

MELCHIZEDEK WITH THE BREAD AND WINE

Genesis 14:17-24

Intro: As the Lord approached the hour of His death, He was with His disciples observing the Passover when Matthew tells us that the Lord did something that was to become very significant in the years to come. This is Matthew's account:

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives (Matt. 26:26-30).

In Luke's account, as the Lord gave them the bread, He also said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). In the account given by the Apostle Paul we are told that both in giving His disciples the bread, and then giving them the cup, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24, 25).

We know that the bread represented the body of the Lord, and that the fruit of the vine, or the wine, represented the blood of the Lord. Furthermore, we know that the two together, the bread and the wine, represented the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord wanted to be remembered by these two symbols of His death. It was designed to bring the Lord's people back to consider the death of the Lord every time the Lord's Supper was observed.

We are all familiar with this truth. We are here tonight not only to remember our Lord, but specifically to remember His death. There are some twenty-one times in the OT and the NT that bread and wine are mentioned together. It was commonly used for refreshment and strength when people were involved in activities which required refreshment.

Usually when anything is mentioned the first time in Scripture, it has special significance regarding its use in the Word of God. As we look for

the first time bread and wine are mentioned together in the Bible, we are taken to Gen. 14:18.

Looking back before that we learn in Genesis 13 that when Abram and Lot with their families, servants, and livestock, came up out of Egypt, both of these men, Abram and Lot, his nephew, were two wealthy to be able to live together. So they separated in order to have adequate pasturage for their flocks and herds. Abram gave Lot the first choice of the land, and we are told that “pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Gen. 13:12) – words which turned out to be very ominous indeed because of the kind of people who lived in Sodom, and because of what was going to happen to Sodom.

Some time later four kings led by a man named Chedorlaomer, who was one of the kings, made war with five other kings, and among those kings was Bera, the king of Sodom. For twelve years the five kings served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. A battle followed, Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him were again victorious, but in the conflict Lot was taken captive, and all of his possessions were taken by the victorious kings.

One person escaped, and went to tell Abram that Lot had been taken captive. Abram armed his 318 servants, went to war on behalf of the king of Sodom, and was able to secure the freedom of Lot and to retake all that had been taken away from Lot. In the process, King Chedorlaomer was killed.

This brings us to the verses that are important as we come to the Lord’s Table tonight. See Gen. 14:17-24.

Suddenly a man appeared out of nowhere whose name was Melchizedek, and he also was a king, the king of Salem, which was probably the site where Jerusalem was eventually located. And he came just as the king of Sodom was getting ready to make a deal with Abram in gratitude for what Abram had done for him.

This king of Salem brought Abram “bread and wine,” and we learn that he was not only a king but he was also “the priest of the most high God.” After he gave Abram the bread and wine, he blessed Abram, and then blessed also the most high God. Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of the spoil, and we hear no more of him, that is, Melchizedek, until we get

to Psalm 110, and there in verse 4 we learn that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, was to be “a priest forever after the order [manner] of Melchizedek.” So this links Melchizedek with Christ.

Next we need to go to the book of Hebrews where suddenly this king who was also a priest appears again on the pages of Scripture. Read Heb. 5:1-10. Then notice the change beginning with Heb. 5:11, which continued until the end of chapter 6 where we find Melchizedek’s name again. And then we learn the details about Melchizedek some of which were not given in Genesis 14. Cf. Heb. 7:1-19.

Now from all of this we can positively say that Melchizedek in Genesis 14 was a type of Christ. Some say that he was Christ. I personally don’t feel that he was Christ because Christ is said to be a priest “after the order of Melchizedek. However, that is not the main point I want to be concerned with tonight. I want us to look at Genesis 14 to learn what we can about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper.

When Melchizedek appeared, Abram was rejoicing in a most amazing victory. But, although he did not know it, he was going to face the greatest temptation of his life up to that point. Obviously Abram and his men would have been very tired, and perhaps weak, after their victory in the battle with Chedorlaomer, and they needed refreshment.

I think we can say from this situation that we as the people of God stand in constant need of refreshment, maybe not so much physical refreshment, but *spiritual refreshment*. We are in a constant battle with the temptations and sins of the world. And for us to set aside an evening tonight to observe the Lord’s Supper, means that here we have the opportunity under the Lord’s blessing to have our souls refreshed, our spirits renewed and strengthened as we have come aside from the world to remember our Lord Jesus Christ in His death. We can’t get much physical strength from the small amount of bread that we eat and the small amount of grape juice that we drink, but these elements and what they represent are full of power as we are here to remember our Lord and His work for us on the Cross. We would not be here if it were not for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord.

But the Lord’s Supper is not only intended for our refreshment, but it is intended for our protection. Who was waiting for Abram? The king of Sodom. What did he want to do? He wanted to reward Abram for what

he had done in setting the people of Sodom free. Lot had already become an ally of Sodom. That was one thing that Abram did not need, and it would have seriously affected the Messianic line leading to Christ. It was this meeting with Melchizedek which enable Abram to say the words to the king of Sodom that he said according to Gen. 14:21-24.

None of us knows what temptations we might meet this coming week. And so it is very important that we get out of this time together tonight what the Lord wants us to get: strength to meet the temptations that we may face this week, and even beyond this week.

But there is another important point that arises from Abram's encounter with Melchizedek, and this applies to the Lord's Supper too. It was through Melchizedek that Abram was to learn more about his God. Here in verses 18, 19, and 20 – three times – we learn that God is “the most high God.” And then Abram used that new title for God when he spoke to the king of Sodom in verse 22.

“The most high God” is sovereign over both heaven and earth. He made them, and they belong to Him. So what can the king of Sodom or anyone else in the world give us that would compare with the gifts of our God?

But notice that Melchizedek stood between Abram and the most high God as the one who was the mediator between the two. He blessed Abram, and then he blessed God. We need to expect blessing at the Lord's Table.

But there was still another lesson that Abram was to learn through what Melchizedek came to do. Notice that Abram was not really the victor after all, but the most high God had given him the victory. It is the same with us. We have been delivered from sin's penalty. We are not going to hell. Nor do we have to live under the dominion of sin any longer. Our Lord has set us free. And to Him belongs all of the glory.

You see, there is a lot to be learned at the communion table.

Now notice the suggestion made by the king of Sodom. He was prepared to make Abram extremely wealthy. What a temptation? But thanks to God's intervention through Melchizedek, Abram was ready for the king of Sodom's offer. *And he wanted to have nothing to do with it.*

It is due to the providence of God that you and I are here tonight. We are

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seeking to be obedient to the Lord by remembering Him in taking these elements. The elements themselves are nothing, but what they represent is of infinite value, and all of the wealth of the world could not even make a down payment on what we have in Christ. But it is our without money and without price. Let us face the days to come with the high praises of God in our hearts, and the power of the Gospel always before us.