

Abraham and Melchizedek

by G.W. North

The sermon highlights the contrast between Lot's sin and Melchizedek's righteousness, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing spiritual principles over worldly comfort.

Duration: 57:50

Scripture: Genesis 13:1, Genesis 14:20, Genesis 14:22-24

Topics: "Melchizedek"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about how Abraham was watched over and protected by the great King of righteousness. Abraham's victory in battle was attributed to the intervention of God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of learning from our mistakes and seeking God's grace when we fall. He also discusses how Abraham pursued his enemies and smote them, highlighting the importance of being open and honest in our actions and not hiding secrets. The preacher encourages the audience to bring their struggles and desires for change to God in prayer, just as Abraham lifted his hand to God.

Transcript

In Hebrews chapter 7, we are told in much detail how much greater than Abraham Melchizedek was. And in this chapter, we are introduced to this mysterious person. Wonderful mystery surrounds him, and undoubtedly as we go through, God will speak to our hearts about it.

The background of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek is sketched for us in this 14th chapter. You will remember that last week we were thinking together of that great event in this saint's life, when he saw that it was utterly impossible for he and Lot to continue together. And we found that Lot chose himself on the plain of Jordan, and moved out, pitching his tent toward Sodom.

As I contemplate this man Lot, this younger man than Abraham, I think of him, my opinion of him gets lower and lower. What a poor, carnal man he was. For, remembering that he but pitched his tent toward Sodom last week, we find that this week, in verse 12 of chapter 14, it says that Lot was dwelling in Sodom.

It was Bishop Taylor Smith who once said in my hearing, and the late Bishop Taylor Smith, of course, once said in my hearing, young man, tell me which way you're looking, and I'll tell you which way you're going. I never forgot that. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and sure enough he finished up in Sodom that time.

In which direction are you pitching? Honestly. Which way are you pitching? Which way are you making? What ends are you moving toward? Sure enough, you'll get there. And this week, as I say, here is Lot dwelling in Sodom.

I try to think why in the world he should want to go to Sodom. There was a complete change of life on the part of this man. He was like a chameleon.

He could adapt himself to outside and exterior circumstances, surroundings and colours as easily as that. Whilst he was with Abraham, he had flocks and herds. What in the world did he want to be living in a city for? If you get flocks and herds, you wouldn't go and pitch and live in West Bowley.

But there came a time when he ceased to pitch his tent and went and lived in a house in the city. Abraham, I remind you, was looking for a city. But he wasn't going to sacrifice any principles in order to live in a city.

He wasn't going to sacrifice anything to have comfort. This lure of comfort. Oh, how nice to have everything just right in the life.

How many people are prepared to sacrifice spiritual principles for bodily comfort and move out of the will of God, achieve their bodily ends and miss their spiritual life and the reason for that life. What in the world do you think he was up to? You don't think he went into Sodom to evangelise it, do you? If he did, he might have gone in with a sort of a pious prayer. But look where he finished up.

Not so, Abraham. Abraham, as we reminded ourselves, had done exactly what he said he would do. He had said to Lot, if you go to the right hand, I'll go to the left.

You go north, I'll go south. He did too. For Lot shifted north, northwards from where he was and Abraham shifted down to the south and came and dwelt in the city Hebron.

It's in the end of the 13th chapter. And there they are. Or in a place called Hebron, not a city really, a little place there, up in the mountains.

And there he settled and built his altar unto the Lord. These two men then, in their respective places, truly, you know, you can't look into the future, can you? You just don't know what's coming. He'd rather know what was going to happen.

He'd never have gone and lived in Sodom. But he did. And it came to pass, chapter 14, verse 1, in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Elisha, Kedol-Leoma, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of nations, that these made war with Berar, king of Sodom, and with Bershah, king of Gomorrah.

Shinar, king of Edmar, and Shemeber, king of Zeruim, and the king of Bila, which is Zer. And all these were joined together in the vale of Sidim, which is the salt sea. Now I want to make a comment here, a geographical one, a topographical one, or whatever you want to say.

You will notice that verse 4, 3, says that the vale of Sidim, not, now notice this, it doesn't say where the salt sea was situated, it says is the salt sea. Now the salt sea is the dead sea. The salt sea and the dead sea is the Sodomitish sea, called so in scripture.

