

Our Great High Priest & King Hebrews 5 & 7 (ESV) Gen. 14

INTRODUCTION: There are two forces that pull at the human heart - two places where we can turn to validation. God or Idol.

- **Arthur Miller** (wrote *Death of a Salesman*; one his later plays (1964) was called *After the Fall*.) He talks about how there was always this sense of judgment that he carried around; even after he stopped believing in God. But for some reason, he still felt like he needed to prove himself. He said he had simply replaced the need to be approved by God with the need to be approved by people.
- **Ernest Becker (Jewish agnostic)**... said that after he quit believing in God, he found his soul still searching for acceptance and validation from somebody. He said, "(After having ceased to believe in God...) The self-glorification that we need in our innermost being, we now look for in the love of a partner. The love partner becomes the divine ideal within which to fulfill one's life. What is it that we want when we elevate the love partner to this position? We want to be rid of our faults. We want to be rid of our feeling of nothingness. We want to be justified. We want to know that our existence hasn't been in vain. We want redemption, nothing less..."
- **ROCKY 1** - 'Cause all I wanna do is go the distance. Nobody's ever gone the distance with Creed, and if I can go that distance, you see, and that bell rings and I'm still standin', I'm gonna know for the first time in my life, see, that I weren't just another bum from the neighborhood.

Listen to our music, watch our shows - we are perpetually looking for someone to say that we aren't just some bum from the neighborhood.

The question today is are you going to look to the King of Salem or the King of Sodom for your validation?

Before we jump into the text, I find it necessary to do some review of the old testament story that it is referencing.

GENESIS 14 - Abraham and Lot- Remember when God called Abraham to go into the land of Promise that his nephew Lot came with him. So we have Abraham who was a very wealthy man, his family and all of his servants. And we have Lot who also had significant wealth, his family, all of his servants. Both moving into the land God had promised.

Conflict between the herdsmen - As they entered the land there began to be a conflict between the servants of Abraham and the servants of Lot. So it seemed fitting that they should go their separate ways. Abraham allowed Lot to choose where he would settle, and Abraham would take the other course. Lot choose the well watered plains of Sodom

- despite the fact that Sodom was infamous for its immorality. It was the sin city of its day.

So you have Lot and his people settling in **Sodom** and Abraham and his people settling in **Canaan**.

Chedorlaomer and Pillaging Kings - NOW - to the North there were 4 kings led by Chedorlaomer King of Elam- keep in mind that the title King was used loosely in those days. They were more like small town **mayors**. Their armies were more like **raiding parties**. In the text four of these kings get together and they begin raiding the neighboring tribes and confiscating their wealth... they move further and further south until they come into the area where Abraham lives. Eventually, they attack Bera King of Sodom. But Bera King of Sodom has an alliance with 4 other kings.

So thus begins a battle of the 4 Kings of the North led by Chedorlaomer King of Elam and 5 Kings led by Bera King of Sodom. A great battle took place in the tar pits in the Valley of Siddim. The 4 Kings of the North win.

Genesis 14:12 (ESV)

¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

So Lot and his people are taken hostage - perhaps to be enslaved or sold into slavery.

Abram takes 318 armed men and go in pursuit. They over take the Kings of North, defeat them and free all the hostages as well and regain all the wealth that was stolen.

Bela, King of Sodom sought to reward Abraham for coming to their defense - but interestingly Abraham refused the gift... he said, "I will not accept your reward lest it be said that the King of Sodom made Abraham rich".

Who did Abraham want to receive the glory for his blessings? God! Abraham was very careful about that. Then something very interesting happens... over the horizon rides a man...

¹⁸ And Melchizedek **king** of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was **priest** of God Most High.)

Now Priest and King are two things that are never joined together in the scriptures. Remember - that is why King Saul lost the throne - a King trying to do the job of the priest. It would be like being **Mayor** and **Pastor** - two very difficult jobs for one man to do.

- The **Priest** would represent the People to God
- The **King** would represent God to the People

Melchizedek did both

So Melchizedek rides out and brings bread and wine to Abraham and blesses him.

¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Abraham had a deep and sincere desire to make sure that EVERYONE recognized that it was God Most High who had empowered him and was responsible for this victory.

So Abraham did something that God's people have done for time and memorial - he took **1/10 of the increase (spoils of war)** and gave them to the individual that he believed represented the one true God.

We can assume Melchizedek rode off... and is not mentioned in scripture for another 1,000 years.

Interestingly - you have these two figures providentially on either side of Abraham -

- The King of **Sodom**
- The King of **Salem**

- Abraham will have NOTHING to do with the King of Sodom, doesn't give anything to him, doesn't receive anything from him.
- But Melchizedek blesses Abraham and is blessed by Abraham.

DAVID, PSALM 110 -The next time he is mentioned in by the sweet psalmist of Israel - King David, in the Psalm most referenced in the New Testament - Psalm 110.

