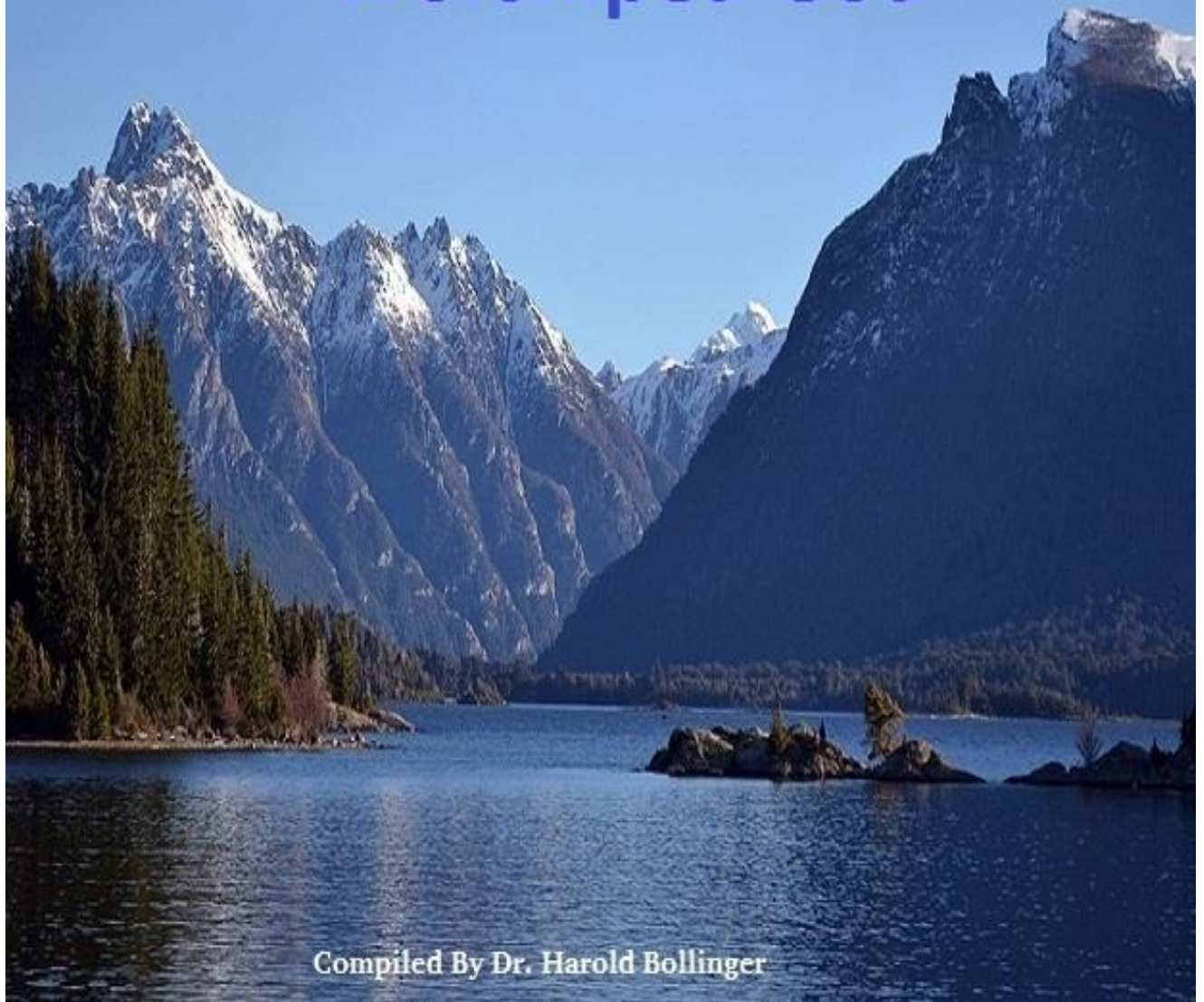


Melchizedek

With Abraham

Worshipped God



Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Overview:

MELCHIZEDEK AND ABRAHAM WORSHIPED GOD

Melchizedek's story is told in Genesis 14:17-20. He is also mentioned in Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5-7.

Do you like a good mystery? History is full of them! They usually involve people. One of the most mysterious people in the Bible is the King of Peace, Melchizedek. He appeared one day in the life of Abraham (then Abram) and was never heard from again.

What happened that day, however, was to be remembered throughout history and eventually became a subject of a New Testament letter (Hebrews).