If you have maps in the back of your Bible, which you should have, if it's a decent one, this is like mine, you needn't bother to look now. I'm only telling you to do this for homework. And you have a gazetteer,

that is, something which will give you an index atlas, and something, the names and the places in the Bible, you know, from A to Z. You will search in vain upon it, the maps, or in the index, for the names Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Zeboim.

Why? Because they were situated at what was then the north end of the dead sea, into which the Jordan flowed. But when God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, and I want you to notice, it says in verse 10, that in the vale of Sidim, there were bitumen pits, translated slime pits, and that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there. And that's what the vale of Sidim was.

But when God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, the bitumen caught fire, and all sorts of things happened, and there was undoubtedly a land subsidence, and the salt sea flowed northward, and the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Zeboim, are lost beneath the waters of the dead sea. So thoroughly did God judge Sodom and Gomorrah. That's not my subject tonight.

But it comes in our reading, and I deal with it as a historical, geographic, topographical subject, if you want. All right, I don't want to spend a lot of time on that. We're not in school.

But, you know, it explains the terrific mineral content of the salt sea, or the dead sea, which I understand has so much valuable minerals in it, that it's well worth conquering that country just to get that tremendous deposit of mineral wealth that's in the dead sea alone. And no doubt about it, nations will sometime or another be contending for the control of the salt sea, the dead sea. They are doing that now, no doubt.

But they'll be fighting about it a little later on in the history of the world, no doubt. Well, this, the Veil of Sidion, which is the salt sea, was the scene, finally, beloved, where the great battle was fought out, that brings Abraham into the picture. These five kings that are mentioned in verse 1 went to make war with the four kings in verse 2. And we can read about it in verse 8. There went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admar, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bilar, the same as Zohar, and they joined battle with them in the Veil of Sidion with Kedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and with Tidal, king of nations, and Amrathel, king of Shinar, and Amiok, king of Elasar.

Four kings with five. The Veil of Sidion was full of silent bits. And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain.

And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their bittles, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And here is where Abram comes right into the picture.

Now, Abram was a man of peace. That's why he separated Lot. He said, we can't have strife among ourselves.

We are brethren. Here's the Canaanite, here's the Perizzite, the Hittite, these people, we can't be fighting in front of these people. God's called me to peace.

That's right. And so they separate. But you know, beloved, this wonderful man of peace is also a man of war.

And here's the great seeming contradiction. Because we're told that in verse 13, there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew. For he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Anar.

And these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, 318, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobar, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. Well, 318 trained servants of his own household. And when this man hears this, he takes these other men with whom he has become confederate, and he pursued, he goes straight away.

Now, he went a long way. He pursued through the night and through the days, and he went almost straight up. Jordan flows down between two mountain ranges.

There is the one on the coast with side, and then there is the one on the other side, and Jordan flows down to the center. And Hebron was down here, in the base of the south, and he goes up the edge of the mountain range, until he finds these other people right up the north at Dan. And he smites them straight away.

And this man, this man of peace, this man who knows that it is right for brethren to dwell together in unity, or else separate in peace, this man who knows this, he is also able to fight, praise God. Lot's enemies were his enemies, so far as he was concerned. He hadn't quarreled with Lot.

There is no doubt about it, his poor old heart ached over Lot. And if he had known all that there was to know, and perhaps he did know quite a lot, because I understand that out in these countries where there is no wireless, and no newspapers, and no post, news travels faster than if you post it in the morning. I understand so.

I don't know quite how it is, but that's what they say. And perhaps he did know a tremendous lot about the condition of his nephew, but he still regarded him as his brother. And when he was in need, praise God for this, he went out.

Hallelujah. He may have been overtaken in his fault. He may have been captured by the enemy, but Abraham was spiritual enough to go out after him and restore him.

And that's just what he did. And he slew the enemy. My, just this man, with these three confederates, and probably their retainers, and his own army, goes out against five kings.

My. Glory be to God. I expect he was proving what David proved when he came up against Goliath and said, well I come to you in the name of the Lord.

That's all. That's all I come in. I don't come in any armour.

I don't come with these armies either. I come against you in the name of the Lord. And that's exactly, undoubtedly, how Abraham went in any case.

