

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

Two Portraits of Christ: Abram and Melchizedek

Genesis 14:1-24

Introduction: Pictures of Christ

Throughout the history of the Western Church, there has been a river of artwork focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ

In 1475, Leonardo Da Vinci painted a scene entitled the Baptism of Christ, oil and tempera on wood, presently kept at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy

Twenty-five years later, perhaps the most famous sculpture of Christ is Michelangelo's *Pieta*, a six foot high block of marble transformed in 1499 by the exquisite skill of the greatest sculptor in history into a scene of moving power... the dead Christ laid across the lap of His grieving mother, Mary

Greek and Russian Orthodox churches are filled with icons, artistic renditions of Christ

Some people believe the most accurate portrait of Christ is the mysterious stain on the Shroud of Turin

Artists have filled the earth with renditions of Christ... BUT

None of the portraits of Christ can rival or replace the words of Scripture

Christ is never described physically in the Bible... but there are numerous portraits of his character and his ministry, and some of the best are in the Old Testament

In our text today, we have **TWO PORTRAITS OF CHRIST**

Abram a type of Christ in his courageous and powerful rescue of Lot

Melchizedek a type of Christ in his status as a Priest King.

Thus today we are studying a chapter with two portraits of Christ!

In the Old Testament there are three major offices for important men: Prophet, Priest, and King

In the Old Covenant, a Priest could be a Prophet... for such was Ezra the Prophet/Priest

And a King could be a Prophet... for such was David the Prophet/King

BUT NEVER could a Priest be a King in the Old Covenant... the two offices were separated

But in our text today we meet a Priest King, a magnificent and prophetic picture of Christ... one of the best in the Old Testament. His name was Melchizedek, the ancient King of Jerusalem long before it became the City of David

I. The Tapestry of Redemptive History: The Wars of Pagan Kings

A. Redemption Woven Into a Tapestry of History

1. "Wars and rumors of wars"

Matthew 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

- a. human history the unfolding of the wickedness of the human heart
 - b. small kings rise against other small kings... they move by greed and lust for conquest; pride and love for plunder motivate them
 - c. one kingdom rises, another falls before it... then that one also falls before the next one
 - d. God uses wars to accomplish His redemptive purposes
- Because of the conquests of the Greeks under Alexander and of the mighty Roman legions, the infrastructure for the rapid advance of Christianity was laid... the roads, the common language, the trade and commerce, the Pax Romana
 - Because of the conquests of the barbarians of the Roman empire, the gospel spread to the wilds of the German forests and the steppes of Russia
 - Because of the conquests of the Vikings, the gospel eventually conquered them as well... enslaved people courageously preached the message of Christ and they came to believe
 - Because of the worldwide ambitions of the English, the sun never set on the British Empire... and the gospel spread to India and to Africa
 - Because of WWII, American soldiers left the comforts of small-town America and fought in the south Pacific, in remote islands they'd never even heard of... and later some of them returned to Papua New Guinea to evangelize Stone Age tribes there

- Because the Taliban was conquered by the America military, missionaries are now able to preach the gospel openly in Afghanistan

Moral: God uses wars and rumors of wars to advance the cause of His redemptive plan

2. Sparrows

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

If God controls the fall of sparrows, how much more does He control the ebbs and flows of pagan history to achieve His ends

3. God unfolds His redemptive plan on a tapestry of great and small secular events

Literally NOTHING seemingly minor is insignificant

Literally NOTHING seemingly major is out of God's control

B. Lot's Faithless Choice

1. Last week, we saw Lot make a selfish and faithless choice

Genesis 13:10-13 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

2. This brought Lot under the swirl of events centered around wicked Sodom

3. Had he stayed with Abram, this would never have happened to him

4. His own selfishness and love for ease and pleasure put him in harm's way

C. The Warring Pagan Kings

1. A series of city-states, like ancient Greece

2. Each city and its surrounding region had a king

3. Major regional King: Kedorlaomer of Elam

a. Elam was east of Babylon, near Ur of the Chaldees where Abram started

b. he was allied with

vs. 1 *Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, and Tidal king of Goiim*

Shinar is the place where the Tower of Babel had been built, and eventually became the city of Babylon

Ellasar is just up the Euphrates river from Ur and from Ellasar

So... Kedorlaomer was an early version of the King of Babylon... the leader of a small form of Gentile empire

c. vassal kings in Palestine

- i) Palestine was valuable: rich soil, lots of natural resources
- ii) Palestine was strategic: en route to Egypt
- iii) Babylonian emperors forever were following the fertile crescent along the Tigris and Euphrates, coming down the King's Highway to conquer and dominate
- iv) Kedorlaomer, king of Elam had conquered these five kings in Palestine: the Kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, and Zoar
- v) for twelve years they paid their tribute to Kedolaomer

4. Thirteenth year: Vassal kings rebelled

- a. five kings allied and rebelled
- b. so Kedorlaomer whistled up three other vassal kings and came to re-establish his authority
- c. the four kings first conquered a bunch of other small states

vs. 5-7 *In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim 6 and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. 7 Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.*

Kedorlaomer was strong and powerful... he was undefeated and now came after Sodom and Gomorrah

- d. battle lines drawn up: the four kings vs. the five (vs. 8-9)

5. Kedorlaomer wins decisively

Kedorlaomer's armies destroyed the armies of the five kings, and some of the men fell into the terrifying tar pits of the Valley of Siddim... the rest fled to the hills

6. Kedorlaomer plunders

Most armies fight so they may plunder their enemies...

