

- God encourages Abram

1. A unique high-priest

- Abraham regarded him as his spiritual superior

- No genealogical record

- Ruled a city of peace

- Jesus – after the order of Melchizedek

- A picture of Jesus – our sympathetic high priest

2. Abram refreshed with bread and wine

- Jesus our bread

- Jesus our wine

3. Abram receives prayer

Abram had entered into danger and hardship in order to rescue Lot. Now as he returns he is weary and troubled, but God has a way of encouraging him.

1. **Abram meets a unique high-priest of God.** ^{□1} Melchizedek was king in Salem, the town which would later be known as Jerusalem. Evidently the knowledge of the true God was present in Salem; perhaps the truth about God had been passed down from the days of Noah. This king had been appointed to represent Him in the city-state of Salem, and Abraham regarded him as his spiritual superior.

The 'order' of his priesthood was unique. He did not get his priesthood by inheriting it. Unlike every other spiritual leader mentioned in Genesis, no genealogical record is given. He is '*without father, without mother*' ^{□1} in the book of Genesis (but not without parents altogether!).

'Salem' means 'peace'. His own name, Melchi-zedek, means 'king of righteousness'. So he was 'king of Peace', in that he ruled in a city known for peace, and he was 'king of righteousness' in his own person. He combined righteousness and peace in his people and in his own person.

We can see why the New Testament says that Jesus is a great high-priest '*after the order of Melchizedek*'. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is king of peace and king of righteousness at the same time. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is not a high-priest by inheritance, but is a unique high-priest without precedent or successor.

Abram finds encouragement in meeting such a person as Melchizedek. After some heavy conflict and as he is returning from battle, Melchizedek comes out to meet him. It is a perfect picture of how Jesus comes to our aid and our rescue when we need Him. After periods of conflict and testing, Jesus Himself has a habit of coming to visit us. He brings encouragements and talks to us of the things of God. Jesus is our sympathetic high-priest in a unique 'order'; there is no one like Him.

2. **Abram is refreshed with bread and wine.** Melchizedek knows that Abram has been in a battle to rescue a wayward nephew. He knows that Abram will be hungry and tired. So he comes out to meet him bringing bread to build up his strength, and diluted wine, several parts water, one part wine, to refresh him and give him energy again. It was obviously not the 'strong drink' against which we have warnings in the book of Proverbs.

When Jesus comes to meet us He brings us bread. He Himself is the bread of life. We feed on Him; we 'eat' Him. It means that we trust Him. Every part of His life and ministry is for us. We take hold of Him like a hungry man grasping food.

Jesus is wine to us. He refreshes us. He comes to us full of goodness and sweetness, full of promises. We are refreshed when He manifests Himself to us and imparts His gifts to us.

3. **Abram is prayed for by Melchizedek** 14:19. '*Blessed be...*' means 'I am praying for you to be blessed by God'. God had promised Abraham, 'I will bless you', but now the blessing comes through a unique high-priest from a unique city called 'Peace'. Like Melchizedek, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. He presents His requests for us to the Father.

^{□1} 14:17–18

^{□1} Hebrews 7:3

• *Jesus our intercessor*

It is not that He is begging or pleading, but He definitely has requests for us. He prays without ceasing; He never has to sleep as the priests of the tribe of Aaron did. He never retires as the Levitical priests had to retire. He never dies. He never makes a mistake. He prays with perfect faith and with perfect sympathy. The Christian lives on the intercession of Jesus.

4. God Most High

• *Melchizedek points Abram to God's greatness*

4. **Melchizedek points Abram to God's greatness when he uses the words 'God Most High'.** This is the name that the people of Salem use for God. They do not speak of El Shaddai or Yahweh; their name for God is 'El Elyon'. It is a compound name which uses the word 'El' ('God') but has another word to describe God. It is used three times in Genesis 14:18,19,20 and a fourth time with Yahweh, 'Yahweh God Most High', in 14:22. 'El Elyon' can be translated 'God Most High'. Melchizedek and his people were conscious that there were other spiritual beings that claimed to be 'gods' or 'sons of the gods'. They are not 'God' in the full sense of the term but there are angels and evil spirits which have an invisible spiritual nature and are sometimes called 'gods'. 'El Elyon', 'God Most High', expressed the thought that the God of Melchizedek is the one and only God above all other claimants to deity. The idea of being 'above' also expresses the notion of control. The God of Melchizedek is the Lord; He is 'over' everything.

5. Abram's tithes

• *Abram was led by the Spirit – before the law existed*

5. **Melchizedek receives Abram's tithes.** ¹ Abram has been wrestling with anxieties about possessions ever since he surrendered the best choice of the land to Lot. Now there is a further anxiety since he will refuse to get financial and material gain from the king of such a wicked place as Sodom ². Yet his anxiety about prosperity does not stop him from tithing. He gives a tenth of what he has gained to Melchizedek. What made Abraham do this? It was not the Mosaic law. It did not yet exist. Abraham was being led by the Spirit. When we are led by the Spirit we shall fulfil the law even if it does not exist! The Christian will tithe and more than-tithe if he is led by the Spirit.

¹ 14:20b–23



² 14:21–24

6. Abram's appreciation of God is enlarged

• *Yahweh, God Most High*

6. **Abram's appreciation for God is enlarged.** He now uses the term 'Yahweh, God Most High'. Abram knows that 'Yahweh' (a word he uses for God) and 'El Elyon', 'God Most High', are one and the same. Abram speaks of 'Yahweh' and Melchizedek speaks of 'El Elyon', but then Abram uses the phrase 'Yahweh, God Most High' ¹. He brings the two names together! His experience of the priestly ministry of Melchizedek has led him into a greater understanding of God.

¹ Genesis 14:22

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