The land belonged to him. I expect he thought, I'm not going to have this happening in my land. This is my country.

God had given it to him. He wasn't going to have the devil or the devil's armies invading his land, carrying off whom he thought. He was a man of faith.

He wasn't a man to lie down under the invasion of the enemy. He knew what it was to go and win battles for the name of the Lord. Praise God.

Fantastic isn't it? That just one man like that can come and do it. But blessed be the Lord. It's the same God who has told us in the Bible that one of us will chase a thousand and two of us will put ten thousand to flight when we're trusting in the name of the Lord.

And that's just how Abraham went. And you know he was overwatched by the Lord. If only he'd known he was protected by the Lord.

I expect he did know in his heart. But you know, beloved, those of us that have got some kind of faith in our hearts and some kind of understanding in our heart of the Lord's goodness and protection and mercy, we don't quite know how it all works. We don't quite know how much he loves us and how carefully he guards us and how he goes with us all the way.

I always like to think then about those two people on the way to death. Oh, I forgot their name. The day of resurrection.

Those two Emmaus. When they were walking along the way to Emmaus and then when they knew the Lord they turned around and the Lord vanished out of their eyes. They turned around and walked back.

They walked all the way back but when they got in the upper room in Jerusalem there he was as well. He'd walked back with them too. Only they hadn't seen him.

You see, he was there. He'd walked all the way back. It doesn't say he vanished out of their presence.

It says he just vanished out of their sight. And when they walked back he came back with them. I expect he listened to their conversation all over again.

And then when they were about to tell the others there he was standing in the midst again. Now Abraham proved that same wonderful Lord for, let's go on with our reading which will see how it happened. Verse 17.

The king of Solum went out to meet Abraham after his return from the slaughter of Kedol Aomer and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Shebi 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. Well, this strange, mysterious Melchizedek this king is never mentioned before he's not mentioned again afterwards until you read his name in Psalm 110. David, the great king then, said that he was his lord.

He speaks about king Melchizedek sitting upon his throne and then he's mentioned again in Hebrews chapter 5 I think is the first mention of his name and through 6 and 7 and so it goes on and 7 is the chapter in Hebrews where this great king is discussed. You see, if you look at your map carefully when you go home tonight you will find, I've given you the layout there was Dan up this mountain range up at the north and he came from Hebron down at the south but on his way up north he had to pass Salem. He had to pass Salem.

He went as straight as he could like an arrow and that man, Abram, had to pass Salem and as he went up, that glorious king looked out upon Abram.

Now this same Salem later had some other four letters added to it as a prefix and was called Jerusalem or Jerusalem same word, same place and the king of Salem it hadn't yet been called Jerusalem you'll often notice this in the scriptures that one or two names are given about the same place I'll give you an illustration Dead Sea, Swamp Sea, Sodomite Sea and you'll find this thing in scripture over and over again and he had to pass Salem and blessed be the name of the Lord that wonderful king was just ready for him and when he came back we find that this new king of Sodom I know the original king of Sodom had been slain but you know what happens it's like if our queen was to die tonight they would proclaim her son king the king never dies the person that holds the office of king dies but

the office of the king continues that's right when I remember when King George V died they announced over the wireless they said that the life of the king is peacefully drawing to its close and then finally he stood up and said the king is dead long live the king who was he talking about? the one that was next going to fill the office same with this man the new king of Sodom steps into the position and he comes out to meet this victorious hero coming back from the fight and you'll find that they meet in the king's dale by praise God whose dale was it? was it the king of Sodom's dale? or not? it was the dale that belonged to Melchizedek it was his vale praise the lord the king's vale is mentioned in other places in scripture I'm not going to refer to them tonight the king's dale and there

was the king of Sodom and following him came this Melchizedek now Sodom came for one reason the reason it seems that Sodom always comes for this is what he came for verse 21 the king of Sodom said to Abram give me the souls keep the goods to thyself ooooh Sodom is always after souls Sodom is always after damning persons Sodom had sucked in Lot and one of the great tragedies about this man Lot is this, as I read this chapter I find no plea in his mouth to uncle Abraham to establish him somewhere else I find no prayer in his heart oh deliver me from this vile city isn't it an amazing thing as the scripture says as we looked at it last week that this righteous man vexed his soul with the filthy conversation of the wicked and that word conversation is behaviour in the scripture or a manner of