Johan Tzerclaes, Count of Tilly, commander of the Catholic forces in the Thirty-year's war said every soldier is entitled to **three hours of plunder**

So it was in this case:

vs. 11 The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away.

BUT they went one item too far:

12 They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

Notice the additional statement: since he was living in Sodom

Originally, Lot had merely lived NEAR Sodom... now he was living IN Sodom... that was the root of his problem

7. Abram is told

vs. 13 One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram.

Abram had made allies with the Amorites... perhaps had led some of them to an active faith in the living God

Together with them, he set out to rescue Lot

II. Christ-like Portrait #1: Abram and the Military Rescue of Lot

vs. 14-16 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

A. Abram's Courageous Rescue of Lot

1. Note Abram's gracious spirit toward his selfish nephew
2. Note Abram's courage and leadership... a relatively small force going after an undefeated army of four kings

3. Note Abram's skill as a general: the incredible boldness and initiative, the night-time attack, the division of his men into groups, the surprise factor
4. Note how beautifully Abram stands as a type of Christ, who also rescued us from capture

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

Galatians 1:4 Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age

B. Charles Spurgeon's Comments

“What a splendid type is Abram, in the narrative before us, of our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us read this story of Abram in connection with our Savior, and see how full of meaning it is. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the abundance of His love, had taken us to be His brothers; but we, through our sin, had moved into the land of Sodom, and Jesus Christ dwelt alone in His safety and His happiness, enjoying the presence of God. The hosts of our enemies, with terrible force and cruel fury, carried us away captives. We were violently borne away with all the goods which we possessed, into a land of forgetfulness and captivity forever. Christ, who had lost nothing by this, nevertheless being a “brother born for adversity,” pursued our haughty foes. He overtook them; He smote them with His mighty hand—He took their spoil, and returned with crimsoned vesture, leading captivity captive. He restored that which He took not away. ... Abram was that righteous man raised in the East, to whom God gave his enemies as driven stubble to his bow; and so the Lord Jesus has driven our enemies like chaff over to the wind, for they fled at the presence of Jehovah Jesus; and by the valor of the atoning Lamb they have been utterly broken in pieces forever.”

C. God's Commitment to Rescue His Own: Both Lot and Abram

1. Lot, however sinful, is still one of God's own
2. God does not send Abram after all the victims of Kedorlaomer, but just Lot
3. God will later send two angels to rescue Lot from a far greater danger in Sodom... His won wrath
4. Peter's comments on Lot

2 Peter 2:7-9 if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)-- 9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

God rescued Lot from Sodom twice... this is the nature of God's commitment to His own children... even if they sin foolishly by choosing to live in Sodom

5. So also God knows how to deliver Abram from His enemies... Abram had every reason to be bold as a lion and utterly fearless in this matter... God had made him a promise!!!

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

God would personally see to Abram's protection, and any who rode with him into battle would also come under his umbrella of blessing... Abram literally could not lose!!

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

Abram completely shocked the victorious armies of Kedorlaomer, perhaps drunk with the excesses from their plunders. He attacked them at night and routed them all the way to Damascus, not letting up until the victory was complete and total

See how also Abram won a blessing for all the vanquished nations of Palestine over the forces from Elam and Babylon!!

Abram in this is a type of Christ... the righteous Son of God who went into battle to set the captives free

So Jesus announced His mighty mission in the synagogue in Nazareth:

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed

The accomplishment of our release from captivity to Satan, sin, and death would be more expensive to Christ than it ever was to Abram... IT WOULD COST HIM HIS VERY LIFE

Matthew 20:28 The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

D. Abram's Faith-filled Pledge to the King of Sodom (vs. 17, 21-24)

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). ... 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.' 24 I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me-- to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

1. Two Kings come out to Abram

The way the account is written, it seems that both the King of Sodom and the King of Salem came out to meet him at the same time

2. The King of Sodom, with material blessings
3. The King of Salem, with spiritual blessings
4. The King of Salem, Melchizedek, Abram respects... his blessing Abram desires
5. The King of Sodom Abram does not respect... his blessing he totally rejects

The King of Sodom perhaps had himself literally fallen into the slime pit of themselves

NASB Genesis 14:10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them.

