

Melchizedek & Christ

Genesis 14:13-24

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Introduction: In a land long known for its wars, an interesting battle took place some 4,100 years ago, recorded for us in Genesis 14. A tent-dwelling sojourner, Abraham, together with 318 armed servants, took on a much larger army representing four city-states. The vastly superior army was quickly conquered by the small band of well-trained body-guards, who also took back the captives, including the victor's nephew, Lot. While returning the prisoners of war to their homes, the victorious leader is greeted by one of the grateful kings whose citizens had been captured & were now returned. This king's name means "King of Righteousness" & he resided over the city of Salem (later known as "Jerusalem"). This mysterious king, who had no recorded parentage or place of birth, is found both in Psalm 110 & here in Hebrews (chs. 5-7) as a type of Christ. The king's name is "*Melchizedek*." The writer to the Hebrews would like to explain just how it is that this king typifies Christ, beginning in Hebrews 5:10-11. But he interrupts his exposition to give an exhortation to his readers: "Don't be a baby!" This book of Hebrews is a treatise on the God-man Jesus Christ. The writer of the book, who remains anonymous to us, sets forth the contrast between the O.T. sacrificial system of the law, conducted by a long series of priests, with the N.T. one supreme sacrifice, made by the King-Priest, Jesus Christ. Ryrie suggests the book can be divided into: (1) the superiority of Christ's Person, chs. 1-4; (2) the superiority of Christ's Priesthood, chs. 5-10; & (3) the superiority of Christ's Power, chs. 11-13. I want us to consider the relationship between Christ & Melchizedek this week & next by looking at 3 things: The historic priesthood of Melchizedek (Genesis 14); the symbolic priesthood of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1-10); & the superior priesthood of Christ (Hebrews 7:11-28). Let's begin with the introduction of Melchizedek found in Genesis 14.

I. First we see Abraham the warrior (Genesis 14:13-16)

A. Note Abraham's attitude (:13-14).

1. **Previously** > Abraham was not involved in the wars between the "kings."
 2. **Personally** > Abraham hears that his nephew Lot has been captured:
 - a. "Abraham was separated, but not isolated; he was independent, but not indifferent" (Wiersbe).
 - b. Abraham had not been treated rightly by Lot & Abraham could have allowed Lot to suffer the consequences of his choices (see Genesis 13:8-11).
- Application: Our actions of brotherly love & overcoming evil with good? (Rom. 12:17-21 & Gal. 6:1-2). How do we respond to mistreatment?

B. Note Abraham's army (:14-16).

1. They were **servants** of Abraham ("*born in his own house*").
2. They were **supplied** by Abraham ("*he armed his trained servants*").
- 3...They were **subjected** to Abraham (:15).

Application: The Christian soldier must put on the whole armor of God & be equipped to do spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18).

C. Note Abraham's achievement (:15-16).

1. Abraham & his men **defeated** the confederacy of the 4 "kings."
2. Abraham **returned** with the captives & the spoils of war.

II. Then we see Abraham the worshipper (Genesis 14:17-24)

A. Abraham faces a “new” kind of battle (:17-18 & :21-24).

1. The choice **before** him:

- a. Offer by Bera, King of Sodom (means “burning”) – all the spoils for return of the people.
- b. Bera represented the dominion of this world system (Sodom, a wicked city).
- c. “Bera mans ‘gift,’ suggesting that the world bargains for your allegiance” (Wiersbe).
- d. Before the battle Abraham had made a vow not to take the spoils of war (:22-23).

2. The choice **by** him:

- a. Melchizedek, King of Salem (“peace”) offered bread & wine (foreshadow of the future communion, representing Christ’s death?)
- b. Melchizedek means “king of righteousness” – “Like Melchizedek in Abraham’s day, Jesus Christ is our King-Priest in heaven, enabling us to enjoy righteousness & peace as we serve Him (Isa. 32:17; Heb. 12:11)” (Wiersbe).

Summary: “So, when Abraham rejected Bera & accepted Melchizedek, he was making a statement of faith, saying, ‘Take the world, but give me Jesus’.” (Wiersbe).

B. Abraham receives a “new” kind of blessing (:18-20).

1. Melchizedek renders Abraham a “better” offer:

- a. The blessing of Abraham: “*Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven & earth*” (:19).
- b. The blessing of God: “*And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand*” (:20).

2. Abraham gives tithes to Melchizedek:

- a. He was **prompt** in his giving – “His stewardship principles were firmly fixed in his heart so there was no reason to delay” (Wiersbe).
- b. He was **proportionate** in his giving – first mention of tithing in the Bible.
- c. He was **purposed** in his giving – “Abraham gave because he loved God & wanted to acknowledge His greatness & His goodness” (Wiersbe).

Conclusion: What can we learn from this account? Some years later David, when facing Goliath, declared: “...for the battle is the LORD’s” (I Sam. 17:47). Today, our battle is “*not against flesh & blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Eph. 6:12). Therefore we must: “*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye (we) may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Eph. 6:11). As God gives us the victory we give Him the praise (Phil. 2:13 & cf. 4:13). As the Lord blesses us, we in turn should acknowledge that God owns everything & that He has entrusted us with His wealth & we are to be grateful stewards of it. Tithing is mentioned in this text for the first time in the Bible, but having commenced here, it is later commanded under the law, then commended after the law (see Mat. 23:23), & is compounded under grace (see II Cor. 8-9).

And what about lessons from Lot in this story? After being freed by Abraham, did he promise to live for God & be reunited to Abraham? Unfortunately, we find him returning to Sodom, where later he must be rescued from the city, loses his wife, & commits incest with his daughters (Gen. 18-19). Wiersbe concludes, “Neither the Lord’s chastening nor the Lord’s goodness in rescuing Lot did him any good. The goodness of God should have led him to repentance (Luke 15:14-19; Rom. 2:4); but instead of repenting, Lot returned to Sodom...he choose to go back to sin” (Wiersbe).

Let us contemplate these lessons from this introduction to Melchizedek.