness (the eighth Malki-tzedek) because Enoch was taken up before his father died and Lamekh died before his father so neither inherited the position of Malki-tzedek. We know Noah's son inherited the position from the record given of him meeting and having a meal with Avraham at which Avraham gave him a tithe. In Gen.14:17-18, the person meeting with Avraham is only described as Malki-tzedek however the book of Yasser 16:11-12 confirms it to be Shem. The above tabulation justifies referring to Noah as the eighth Malki-tzedek and the correct rendering of 2Pet.2:5 being as follows,

And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly,

A further string we can add to this bow is that Shem/Malki-tzedek met with Avraham after he (Avraham) had just defeated King K'dorla'omer who along with Avraham was a descendant of Shem. Was the sole purpose of the meeting with Avraham for Shem to restore family harmony? Well we don't know but it is a very logical conclusion.

Having established that persons carried the title of Malki-tzedek from creation, we can better understand Mashiach's words, "I am the first and the last," He was referring to His position as Malki-tzedek but does this conflict with the above tabulation which places Adam as the first Malki-tzedek? Not at all! Mashiach was certainly before Adam but Adam was the first of humanity to occupy the position of Malki-tzedek. Yahusha was/is the heavenly Malki-tzedek before Adam and He will be the last earthly Malki-tzedek when He returns, hence His statement referring to Himself as the first and the last.

Back to Romans 5:14

But death reigned from Adam until Moshe, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

There are two reasons we know the apostle is talking in terms of Malki-tzedek in this verse: firstly is the connection with Moshe to Adam and secondly referring to Moshe in terms of death's reign. We know that death continued after Moshe but Moshe was the last Malki-tzedek under whom death reigned. The next Malki-tzedek after Moshe was Mashiach and He overcame death. Thus the apostle's statement, 'death reigned from Adam to Moshe' is correct but only in terms of Malki-tzedek.

You may consider all of this to ignore Aharon's position as Kohen Hagadol but Aharon was the head of a temporary earthly priesthood whereas the Malki-tzedek priesthood is a heavenly eternal priesthood intended to have representation on earth. The writer of Hebrews explains it well,

Truly, then, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood – for under it the people were given the Torah – why was there still need for another priest to arise according to the order of Malki-tzedek, and not be called according to the order of Aharon? (Heb.7:11).

The Malki-tzedek priesthood is of a higher standing than the Aharonic priesthood, indeed the apostle refers to it as a royal priesthood 1Pet.2:9. The Israelites had shown themselves to be a stiff-necked and disobedient people and were therefore reduced to a lower level priesthood.

Finally we have a further comment from the writer of Hebrews,

Now this Malki-tzedek was king of Salem, a priest of the most high Elohim: and he met Avraham when returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. And to him Avraham set aside one tenth portion of all that he had with him. And in addition, his name is interpreted king of righteousness; and again (he is called) King of Salem, that is, King of Peace. Of whom neither his father nor his mother are recorded in the genealogies; nor the origination of his days nor the closing of his life; but, after the likeness of the Son of Elohim, His priesthood remains forever. (Heb.7:1-3).

The writer is talking in terms of both the person who met with Avraham i.e. Shem the earthly representative of Malki-tzedek and the eternal Malki-tzedek i.e. Mashiach. When we consider the other verses above, it is quite clear that the earthly representative of Malki-tzedek having the title 'preacher of righteousness' is also spoken of in terms of Malki-tzedek.

Clifford Fearnley 2017