

GENESIS 14:17-23 DIVINE INTERVENTION

¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹ The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath ²³ that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'

Melchizedek, the king of righteousness (literal meaning of his name), the king of peace (Salem), a priest of God Most High and Creator of all things, comes out of nowhere bringing bread and wine, and blesses Abram and glorifies God. Abram, who has just put himself in the position of king of kings in the region through his battle victory, then recognizes Melchizedek's superiority by tithing him. No wonder, after this brief record of Melchizedek's appearance, his name will be referred to later in Scripture as the origin of God's eternal priesthood (Psalm 110:4) and foreshadowing of the priest-king, Jesus the Messiah (Hebrews 7:11-19).

In the life of Abram, the appearance of Melchizedek is a clear sign of God's preemptive aid when we are about to face a challenge. For Abram, the king of Sodom is about to make Abram an offer that could have led to a repeat of his performance in Egypt. Was Abram going to retain his faith in God or was he going to enrich himself with the decadent bribe being offered by Sodom? At that very moment in the biblical narrative, the mysterious holy man shows up and Abram's faith is bolstered. With the blessing and praise of God still ringing in his ears, Abram is able to place his entire faith and dependence upon the Lord and not be distracted by the lure of worldly wealth, luxury and power. The witness to this is that he rejects Sodom's offer in the name of the Lord.

If a Melchizedek is to be seen at all, he can only be seen through the eyes of faith. We are given none of the traditional biblical details about him or how he comes into relationship with Abram. This could well be because God intervenes in our lives in the context in which we live. For us, the appearance of a priest-king would be a hallucinatory distraction rather than an aid to our faith. We need to keep the eyes of our faith open at all times so that we might recognize the aid that God provides for us at our time of need. Do not ignore the prompting of the Spirit of Christ within you, for through him you will recognize "Melchizedek," whether in the form of word, event or person.

Lord Jesus, as the real Melchizedek, you have placed yourself between me and the dangers and temptations of this life. Open my eyes to see the manifestations of your saving love in the world around me so that I might have my faith bolstered in my time of trial. Amen.