The figure of Melchizedek has long puzzled traditional exegetes as well as modern commentators. Presented in Genesis 14 without explanation or pedigree, and promoted to an elevated status in Psalms 110:4, Melchizedek has remained an enigma. Yet he looms large in several later works, especially Epistle to the Hebrews 7 and 2 Enoch 65–73. This gap has puzzled generations of critical scholars. So when the new Melchizedek pesher from Qumran (11Q13) was first published more than four decades ago it was expected to solve the riddle. The new pesher was especially intriguing because of its presentation of Melchizedek as a supernatural eschatological judge at the final jubilee of history. Ever since this first publication the practice has been to include the pesher in surveys of references to this figure in Jewish sources, in connection with the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Eric Mason’s presentation is written in this tradition. Yet an examination of the evidence shows that the references to Melchizedek in Jewish sources do not explain the elaborate midrash of the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor for that matter, the account of Melchizedek’s miraculous birth in 2 Enoch. In my judgment, the contribution of Jewish references to understanding the Epistle to the Hebrews 7 is marginal, while the episode

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4 See E. F. Mason, *You are a priest forever*: *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrew*, STDJ 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 64–137. Mason writes in unprecedented detail. Especially notable is his treatment of Qumran texts. However, significantly he divides his treatment between the idea of priestly messiah at Qumran (Second Temple Jewish Messianism, 111–132) and the figure of Melchizedek at Qumran (Second Temple Jewish Messianism, 164–190). Indeed, the two issues are distinct and should be treated separately.
from 2 Enoch is best explained by the Enochic literature rather than by the scattered allusions to Melchizedek in other Jewish literature.\(^5\)

In the way they treat the biblical sources related to Melchizedek these allusions vary and, as Mason rightly indicates, may be divided into two groups. One builds exclusively on the episode of Genesis 14, while the other is based mainly on Psalms 110. The sources which develop the Genesis story consider Melchizedek human, and therefore do not refer to Psalm 110 since the psalmic picture does not accord with such an understanding. The texts which adapt Genesis 14 highlight Melchizedek’s priestly or royal functions, or both. This is true of the Genesis Apocryphon XXII, 12–17, Jubilees 13:25, Pseudo-Eupolemus (Praep.Ev. 9.17.5–6), Philo (Abr. 235; LA 3.79–82; Congr. 99; Legat. 3.79–82) and Josephus (JW 6.438 and Ant. 1.179–181). Yet although the above sources describe Melchizedek in terms of the same biblical episode, they do so differently and according to their individual perspectives. The Genesis Apocryphon tells a straightforward story, rewriting the biblical episode within the framework of Abraham’s life.\(^6\) Jubilees 13:25 is textually defective but is clearly interested in the tithes given by Abraham in order to derive from it the law of tithes assigned to the priests.\(^7\) Pseudo-Eupolemus emphasizes the booty returned by Abraham,\(^8\) while Philo goes his own allegoric way.\(^9\) Josephus is interested in Melchizedek as the first priest.\(^10\)

The second group of sources presents Melchizedek as a supernatural being: the Melchizedek pesher from Qumran, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the episode of Melchizedek’s miraculous birth in 2 Enoch. Yet except


