

Hebrews

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Hebrews 7:1-10

Vss. 1-3

- We first meet Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18-20. In Genesis 14 there was a massive regional war. Elam had dominated the region and some were prepared to take Elam on. Alliances were made and troops were called up. All in all, there were nine kings, Elam and three allies against five rebel kings. When the battle was over, Elam had prevailed. Two of the defeated kings were the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. The king of Elam sacked their cities, took all the food supplies and many captives, including Lot, the nephew of Abraham (Abram).
- Abraham had sat out the fight, having no quarrel with anyone. But when he heard that Lot had been taken prisoner, and prisoners were always taken as slaves, he gathered his trained warriors, some 318, and went after the Elamite army. The Elamites, thinking that there was no danger and being exhausted from the fighting, were not prepared. Abraham divided his troops at night to hit the Elamites from two sides and defeated the much larger army and pursued the Elamites beyond Damascus, utterly destroying their army. He rescued Lot and recovered the captives and food.
- As Abraham was returning, he was met by the new king of Sodom and by another king who had sat out the war, the king of Salem, Melchizedek. Melchizedek brought bread and wine and Genesis 14:18 tells us he was a priest of the Most High God. He offered a blessing on Abraham and thanked GOD for delivering Abraham's enemies and Abraham gave a tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek. The king of Sodom asked that Abraham return the people but offered that he could keep the rest of the goods. Abraham instead returned both the people and the goods to Sodom, so that he would be in debt to no man but to God only.
- In recounting the story, the preacher of this sermon to the Hebrews points out that the name "Melchizedek" means he was "the king of righteousness" and that "Salem" means "peace". He wants to draw the correlation that Melchizedek was the ancient

king of righteousness and peace, just as Jesus Christ is the living king of righteousness and peace. Further, as we looked at in the introduction to Ch. 7, the preacher points out that Melchizedek was a priest without his father being a priest, indeed scripture does not record his father and mother at all. Recall in the introduction, that when the ancient rabbis did interpretation of the scriptures and from the scriptures drew theological truths, they looked at what the scriptures **did not say** as much as they looked at what the scriptures did say. So if the scriptures do not speak of Melchizedek's father and mother, then it is as if God simply placed him there in Salem. Further, given that he had no father, and since one could not be a priest without their father being a priest and having a long genealogy of priesthood in the family, generation after generation, then only God Himself could have made Melchizedek a priest, again drawing the correlation to Jesus coming to earth from Heaven and being given authority from Heaven (John 17:1-2). Lastly, because the scripture does not mention Melchizedek's birth or death, the preacher says he is a priest perpetually, just as he wants us to understand that Jesus is a priest eternally.

Vss. 4-10

- Having made the connection between Melchizedek and Jesus as being kings and priests from God, the preacher now turn to the supremacy of both over all other priests. He points out how Abraham gave a tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek, just as the 18th chapter of the book of Numbers commands the people of God to give a tithe to the Levites, the priests. So in Genesis 14 we have the Father of the nation of Israel give a tithe to Melchizedek, recognizing his priesthood and in submission to his divine authority as having been appointed by God.
- Further, the preacher points out that in Genesis 14 that Abraham received a blessing from Melchizedek and tells us in vs. 7, "But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater". So given that Abraham tithed to Melchizedek and received a blessing from him, then clearly Abraham was placing himself in submission to Melchizedek, recognizing and affirming Melchizedek's superiority over him. And because Levi was a descendent of Abraham, he too is subordinate and in submission to Melchizedek, as are all of Levi's descendants, the Levites, the Levitical priests of the Great Temple.