

Through the Bible - Genesis 13-14

by Chuck Smith

Abraham returns to Bethel, where God renews His promise to give him the land and make his seed innumerable, and Abraham moves to the plain of Mamre, where he builds an altar unto the Lord.

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 13 - 14, Psalm 110:4, Proverbs 14:12, John 8:56-57, 1 Corinthians 1:29, Hebrews 7:1-3

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Choices and Consequences"

Description

Chuck Smith discusses Genesis chapters 13 and 14, focusing on Abraham's return from Egypt and the subsequent separation from Lot due to their growing wealth. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with God, as seen in Abraham's return to Bethel, a place of worship and remembrance of God's promises. The sermon highlights the dangers of worldly choices, illustrated by Lot's decision to settle near Sodom, and contrasts it with Abraham's faithfulness. Smith also introduces Melchizedek, a mysterious figure who blesses Abraham, symbolizing the superior priesthood of Christ. Ultimately, the message encourages believers to recognize God's blessings and avoid taking credit for His work in their lives.

Transcript

Thirteenth chapter of the book of Genesis. In chapter twelve, we find that Abraham had gone down into Egypt because of the famine. And there as the result of a lack of faith and trust in God to take care of him, he had Sarai pass herself off as his sister. But God brought a plague upon the Egyptians because the Pharaoh had more or less taken her into his harem and he rebuked Abraham for the deception and ordered his men to allow Abraham to travel freely. And so now Abraham is returning from Egypt in chapter thirteen.

He went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south (Gen 13:1).

That would be into the south part of the land of Canaan into the area of Beersheba, Kadesh, Barnea, Hebron there in the southern part.

And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold (Gen 13:2).

So God had blessed Abraham in a material way, "rich in cattle, silver, gold."

And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai (Gen 13:3);

So when Abraham first came into the land, his first stop was at Shechem, and then he came back towards the Jordan River at a high point. This is the highest point in the Jerusalem range of mountains, which begins actually in the area of Samaria and goes almost to Beersheba. Just before you get to Beersheba, you, the Jerusalem mountains sort of fade out. But this is the highest point and there is this mountain between the city of Bethel and Hai, the mountain in which he had just a tremendous view of the entire land. Abraham, when he first came there, was able to see the entire land, and there he built an altar unto the Lord and worshipped the Lord, and now he returned again to this spot of Bethel.

The place is actually sort of a significant place. It was near Bethel there that Jacob was fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau, and he used a pillow of a rock, and he had a dream and the awareness of the presence of God. And there God made the covenant with Jacob, and said, "I am going to be with you whithersoever you go. I'm going to bless you. I'm going to prosper you and I'm going to bring you back into this land". And Jacob sort of made his deal with God and said, "If You'll be with me, if You'll bless me and prosper me, I'll give you a tenth of everything I get".

And so Jacob made his deal with God and he left from the place of Bethel. Later on in Jacob's career, God said to him, "I am the God of Bethel" (Genesis 31:13). And the Lord commanded him to return to Bethel. It was at Bethel that Jacob first became conscious of God, and God then challenged him to return to that place, really, of your first consciousness; more or less as Jesus called upon the church of Ephesus to return to their first love, that place where you first met God or you first became conscious of God.

And it seems that God seeks to call us back to that place of our beginning, the beginning of our faith, the beginning of our devotion, the beginning of that excitement of knowing God and walking with God. Sometimes we begin to take things for granted. Our Christian experience begins to sort of just become a prosaic kind of a thing. I just, you know, go along with it and I lose the excitement.

God said to Israel at one time where is the excitement of the espousal? You know, when I first called you out and upon all the people with holiness unto the Lord. In other words, the consciousness of the people was a God-consciousness. They were so aware of the presence of God and they were so excited in the things of God. And God is saying, where is the excitement of that espousal when I first drew you out of Egypt and all of you were aware and conscious of Me?

And we see movements of God's spirit such as we are experiencing here. And it's so exciting just the work of the Lord and the excitement of everyone just being, you know, turned on for Jesus and just, you know, we realize His presence, His power. We see His work. And there is that beauty of the excitement of God's work in our midst. It's always a sad and tragic day when that excitement begins to wane a bit and we begin to take for granted those things that at one time were so special and important and exciting to us. God help us that we will never take for granted His goodness, His grace and the blessings that we've experienced. I pray that that excitement shall never diminish. But each day we'll be excited with the presence of God and with the work and the power of His Spirit within our lives. That we'll never lose that just overawed kind of an experience that God is working in our midst. God is demonstrating His love and His power. That we'll always have that fresh relationship with Jesus Christ.

