

## Genesis 14: 18-24

**A. Gen 14:17 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).**

***And the king of Sodom went out to meet him***

While Abram was in pursuit of the four kings, the king of Sodom came down from the mountain whither he and those that escaped with him fled, and came to Sodom: and from hence he went out, not alone, but accompanied with his retinue, to meet Abram: ***after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that [were] with him;***

Now, the King of Sodom, that place that Lot was living was one of the ones who did the run away thing or commonly called "the tactical retreat". The inference is that he comes out of hiding to suck up to Abram.

### **B. Abram and Melchizedek.**

#### **1. (18-20) Abram meets Melchizedek.**

***Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said:***

***"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,  
Possessor of heaven and earth;  
And blessed be God Most High,  
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."  
And he gave him a tithe of all.***

- a. **Then Melchizedek:** We have no idea of where **Melchizedek** came from, how he came to be in

Canaan, how he came to be a worshipper and priest of the true God, and how Abram came to know about him. We only know he was there.

b. **Melchizedek king of Salem:** The name **Melchizedek** means *King of Righteousness*. He was the **king of Salem**, and Salem was the original **Jerusalem**, and Melchizedek was **the priest of God Most High**. He was a worshipper and priest of the true God, ruling over Jerusalem even in those ancient times.

i. One thing that makes Melchizedek unique was **He was both a king and a priest**. History shows that it is often dangerous to combine religious and civic authority. God forbade the kings of Israel to be priests and the priests to be kings. In 2 Chronicles 26:16-23, King Uzziah tried to do the work of a priest, and God struck him with leprosy. Melchizedek was an exception.

ii. Melchizedek was the **priest of God Most High**. *El Elyon* means "Highest God," and is like saying "Supreme Being." Melchizedek is an example of a worshipper of the true God, even a **priest of God Most High** yet not related to Abram or other known covenant people of God.

b. **Brought out bread and wine:** Melchizedek served Abram **bread and wine**. He practiced the basic hospitality rules. Some commentaries link this with the communion service. I think it may be a hard stretch to do so.

c. **He was the priest of God Most High:**

Melchizedek, as priest, did two things.

**He blessed Abram and he blessed God.** Melchizedek showed that a priest must connect with both God and man and has a ministry to both God and man.

Interesting comment isn't it. And we have to ask a question: Are we in the habit of blessing people?

We deliberately attempt to bless God – we call that worship, it is the aim of our Sunday mornings and Tuesday night services and we have many opportunities to bless God through worship.

- i. Though Melchizedek seems like an obscure figure, he is in fact an important Old Testament person. Psalm 110:4 says the priesthood of the Messiah is a priesthood according to the *order of Melchizedek*, as opposed to being of the order of Aaron. Psa 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."  
Hebrews chapters 5 through 7 show this is an important idea.
- ii. Hebrews 7:1-3 described Melchizedek as *without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually*.  
Listen to it in context.

**Heb 7:1** For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Heb 7:2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

Heb 7:3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

Because of this passage, some have thought Melchizedek was actually a pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus.

iii. Others have suggested he was Shem, Noah's son, or Job, or an angel; or even some have fancifully speculated Melchizedek was an outer-space visitor, an "unfallen Adam" from another planet, sent to observe the progress of God's work of redemption for this fallen race. *These suggestions are bizarre and have no Biblical foundation.*

iii. "The question cannot be said to be settled completely... otherwise, the identity of Melchizedek would have been agreed on by Bible scholars long ago" (Morris). We can say with confidence that if Melchizedek was not an appearance of Jesus Himself, at the very least he is a remarkable type or picture of Jesus.

d. **And he gave him a tithe of all**: Abram gave unto the LORD and he did it through giving to Melchizedek a **tithe of all**.

This referred to one tenth of his *assets*, not his *income*.

i. It was almost as if Abram and Melchizedek worked to see who could bless the other more. Melchizedek blessed Abram out of his resources which were Spiritual, and Abram blessed Melchizedek out of his resources which were possessions. This is a great attitude for us to have in the community of believers, an attitude of mutual blessing.

Bless people with what ever resources you have.

## 2. **(21-24) Abram refuses the plunder from the battle.**

***Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'—except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."***

Arrh. the King of Sodom hears all this blessing stuff!!! He is there witnessing God's blessing. Didn't make any difference to how he ran his life and city!

This is basic suck up stuff!

b. **I will take nothing**: Yet, Abram would not take any of the plunder, the spoil taken from Sodom and Gomorrah and

recovered. This was because of a vow he made to **God Most High** – a phrase he used *after* hearing Melchizedek use this particular title for God (Genesis 14:19). The phrase **I have raised my hand to the LORD** indicates that Abram made the VOW.

c. **Lest you should say, “I have made Abram rich”**: Abram refused any portion of the plunder because he would not allow anyone say that a man had made Abram rich. Abram determined that all of the credit for his success and wealth should go to God and God alone.

Yo – a chance to get rich and he says no – I want to live by faith in God!! This is huge.

i. If success does come when we pursue human measures of success, using man-centered wisdom and methods, how can we really say that God gave the success? It is much better to follow God’s wisdom so that when success comes He gets the glory, and it is evident to everyone that it was His work.

ii. How do we do this?

Actually, How do we do this as a church?

How do we rely on God in such a way that it is evident to others that what we do is God’s will?

How do we set a budget for that? (By the way Deb – I have no idea – but let’s investigate)

e. **Let them take their portion**: However, at the same time, Abram did not impose his principles on his Amorite allies (Genesis 14:13). They were entitled to as much of the spoil as was appropriate under the customs of the time.

Here is a huge principle for us to use in our dealings with non-Christians. Don’t put the same rules on them as we do on us. Don’t expect them to think like us and have the same world view. Actually, we don’t see Abram telling the King of Sodom to change his ways. Now if it was us, we’d be making comment wouldn’t we!

But credit where it is due. Give those people what they deserve. The Amorite allies did some of the work – pay them.

Actually, one of the big lessons I get from this passage is give what is deserved.

As Abram gave to the Amorite allies, he also gave what he felt was appropriate to give to Melchizedek in that way giving to God most high.

That's the lesson. Give what is appropriate.

Notice too that we should have the attitude that we don't want to get rich on what we shouldn't get – or as it says

*I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'.*

Interesting, attitude, not using anything that could be seen as inappropriate financial gain. Do we place our financial structure with such an integrity.

Interesting passage for us to look at.