Psalm 110:2-4 (ESV) This is a messianic psalm so it's pointing forward to Christ... ² The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty **scepter. Rule** in the midst of your enemies! ³ Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. ⁴ The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a **priest** forever after the order of Melchizedek."

David speaking of the Messiah who would come and save Israel says, "One is coming who I call LORD" David says somehow this coming Messiah is not only going to be a **King**, ruling with a scepter... but he is a **Priest** forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

So Messiah is an eternal **Priest AND King**.

ESSENE - Now, Remember that Hebrews is likely written to those who came under the influence of the **Essene** community who believed in a Religious Messiah and a Political Messiah. The Essenes would argue that Messiah couldn't be one man because he would be law be required to come from two different tribes, which was the basis of their two Messiah theory.

So, if he is a priest then he must fulfill the qualifications of the priest and be of the tribe of LEVI... remember what tribe Jesus was from? **Judah**... so one might argue that Jesus can't be the Great High Priest he isn't of the proper tribe - **Levi**.

David is saying - no he is from a **different order of Priests**... the order of Melchizedek.

HEBREWS - Now there had been 1000 years from when Melchizedek walked the earth until he showed up again in the Holy Scriptures... there would be 1000 more years before we see him mentioned again. Where? right here in our text in **Hebrews 5**.

TEXT: Hebrews 5 -

⁶ as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, **after the order of Melchizedek.**"

Now Jesus, he says, comes from the order of Melchizedek. Not only that - the writer to the Hebrews teaches that this fact is intricate to understanding who Jesus is. He's going to argue that if you don't understand the priesthood of Christ that **you are a spiritual baby**.

So something happens here that I need to point out - He mentions Melchizedek in chapter 5, says understanding this man and the priesthood of christ is elementary to christianity... then he goes off on a tangate about spiritual immaturity in chapter 6.. and in chapter 7 he returns to Melchizedek.

So what we are going to do is slap chapters 5 and 6 together and unpack all we can about how Jesus is related to Melchizedek - then next week we will talk about how most of you are babies in christ.

There is an interesting phrase in Hebrews 7:7 - resembling the Son of God... That is what the writer is unpacking - how Melchizedek resembles Jesus. I want to show you two ways that he gives us in the text...

1. As Priest Jesus Provides Perfect Atonement

Once a year on the Day of Atonement - the High Priest of Israel would enter into the Inner Sanctum of the Temple of Jehovah and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. You see the ark of the covenant was there, within it was the stones on which the 10 commandments were written and Aaron's rod that budded. The law of God was

demanding satisfaction for man's sin. The blood of the sacrifice was a type of interest payment as if to say - the principle payment is coming...

But when Jesus died he delivered the principle payment in full.

Hebrews 9:11–14 (ESV)

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus **securing an eternal redemption.** ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

ILLUSTRATION: A while back I traveled to Kentucky to visit some of my old friends. One of my best friends in KY was the local assembly of God Pastor. Without fail we have always ended up debating the concept of eternal security. He explained to me his position - I was sitting in my truck and he pointed at the rear view mirror. He said, you see let this mirror represent the grace of God. That grace is strongest in the center where the Holy Spirit is at... the further you move from the center the less of the Spirit's power you have on your life... and eventually you can move off of the mirror entirely. So little sins move you from the center - but big sins move you off the mirror.

I asked one question - which sins did Jesus atone for? All sins right? So the problem with your illustration is the size of the mirror. It is an infinite mirror. No matter how deep the stain of my sin - the blood of Christ goes deeper still.

You see his work was superior to that of the high Priest of Israel.

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As Priest Jesus provides perfect atonement...

2. As King Jesus Provides Perfect Victory

Hebrews 7:4–10 (ESV)

⁴ See **how great this man was** to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! ⁵ And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. ⁶ But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. ⁸ **In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.**

This is a very important verse - Theologians have argued for centuries about what it means. But the best explanation I have found is this.

- Tithes are received by mortal men - **Melchizedek**.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND
- Tithes are received by one of who it is testified that he lives - **JESUS**

When you give your tithe you are saying any good that I have received in life or in the life hereafter is because of my King Jesus Christ.

So you see ultimately Abraham wasn't giving to mortal men - he was giving THROUGH Mortal Man to JESUS.

If by giving you intend to give to me, or to this staff, or to this church - KEEP IT!!! NO - you write First Baptist on the check - but that is simply who you give THROUGH. Your gift is ALWAYS to be given TO JESUS.

So you give through the earthly representation of Christ - the church. But you give TO Christ himself.

So to be clear - in the story - Melchizedek points to Jesus... Abraham points to you.

Melchizedek comes into Abraham's story as Priest and King!
Jesus shows up in our story as our Priest and King!

CONCLUSION: One of the most human needs we have is the need for validation. We don't want to be some bum in the neighborhood.

The only one who can truly offer that validation is when we seek to honor the one who comes like Melchizedek... perfect priest and perfect king.

- Does your life pay homage to Him?
- Or does your life pay homage to the Kind of Salem?