And so Abraham returned to Bethel, the place where he had built an altar and offered a sacrifice unto God and God had first promised to him the whole land that was before him.

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had his flocks, and his herds, and his tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for the substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there developed a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled in the land (Gen 13:5-7).

And so here there began to be a division between Lot and Abraham. Lot was Abraham's nephew but Lot's father Haran died very early. And Lot was left as an orphan. And so Abraham more or less adopted, inasmuch as he did not have any children of his own up to this point. He had more or less adopted Lot and raised Lot. So Lot was really like a son to Abraham and journeyed with him. But now they had both become very prosperous, the hand of the Lord's blessing upon their lives.

And you remember Abraham had about three hundred menservants that he could arm for battle, gives you a size idea of the size of the multitude that was going with Abraham and Lot was probably just about in the equal position. And so because the land just wasn't big enough to--for all of them to graze their cattle and sheep together, and strife began to rise up between the servants of Lot and the servants of Abraham.

Abraham called Lot.

And he said unto him, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: and if you will take the left hand, I will go to the right; if you'll depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it was even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar (Gen 13:8-10).

So at that time, of course, it was not too long after the flood. The great African rift was probably somehow related to the flood. As we mentioned, there was a whole change in the geographical surface of the earth at the time of the flood. And in the beginning, the Dead Sea was formed actually, because there was no outlet for the Jordan River. And in the beginning there would not have been the high salt content which has been leached out of the soil through the years. And because there is no outlet for the Dead Sea, all of the mineral salt content has just continued to build up over the millennia so that today, of course, there is not possible that anything can live in the Dead Sea. But at that time, there was probably not the high concentration of salts that we have today. And before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, it was all well watered and it was a place of really lush vegetation.

Of course, you're in a deep depression, twelve hundred feet below sea level, almost thirteen hundred feet below sea level there at the surface of the Dead Sea and the weather is tropical-type weather; gets very hot in the summertime and stays quite mild in the wintertime. Usually in the wintertime it's in the seventies, high seventies, low eighties, can get up into the nineties even during the wintertime down there. And so it's great for growing tropical kind of foods--papaya, mango, and of the tropical types of foods. And of course, all kinds of vegetation, citrus fruits and so forth grow very profusely down there around Jericho today, where they have a good water supply, fresh water supply.

So it is interesting because you're in such a deep rift, so low that there are springs that just come out of the mountains and flow then on into the valley. And before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, much more it was like the garden of the Lord. It was like the Garden of Eden. So Lot looked down at that lush tropical area and he chose to move down in that direction.

And Lot chose all of the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves one from the other. And Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and he pitched his tent toward Sodom (Gen 13:11-12).

This was, you might say, sort of the beginning of the backsliding of Lot. First of all, his choice was a fleshly choice. He really didn't consider Abraham and Abraham's needs. But looking to himself first, he chose the plain of Jordan and then he pitched his tent toward Sodom. And next time we find him, he is sitting in the gates of Sodom, or actually he's living in Sodom because he's captured as he lives in Sodom. So the beginning, pitching toward Sodom, attracted somehow by this wicked city.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly (Gen 13:13).

It's a very wicked place and yet Lot seemed to be somehow attracted by it. There does seem to be a certain type of an attraction to sin. Satan does make it look very attracting. "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). You want to look down the road and find out where it leads to. Sin can be very exciting. Sin can be very thrilling. It would be wrong to say that it isn't. It can be very pleasurable, but it eventuates in death. The wise man will look down and see where is the road leading. It might be a fun road to travel. It might be filled with allurements, excitement, but where is the path leading me?

My ambition is to someday ride the rapids either in the Grand Canyon or up in Idaho. I just would love to get on a raft and go down the rapids. I think it would be a--I'm just looking forward to someday doing that, either now or in the millennium but someday I'm going to ride the rapids. But there are rapids that I have no desire to ride and those are the rapids above Niagara Falls. Now I don't doubt, but what they're just as exciting as the Grand Canyon or any other rapids you might ride, but I don't like where it is. So you go down; wee, fun, exciting, thrill, thrill. But man, the roar of the falls is getting louder. You're heading for destruction. And so the person in the path of sin, excitement, thrilling, but you're heading towards destruction. "The end thereof are the ways of death."

