

**Series: God & Abraham #1196**

**Title: Genesis 14.18-20**

***Two Men, One God***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. It is time to return to the Word of God in Genesis 14 as we continue our conversation about a king named Melchizedek.

I have been waiting, eagerly, all weekend for today because there was so much more I wanted to say on Friday just when our time expired. If you recall, I was in the middle of explaining our fifth point as to what we *do know* about this man Melchizedek. Last week I gave you, in a point-by-point format, five things we *know* about him because, as was also acknowledged, there is a lot we do *not* know. In fact, I told you he is a mysterious man. There is intrigue surrounding him and we are left with some unanswered questions. We are making our way towards one of those, but it requires some time to set up the question.

So, let me repeat a measure of what was said on Friday. To get at this, I will read from the first Book of the Bible, Genesis, at chapter 14, verses 18-20, **“<sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup>He blessed [Abram] and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup>and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ [Abram] gave [Melchizedek] a tenth of all.”**

Melchizedek. Thus far, we have five facts we *know* about him. And here is the fifth. **Point number five:** Melchizedek and Abram believed in, worshiped, and honored the same God. We know this because Melchizedek refers to the God of Abram as “God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.” We get the English “God Most High” from the Hebrew El Elyon. This is one of God’s names and it means Sovereign Lord or God the Highest. Think of it this way: the Bible teaches there is only One God. But within the Bible itself and then of course throughout all of history people have served and worshipped other gods (and goddesses, for that matter). These are what I like to call small g gods. These are invented deities. They do not exist, except as demons masquerading as deity, and all sorts of people believe in their existence. They think they are real.

In order to address the people who believe in false gods and to warn others away from them, the Bible makes the distinction that *The God* is El Elyon. He is God Most High. He is The God who rules over all other gods, goddesses, idols, and made up deities in the imagination of men and women.

I will have more to say about El Elyon in a moment. But to this name, Melchizedek (importantly) adds, “Possessor of heaven and earth.” And “Possessor of heaven and earth” speaks of God as the Creator. Possessor also means maker, as in “Maker of heaven and earth.” The God who is El Elyon is the Creator of heaven and earth. This takes us straight back to Genesis chapter 1. This is a strictly monotheistic conception. Monotheism (the belief in One God) understands the One God is *the* Creator. But in polytheism (the belief in multiple gods – plural) there is not the theology of One God who is the Creator.

It is very interesting that here is Melchizedek, a Canaanite, and the Canaanites were polytheists. They worshiped multiple gods. And yet Melchizedek, by adding “Possessor of heaven and earth,” is indicating that he believes “God Most High” is *the* Creator. We know this is *the* God Abram worships because we have been reading from Genesis 1, verse 1 all the way through to here in Genesis chapter 14 and the Creator is the same God who calls and commands Abram. Abram definitely worships the Creator. And so does Melchizedek. If Melchizedek had only said God was “God Most High” that would *not* be enough to qualify Melchizedek as a genuine believer in Abram’s God. But when he adds “Possessor of heaven and earth” that is a signal that Abram and Melchizedek believed and worshiped the same God.

Let me just add there is an element of prophecy included in the title “Possessor of heaven and earth.” Let me give you just one example, and this from Zechariah chapter 14 and verse 9. This speaks of the still coming Millennial Reign of Christ on this earth. Listen to Zechariah in the fourteenth chapter and verse 9,

**“<sup>9</sup>And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be *the only one*, and His name *the only one*.”** Talk about monotheism! When the Lord rules this earth, there will no longer be polytheism. Gone are all the false religions invented by Satan himself.

Notice, the Lord will be king where? “Over all the earth,” because He is (back to Genesis 14), “Possessor of heaven and earth.” This whole earth and everyone in it belongs to God, because He created the world and everyone in it. One of my all-time favorite hymns says this, “This is my Father’s world...God is the Ruler yet!” Oh yes, God is The Creator and He reigns and rules. He is Possessor of heaven and earth!

My task is to show you that Abram and Melchizedek believed in and worshiped the same God. We have the name “God Most High,” and added to this we have the name “Possessor of heaven and earth,” and now let me show you another name for God that Abram actually adds in Genesis 14 and verse 22. Follow me in the text a little further along. I want you to notice what Abram says of *the* God in Genesis 14, verse 22, **“Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth...’”** Here again we have “God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.” Abram is mirroring Melchizedek’s words, and *then* Abram adds “LORD” or “Yahweh.” Abram combines Melchizedek’s two names, “God Most High” and “possessor of heaven and earth” and prefaces these with “LORD.” This a sure-fire way to know that Abram accepts Melchizedek as a true believer in the LORD (in Yahweh).

Speaking of which, here is another proof that Abram and Melchizedek shared the same God. Look in verse 20. I am reading Genesis 14, verse 20, “[Abram] gave [Melchizedek] a tenth of all.” We will talk about this again, but it strikes me that Abram would not have done this if Melchizedek was a polytheist who only worshiped God Most High as part of a panoply of gods. The Bible makes a definite connection between what happens in this verse and the conviction that Melchizedek embraced the Lord God, and does so over in Hebrews chapter 7 (but I will save that for later).

Lastly, by way of proof that Abram and Melchizedek honored the same God, draw your attention to Genesis 14 and the second half of verse 18, “now he [Melchizedek] was a priest of God Most High.” Again, we will come back to this another time, but this surely speaks to what we have been saying. Doesn’t it? Melchizedek was a priest of *the* God, *the* God above all false gods, *the* Possessor of heaven and earth, *the* Creator, *the* LORD.

Friends, for Melchizedek to believe in, to worship, and to honor the Lord God is a truly remarkable fact. Remember, he is a Canaanite. For him to carry on the tradition of monotheism, all the way from the Garden in Eden to here, for him to make the One God his God, this speaks to the redeeming work of God in his life. The reality is monotheism preceded polytheism, as the author and missionary to the Muslims Samuel Zwemer made so clear in his lectures and book *The Origin of Religion*. But by the time of Abram – whom you will remember was an idolater in Ur of the Chaldeans – monotheism was *out* and polytheism was *in*. Yet not with Melchizedek.

I cannot help but to think of the Apostle Paul’s words to the Romans in his opening chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, verses 21 and following. Romans 1, beginning in verse 21, **“<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”** Melchizedek knew God and he honored him as God and gave thanks. But the other Canaanites did not.

Keep reading the Bible, boy did they ever exchange the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man. They were full-blown idolaters. But not Melchizedek. More on him tomorrow, right here, on God Is.

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