life he vexed his righteous soul and when he was out of the city and when he was in his uncle Abraham's hands again his soul lusted after that which was within the city I never find that this man Lot ever came to a place of repentance I don't find it in the scripture there are lots of people in the bible they are wanting the blessings of God they are wanting the things that God can give Esau was the same hast thou not a blessing for me but he never repented over the fact that he parted with his birthright as though it was a thing of nothing and he found no place for repentance he didn't find it oh beloved to come to a place of repentance this man Lot never did and he is solemn saying give me the souls you can take the bread you can take the cattle you can take the commodities you can take

everything give me the souls that's just like the devil isn't it devil's representative that he was give me the souls there are lots of people acting like that today too they are settling down into comforts and things Christians but the souls that are going down to hell being sucked in to solemn I don't mean just the practice of solemn that's the way of the devil he comes to Abraham he says give me this and you can have the rest rather like the temptation of the devil to the Lord is it fall down and worship me I'll give you this that's right I'll give you this and that oh you know this slimy trail of the serpent is through the book from one cover to the other but what a contrast to this mighty Melchizedek as he comes out into the king's day why bless the Lord Melchizedek you will know if

you are familiar with the scripture that it means by interpretation first king of righteousness that was his name a blessed name isn't it Melchizedek and the second one is king of peace which means Salem or

Shalom that's the great Hebrew word for peace to death Shalom they say when they meet one another the Jews the real old Hebrew speaking Jews he was king of Shalom or Salem because oh beloved what a contrast here here solemn a city filled with sin and here's a city the king of righteousness here it is a city of peace now beloved if Lot had really been looking for a city if he was a righteous man as the scripture says he ought to have gone and lived under the king of righteousness and his good would have been at peace and so would everything else but no no his heart was set on his sin

terrible thing when a heart gets set on sin it will use any excuse and it will go to all lengths to fulfill its desires I praise the Lord in the same way when a heart gets set on righteousness and it really got set on righteousness it will go to all lengths to fulfill its desires and allow nothing and no one to stand in the way we find this in the life of Abraham before this room he was prepared to go to any lengths and he did glory be to God but this man Melchizedek he comes out and it says that Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine and he was the priest of the most high God oh bless the Lord I have pointed out already beloved and if you cast your eye back to the end of the 13th chapter you will find that Abraham only ever reared altars you will never find that he

offered anything upon never and I believe I mentioned before simply because he didn't know what to offer back there in Ur of the Chaldees they offered all kinds of things to all kinds of devils and idols, false gods now he's in touch with the living God he doesn't know what to offer to him wherever he goes he builds an altar and he pitches by this altar and here is the priest of the most high God he's met him apparently for the first time in his life he's now met him this priest there's a priestly order of the most high God and Melchizedek meets him this great king of righteousness oh of course beloved we know it's what's called a theophany in the Bible a theophany is an appearance of God of Jesus Christ on the earth before the incarnation that's right the Lord was often manifest on the

earth in a body before he became incarnate on the earth you got that? he often manifested and appeared on the earth in a body before he was incarnate before Jesus was born on Mary the Lord says it he's going forth that's right in Micah he'd always been going forth you read Micah he'd always been going forth from eternity the Lord and here he was he appeared unto Abraham here I don't know just all the connections about it I freely confess unto you that this is the mystery person of the Bible of course it's the mystery person because it's the Lord himself and he appears unto Abraham and now what he brings forth he doesn't bring forth a sacrifice he doesn't bring forth a blood offering he doesn't bring forth anything for atonement he brings to Abraham the symbols of the offering he brings

forth bread and wine what a glorious communion what a glorious communion he comes back fresh from his victory and he comes back beloved and he this man he'd been a sorely chastened man this man Abraham you remember that before he'd gone down into Egypt and there he'd been made rich by Pharaoh Pharaoh had lavished upon him flocks and herds and camels he came up out of Egypt we're told at the beginning of the 13th chapter rich, silver and gold because Pharaoh had taken a great liking to Sarah his wife only by the intervention of God had mischief been prevented that's all but he learned his lesson thank God for men that learn their lessons there isn't one of us in this room but that we make mistakes and we fall but praise God when we fall having made our mistake having blotted our escutcheon

having lowered our colours or our standards bless God when we come up out of it praise God as it says in the 13th chapter the opening verse when we come up out of it we can take our place with God by his grace where we can say I'll never do it again now beloved listen if you're going to get anywhere with God in these great things of moral conduct and spiritual purpose you must have purpose about you for