Lot was attracted. He pitched his tent toward Sodom; this exceedingly wicked and sinful city even before Lot ever got there. "And Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, he pitched his tent."

And then the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him (Gen 13:14),

It was probably a difficult experience. Lot had become like a son to Abraham. He was close. He loved him and parting is never an easy experience. You see Lot taking off, and it's always harder to be the one that's left. It's always easier, I think, to go than to be the one that's left behind. And to see them going always gives you sort of an empty, sinking feeling as they sort of disappear over the hill, you know. And I can imagine for Abraham it was a--here he'd been traveling for years together now, for probably something like fifty years they've been together, close. And now, he sees Lot taking off and there has to be an ache in the heart, a lump in the throat. And so the LORD comes to comfort Abraham. "And the LORD said unto Abraham after that Lot was departed from him."

Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, southward, eastward, westward: For all the land which you see, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever (Gen 13:14-15).

God's promise to Abraham; from the area there at between Bethel and Hai, this mountain peak, looking towards the north you see the area of Samaria. You can look clear on up and see Mount Hermon on a clear day. And he wasn't bothered with smog in those days. Looking towards the east, you see the mountains of Moab. Looking towards the south, you see the area of Jerusalem, the southern ranges of Jerusalem, mountains clear on down to the area of Beersheba. Looking towards the west you see the Sharon plains and the Mediterranean. And so God said just look to the north, the south, the east, the west. Just as far as you can see, Abraham, I'm going to give you this land to you and to your seed. And God was going to give it to him forever.

But Jimmy Carter's going to take away part of it from him. What's that make him? I get in trouble with these remarks. I'll get a dozen letters tomorrow, but they just come out. I'd have to apologize to people. I guess I'm too open. I just say what's in my mind. But anyhow

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered (Gen 13:16).

Now God promised, Hey, I'm going to multiply your seed like the dust of the earth. Now later on, we will get to it this evening a little later on. God said to Abraham in chapter fifteen, "Look up into the heavens and I am going to make your seed like the stars of the sky innumerable" (Genesis 15:5). Hey, that's an interesting, interesting thing because modern science in that day thought that there were six thousand one hundred and twenty-six stars. They didn't think they were innumerable. Many of the ancient people had counted the stars. And up until the time of Galileo, we didn't realize that there were so many stars out there in the universe.

But now, they estimate the number of stars to be just so vast that you really can't count them all. There are billions of galaxies like our Milky Way galaxy, and there are billions of stars in our Milky Way galaxy. Someone has estimated that there might be as many as ten to the twenty-fifth power stars. But it's also interesting they've estimated that if you would take the amount of sand in a cubic inch, and take the volume of the earth, there's probably ten to the twenty-fifth grains of sand that make up the earth.

So when God's saying I'm going to make your seed as the sands of the sea or as the dust of the earth, and then as the stars of heaven, they're probably sort of an equal number here. But the interesting thing is God said the whole idea is that they'll be innumerable. You won't be able to count them.

Now God's promise was that you can't count them and David's sin was what? He tried to count them. He took a census. God didn't want a census taken of His people because God's promise is they're going to be innumerable as the sands of the sea. You're not going to be able to count them. David's sin was in taking a census and counting the people and it brought God's judgment against Israel because of David's sin in counting the people. So since then, they didn't take census in Israel, but everyone had to put a shekel into the temple treasury and then they'd count the shekels.

But the Orthodox Jew to the present day will not count off in a group. If you're in a group and you're playing party games, you've got a number in the group; an Orthodox Jew will not be numbered. And so they'll say, "You're not one, not two, not three, not four, not five". You can always figure out ways to get around things, you know. So we're not really not numbering because you're not one and you're not two. But the promise of God is the dust of the earth cannot be counted or numbered, so the descendants that I am going to give unto thee.

Now the Lord said

Arise, and walk through the land through the length and the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD (Gen 13:17-18).

So Abraham moved from the place about twenty miles north of Jerusalem or twelve, fifteen miles north of Jerusalem actually to a place approximately twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem, still on the Jerusalem hills or the mountains of Jerusalem they call them, down now south of the valley of Eshcol. Now Eshcol was a place with a beautiful stream and well-watered and the grapes in the area of Eshcol were just phenomenal. They still are today. Some of the most delicious grapes ever had in our life came from the valley of Eshcol and right near of course is adjacent to the area of Hebron.