This meeting between Abram and Melchizedek was most unusual. Although the two men were strangers and foreigners to each other, they shared a most important characteristic: both worshiped and served the one God who made heaven and earth.

This was a great moment of triumph for Abram. He had just defeated an army and regained the freedom of a large group of captives.

If there was any doubt in his mind about whose victory it was, Melchizedek set the record straight by reminding Abram,

“Blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand” (Genesis 14:20). Abram recognized that this man worshiped the same God he did.

Melchizedek was one of a small group of God-honoring people throughout the Old Testament who came in contact with the Jews (Israelites) but were not Jews themselves.

This indicates that the requirement to be a follower of God is not genetic, but is based on faithfully obeying his teachings and recognizing his greatness.

Do you let God speak to you through other people? In evaluating others, do you consider God's impact on their lives?

Melchizedek goes out to meet Abraham.

Genesis 14:17-20.

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Who was Melchizedek? He was obviously a God-fearing man, for his name means “king of righteousness,” and king of Salem means “king of peace.” He was a “priest of God Most High” (Hebrews 7:1-2).

He recognized God as Creator of heaven and earth. What else is known about him? Four main theories have been suggested.

- (1) Melchizedek was a respected king of that region. Abram was simply showing him the respect he deserved.
- (2) The name Melchizedek may have been a standing title for all the kings of Salem.
- (3) Melchizedek was a type of Christ (Hebrews 7:3). A type is an Old Testament event or teaching that is so closely related to what Christ did that it illustrates a lesson about Christ.
- (4) Melchizedek was the appearance on earth of the preincarnate Christ in a temporary bodily form.

Abram gave one-tenth of the booty to Melchizedek. Even in some pagan religions, it was traditional to give a tenth of one's earnings to the gods.

Abram followed accepted tradition; however, he refused to take any booty from the king of Sodom. Even though this huge amount would significantly increase what he could have given to God, he chose to reject it for more important reasons—he didn't want the ungodly king of Sodom to say, "I have made Abram rich." Instead, Abram wanted him to say, "God has made Abram rich."

In this case, accepting the gifts would have focused everyone's attention on Abram or the king of Sodom rather than on God, the giver of victory. When people look at us, they need to see what God has accomplished in our lives.

Psalm 110:4

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Many people have a vague belief in God, but refuse to accept Jesus as anything more than a great human teacher. But the Bible does not allow that option. Both the Old and New Testaments proclaim the deity of the One who came to save and to reign.

Jesus explained that this psalm spoke of the Messiah as greater than David, Israel's greatest king (Mark 12:35-37).

Peter used this psalm to show that Jesus, the Messiah, sits at God's right hand and is Lord over all (Acts 2:32-35). You can't straddle the fence, calling Jesus "just a good teacher," because the Bible clearly calls him Lord.

As a priest like Melchizedek, Christ will never abuse his divine position, and his reign will be forever. Jesus is more fully described as our High Priest in Hebrews 5.

Hebrews 5-7

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Jesus was in great agony as he prepared to face death (Luke 22:41-44). Although Jesus cried out to God, asking to be delivered, he was prepared to suffer humiliation, separation from his Father, and death in order to do God's will.

At times we will undergo trials, not because we want to suffer, but because we want to obey God. Let Jesus' obedience sustain and encourage you in times of trial. You will be able to face anything if you know that Jesus Christ is with you.

Have you ever felt that God didn't hear your prayers? Be sure you are praying with reverent submission, willing to do what God wants. God responds to his obedient children.

Jesus' human life was not a script that he passively followed. It was a life that he chose freely (John 10:17-18). It was a continuous process of making the will of God the Father his own. Jesus chose to obey, even though obedience led to suffering and death. Because Jesus obeyed perfectly, even under great trial, he can help us obey, no matter how difficult obedience seems to be.

Strengths and accomplishments:

The first priest/king of Scripture—a leader with a heart tuned to God
Good at encouraging others to serve God wholeheartedly
A man whose character reflected his love for God
A person in the Old Testament who reminds us of Jesus and who some believe really was Jesus

Lesson from his life:

Live for God and you're likely to be at the right place at the right time. Examine your heart: to whom or what is your greatest loyalty? If you can honestly answer *God*, you are living for him

Vital statistics:

Where: Ruled in Salem, site of the future Jerusalem
Occupation: King of Salem and priest of God Most High

Key verses:

“This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, . . . Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!” (Hebrews 7:1, 4).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.
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