Abraham did this thing when Sodom said to him you can have all the goods he said I lift up my hand he said let's read it together I have lift up my hand unto the Lord verse 22 the most high God the possessor of heaven and earth that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet and that I will not take anything that is thine lest thou shouldest say I have made Abraham rich oh beloved

what a glorious lesson that man had learned and how purposeful I love this simple straightforward character of Abraham don't you I love it when he hears his brother sounds in trouble he's after him he doesn't stop and argue he goes and rescues him he's as straightforward and as simple and as open as the day that's the basis of his success and that's the basis of everybody's success in the things of the Lord show me a person that's not open show me a person that's subtle in their movements I'll show you a person that doesn't belong to God doesn't matter what claims they make or how many tongues they use either the Holy Ghost is a person of openness he's the spirit of the day he's light he's wonderful and whenever he visits a man doesn't matter about any other evidences whenever the Holy

Ghost visits a man he makes him as open as the book and as plain as daylight and as simple and as straightforward and as upright as the Christ that sits on the throne that's his purpose all the subtleties all the twists all the darkneses all the home and corner business all the mumbling and muttering and the whispering that all comes out of the pit all along there and this man he was all out in the daylight I want to warn you if you've got some secrets that you're holding back if you've got something you're trying to cover up get it out in the daylight and get it out quick in case the Lord comes this man he went the right way about it now I'll tell you how so many people fail in wanting to get through with God I know I've tried it myself and I've failed this way oh Lord we say help me

Lord give me grace Lord help me oh Lord help me not to do that help me not to say that Lord keep me from it knock off pious prayers we spend about two hours in our bedroom and we come back and stop inside I've prayed and you know I can't get free of it now you do what Abraham did he lifted his hand to God he says I've sworn I won't do it he didn't say you know I've asked God to help me not to touch it and not to do it that's the way Lot thought when he got into Sodom but I'm there with God basing nothing in himself not thinking of his own moral strength or of his great will he comes to a place where he sees it plain that God is all for him to save him God is I was going to say always falling over himself to keep that man from sin and from evil and he steps up into the place and he raises

his hand to God and he says Lord I see it and I won't do it again by my grace something happens in that man something happens that's right you try the soft method that you think is so biblical and you'll get nowhere oh I've asked I've prayed I want grace I want strength it sounds so nice and you can find lots of books to back it up but take the book beloved and take the actions of men of God there I raise my hand that's right God says that's right Abraham he reaches down with his nape he has hands and he shakes it that's right and he clasps that hand and it's right it's right Melchizedek King of Righteousness he watched Abraham when Abraham fled through the night chasing his harvest he could go he didn't know that he was being overlooked from the mountains he didn't know that he was being

watched over it was by this great King of Righteousness this Melchizedek that Abraham won his battle and he meets him in the King's day and out comes the bread and the wine and he says here Abraham you've won your battle you've gotten your victory you'll never find that there was another battle fought in that land by Abraham you've gotten your victory look and I've gotten mine too let's commune shall we let's commune shall we and Abraham ate the bread and Abraham ate the wine you won't ask for anything better than that on Sunday morning will you you won't ask for anything better than that oh Abraham

And so that's how we finish our story tonight. He goes back and he meets God again, but that's another part and we'll be there together in the will of the Lord next Wednesday. But as you part, as we part tonight and as you go out that door, can you walk out there with your feet and hands clean, your heart right, your mind right, right in relationship to God, right in relationship to Solomon, right in relationship to Lot, right in relationship to everybody, Kettle, Naoma, and all these evil fighting kings.

What's your relationship? Isn't it simple, all this? He just moved in faith and God saw to the rest. That's all that is in it. And as the Lord meets your heart, beloved, he meets you in the King's Dale.

Well, can you commune with him? Can you commune with him? Because things are right in itself.

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