When Joshua and Caleb came spying out the land some four hundred years later in order to prove to the people that the land was a very fertile land, they picked a cluster of grapes that was so big that they had to carry it in a staff between them. And they took back this huge cluster of grapes to show the people, hey, this land is really fertile. This is great.

So Abraham moved south, plains of Mamre which are near Hebron some twenty miles or so south from Jerusalem.

Chapter 14

And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel the king of Shinar (Gen 14:1),

Now Shinar is Babylon.

and Arioch the king of Ellasar [which is Babylonia], and Chedorlaomer the king of Elam [which is Persia], and Tidal the king of [Goyem or] nations (Gen 14:1);

So we don't know exactly what nations that comprise. Four kings.

They made war with Bera the king of Sodom, and with Birsha the king of Gomorrah, and Shinab the king of Admah (Gen 14:2),

And these kings, really no sense of reading their names off because we're not going to remember them anyhow. But they are the kings of the plain, the area where there were five cities in this lush area of the Jordan Valley there that comprise the cities around Sidon.

Now these were joined together in a confederacy in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. And twelve years they served Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:3-4),

So Chedorlaomer, the king of Persia, had conquered the area and have put them under tribute. And they've been under tribute for twelve years.

in the thirteenth year they rebelled against the tribute (Gen 14:4).

Thirteen is a very interesting number, the number of rebellion. And so it is significant that it was in the thirteenth year that they rebelled. The number thirteen is a number that does appear in other places; it's always a number of rebellion. It happens to be the number of Satan. Every name for Satan in the Greek

when you take the gammatria, the numeric value of those names, and total it up, it's always divisible by thirteen; very interesting thing. I don't know what it means, but it is just the number of rebellion and has been scripturally the number of Satan, the number thirteen.

And that is why thirteen has become considered as an unlucky number and that is why whenever you get into spiritism, spiritual séances and so forth, and you begin to dabble in those realms of spiritism, the number thirteen becomes a very significant number.

I don't know if you've ever been through the Winchester Riffle House, the woman supposedly was being directed by the spirits. And in the building of that house and she had men working there continually. But as you go through the house you'll find thirteen windows in a room, or you'll find six steps down, seven steps up, and the number thirteen is woven through the house all the way in the dimensions of the rooms, in the number of windows, in the steps and so forth. And she used that number through the whole house, it is a number that anyone who dabbles into spiritism is familiar with because so many of the séances and so forth are the number thirteen is an important number to them and interestingly enough it is a number of scripturally a number of Satan, the number of rebellion.

So twelve years they served the king, in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

Now in the fourteenth year (Gen 14:5)

He got together with these kings of Babylon, Babylonia, and they made an invasion in the area that is today Jordan, but in history was Moab, and they invaded across the high country, clear on down to the area of Edom. The coming down to the--it gives you the city, all of the cities that they conquered here. And they came on finally across to Kadesh. They came south and then began to move west as they came to the area of Edom, and Mount Seir is where it was and then across to Kadesh.

Having conquered all of these cities and archaeology has certainly confirmed this particular part of history here in the Bible as they have uncovered vast cities that were never rebuilt. They just totally wiped out the cities and all, took the spoil and the cities were never rebuilt. They have dated the ruins and so forth to about the seventeenth century B.C. to the nineteenth century B.C. so that it puts it about the time of this invasion. And they've actually discovered many of these cities that are named here. And the ruins of these cities as they have put their spade to the Tells, and have uncovered really a vast civilization that once existed there. But they were wiped out by this invasion of the Babylonian confederacy with the Persian confederacy of kings.

Now the whole purpose of the invasion was ultimately to get at Sodom these five cities of the plain that had rebelled against the tribute that they were paying to Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam.

And so they came [in verse ten] to the vale of Siddim which was full of slimepits (Gen 14:10);

Now the word "slimepits" is actually the asphalt pit. This was an area of a lot of tar asphalt pits down there in the valley, which when God sent fire from heaven to consume Sodom, probably set these things on fire and they probably burned for months. Once you get that hot enough to where it's ignited and burning, it probably went on and on and on. So it was an area that was full of slime. It's an interesting thing that in the tower of Babel they used pitch for mortar. The word pitch there again is a word that signifies tar.

Rockefeller when he read the Bible saw that and figured, hey, if it's tar there must be oil and that's why he began to explore for oil over in that area of Saudi Arabia and Iran and so forth and that's why he became

such an extremely wealthy man. He read his Bible and he used his head.

and so the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled into the mountain (Gen 14:10).

Now of course if you're down there, man, you know that there's all kinds of steep cliffs and caves and hiding places and Masada, one of the mountains down there that would overlook the area that was once Tyre and Sidon.

And so these kings took all of the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all of their victuals, supplies, and they went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped (Gen 14:11-13),

Probably one of Lot's servants.

and he told Abram the Hebrew (Gen 14:13);

And of course this is the first time the word Hebrew is used. It probably comes from the name of his great, great, great grandfather Eber. And so he was called the Hebrew here. It's a name that was adopted later, but Israel was the name that really is adopted for the people because of Jacob and Israel defines more the nation that God had blessed. The Hebrews would include actually the Arabs in a technical sense because they are the descendants of Ishmael.

for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and they were confederate with Abram (Gen 14:13).

So Abraham had these others that he was dwelling in this area of Mamre with; Eshcol from whom the valley of Eshcol became named later on and his two brothers Mamre and Aner.

And when Abram heard that his brother [that is, Lot] was taken captive, he armed his trained servants that were born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and he pursued them unto Dan (Gen 14:14).

So gives you the size of Abraham's wealth and all. He had three hundred and eighteen men who were his own servants that he could arm for battle. And you can imagine, you know, if you had that many servants you'd have a real food supply problem, you know, feeding everybody because you're responsible to take care of them all.

So Abraham was a man of very vast means, very vast wealth that he could support and keep that many servants. They pursued them as far as Dan. Now Dan is in the uppermost part of Galilee. It's just before you get to the base of Mount Hermon. It's probably five miles from Banos where the Jordan River comes right of the base of Mount Hermon, and so you're clear on up at the northern end of the Upper Galilee, which means from the area of Hebron, he pursued them about a hundred and twenty-five miles. Which without armored weapons carriers and so forth that was a pretty long jaunt for these guys to go figuring that on sort of a forced march, you can get twenty-five miles a day. You get an idea of how far they pursued these armies on up to the area of Dan where they caught up with them in the area of Dan.

And he divided himself against them, and he and his servants, by night, he smote them, and pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus (Gen 14:15).

Now Damascus is some forty-five miles beyond so he came upon them at night. Took them by surprise which was probably the wisest thing he could do, because they the armies that he was facing were numbering anywhere from fifty to a hundred thousand men. And here he comes up with his three hundred eighteen servants plus those of the three brothers that went with him, confederate with him. And so probably at most an army of five hundred or so coming against several thousand who had just wiped out almost a whole civilization, wiped out five kings of the plain. A tough guy. And Abraham came on them at night.

Now they probably number one, figured no one would dare attack us unless they had a huge force. At night they couldn't see how many Abraham had. And they were taken by surprise; they were confused, they began to flee. But from that point, it was hard to flee because you've got to go right on up the Golan Heights. You're in a boxed canyon. And so whenever you flee the direction you always try to flee at least is home.

And so they started heading home up Mount Hermon really because they came to the left side of Damascus which meant that they went up Mount Hermon. And as they were fleeing gave Abraham and his men a chance to really wipe at their flanks and to come up and to destroy them as they were coming up on them. Pursued them all the way to Hoba, which is to the left of Damascus that would be going north. And so Abraham destroyed actually these armies that had come.

And he brought back all of the goods, and he also brought again his brother [or his--literally his nephew] Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people (Gen 14:16).

So these kings have taken a lot of captives that they would have made slaves. Abraham rescued them all and was bringing them back. And as he was returning,

The king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is in the king's dale. And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of El Elyown, or the God, the most high (Gen 14:17-18).

Or the most high God.

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of the heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And Abraham gave him tithes of all (Gen 14:19-20).

So briefly we are introduced to this interesting mystical person Melchizedek of whom the scriptures speak very little. It tells us nothing of Melchizedek's parentage, nothing of his mother and father, tells us nothing of his genealogy. All that it tells us is that he was a servant or a priest actually of the most high God. He came up to Abraham with what? Bread and wine which are the symbols of communion. And he gave these unto Abram and then he blessed Abram.

Now the lesser is always blessed by the greater. Therefore, in blessing Abram it puts him a level above Abram. And Abram giving tithes of all that he had to him, again it was signifying of the lesser paying the tithes to the greater, to the servant or the priest of the most high God. So Abram received the blessing, recognized the man as the priest of the most high God, gave tithes of all of the spoils that he had taken unto him. Nothing more is said of Melchizedek until we get to the 110th Psalm. And suddenly out of

nothing that seems to relate to the rest of the 110th Psalm, we read the words, "I have sworn, and will not repent, I have made thee a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).

Now Abraham's son Isaac had a son Jacob who had twelve sons, one of Jacob's sons was Levi, and when the law was established, Levi was the tribe that was to become the priestly tribe. And so they were called the order of Levi or the Levitical order of priesthood, order referring to the family. Now here is an order of priesthood that precedes the Levitical order and is superior to the Levitical order in that Levi, in essence, when Abram paid tithes; great, great grandfather of Levi, Levi in essence was paying tithes unto Melchizedek.

So it puts the order of priesthood of Melchizedek in a superior order to the Levitical order. And God has sworn and will not repent; I have made thee a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. That Psalm had to remain a mystery as did Melchizedek himself until we come to the book of Hebrews when the mystery begins to unravel.

For the author of the book of Hebrews when he begins to point out the fact that Jesus, though He is from the tribe of Judah of which the scriptures have nothing to say concerning the priesthood, but even though He is of the tribe of Judah, He is of the order of priesthood of Melchizedek, the superior order of priesthood. Thus, He can be the great high priest of those who will come unto God through Him.

Now Melchizedek was called the king of righteousness as well as the king of peace. King of peace is Salem, which is the early name for Jerusalem. So he was one of the first kings of Jerusalem. But he was also called the king of righteousness. Now it is interesting when he refers to Christ who is of the order of Melchizedek and he talks about Christ making intercession for us as our great high priest. "Wherefore we have a great high priest, even Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). Again the repetition of that word the righteous, king of righteousness. We have a great high priest, Jesus Christ the righteous One literally, who has entered into heaven for us.

Now you see how the word of God is so beautifully tied together. Here is just a little snatch in Genesis. By itself we don't understand it very much. If that was all that was said, Melchizedek would be just lost in history as a mystical character. We know very little about him.

And then when David comes along in Psalm 110 and said, "I sworn and will not repent, I made thee a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek", you think, What in the world is David talking about? Psalm doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense until it's all put together in Hebrews and we realize that Jesus is our great high priest. He's not of the tribe of Levi, true, for He had to be the lion of the tribe of Judah to fulfill the prophecy of the Messiah. But He is also the priest, but not after the Levitical order, after the order of Melchizedek who has neither mother nor father or genealogy.

Now there are many Bible scholars who believe that Melchizedek was none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Very possible. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day and saw it. They said, What do you mean Abraham saw you? You're not fifty years old" (John 8:56,57). So Jesus could have been referring to this particular incident.

Now after Abraham received the elements of communion, the bread and wine, received the blessing,

Then the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself (Gen 14:21).

You know, just give me the hostages that you've recaptured and you keep all of the loot.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the LORD, the most high God [El Elyown] (Gen 14:22),

He uses the same term now that that Melchizedek had used concerning God, El Elyown, the most high God. "I've lifted up mine hand unto Jehovah, the most high God."

the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread to a shoelace, I'll not take any thing that is yours, lest you would say, I made Abram rich (Gen 14:22-23):

Abraham had acknowledged that the blessings and the riches that he had had come to him from God. He was not about ready to let any man take credit for making him wealthy. He didn't want anyone boasting and saying, "Well, I made Abraham rich". God had blessed Abraham, had prospered him and Abraham wanted only God to get the glory. So he refused to take any, not even a thread or a shoelace. He said,

Except just the food that these young men who went to battle with me have eaten and so forth, and these others let them have their share (Gen 14:24).

But I'm not going to take anything because I don't want you saying I made Abraham rich. It's an important lesson for us to learn and that is never take the bows for the work of God. Or never let man take the credit for the work of God. Man seems to always like to take credit for what God has done. Well, I fasted for many weeks and I did this and I did that. And I made this commitment and I made this sacrifice and I, you know, and because I am so wonderful, God has done all of this.

Oh, how horrible when man seeks to take credit for what God has done. The Bible says that "no flesh should glory in His sight" (I Corinthians 1:29). So Abraham was very wise in this, recognizing that the hand of God's blessing had been upon his life and will continue upon his life because God had promised it. He said, "Hey, and I won't even take a shoelace from you. As in time to come, I don't want you to say I made Abraham rich". Recognizing that God was the One who had blessed him with these riches.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-genesis-13-14-2/>

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