So here is the immoral and disgusting king of Sodom, covered with the stinking slime of the tar pit of Siddim, wanting to offer a reward to Abram

Abram is different than Lot... he wants literally nothing from Sodom... nothing at all. So he relates the depth of his commitment in this matter:

vs. 22-23 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.'

Abram's eyes are on the rewards that only God can give. It is not by accident that the very next interaction in Genesis is this one:

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

THAT is the reward Abram wanted... God Himself, and God alone

However, he does intercede for the Amorites that rode with him:

vs. 24 I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me-- to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

III. Christ-like Portrait #2: Melchizedek, the Priest-King

vs. 18-20 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.

A. Who Was He?

1. His name: Melchizedek

literally means "King of Righteousness"

2. His city: Salem = Jerusalem

Salem is the Hebrew word for Peace... security, well-being

The beginning of a long history of the rulers of Jerusalem

Ironic first name: City of Peace

Jerusalem has been anything but peaceful... rather a long history of one conquest after another

Abram met with this King and would later go to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah near Jerusalem

- David conquered Jerusalem from the Jebusites in 1005 B.C. ...from then on the Jews called it the City of David
- Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar conquered it from the Jews in 587 B.C.
- Persian King Cyrus the Great conquered it from the Babylonians in 538 B.C.
- Greek King Alexander the Great conquered the city and its Persian army in 331 B.C.
- Roman commander Pompey conquered the city from the Greeks in 64 B.C.
- Egyptian Muslims under Caliph Omar took the city from the Byzantines for Islam in A.D. 637
- European Crusaders conquered it for Christendom from the Muslims in 1099.
- Egyptian Muslims under Saladin reconquered it from the Crusaders for Islam in 1187... the Crusaders tried numerous times to dislodge the Muslims, briefly succeeding from 1229-1244.
- Muslim Mamluks and later Turks controlled the city for Islam until the British conquered it during WWI in 1917
- The British controlled Jerusalem until they departed the divided city to a coalition of Jews and Muslims on May 15, 1948... the Arabs immediately attacked the Jews and one Jewish-Arab war after another has resulted

All of this from the city originally called "Peace" in the time of Melchizedek

Jesus Himself acknowledged the root cause of the warfare of Jerusalem

Luke 19:41-44 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-- but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Not until the Jews acknowledge the true King of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, will the city of Jerusalem be truly the city of peace

3. His office as King

Melchizedek was King of the City-state of Salem, much like the other kings in this chapter... he was the leader of the city

4. His office as Priest

He was also called a "Priest of God Most High"

This should show us that God was doing more things in the world at that time than just working through Abram... He had His godly remnant, men like this mysterious king who knew the true and only God as did Abram

B. What Did He Do?

1. Brought out bread and wine
2. Blessed Abram with authority
3. Received a tenth of Abram's plunder

C. Psalm 110: King David's Inspired Meditation on the Christ

Psalm 110:1 Of David. A psalm. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." 2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. 3 Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

1. The Pedigree of the Psalm: Christ's Quotation

Matthew 22:41-46 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. 43 He said to them, "How is

it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, 44 "'The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" 45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" 46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

2. Christ's basic point: David was NOT writing about himself, but about the Christ

3. Kingly might and power are expected and prominent

a. the "Son of David" would certainly be a King in the order of David... for so it was prophesied

ESV Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Jeremiah 33:17 "For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel...'"

b. the kingly power of the Messiah is clearly prominent

Psalm 110:2-3 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. 3 Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth.

4. But what then can this mean?

Psalm 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

5. Did David understand this? Probably not!!!

1 Peter 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

David could not have plumbed the depths of his own words when he wrote,

"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Full revelation of the implications of Christ's priestly ministry would

D. Hebrews 5 & 7: The Inspired Commentary on Genesis 14 and Psalm 110

1. First mention in Hebrews 5

2. Hebrews rebuked for immaturity and ignorance
3. Hebrews 7: Extended meditation on theme

“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek”

E. Aspects of Comparison

Hebrews 7:1-4 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." 3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. 4 Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

1. Melchizedek was a Priest-King and so was Christ
2. The name “King of Righteousness” is perfectly fulfilled only in Christ
3. The name “King of Peace” is perfectly fulfilled only in Christ
4. Symbolic eternal origins is perfectly fulfilled only in Christ
5. Symbolic eternal priesthood is perfectly fulfilled only in Christ
6. Higher in rank and able to bless Abram... again perfectly fulfilled only in Christ
7. Received a tenth from Abram, standing in Christ’s place as representative

F. Glorious Composite Portrait of Christ

Jesus Christ is the perfect King and the Perfect Priest

G. Was Melchizedek Actually the Pre-incarnate Christ??

IV. Theological Significance of Melchizedek: Christ Our Eternal High Priest

A. Central Message of Hebrews: Superiority of Christ and the New Covenant

Hebrews 7:22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

B. Specific Message of Hebrews 7: Christ is Our Eternal High Priest

Hebrews 7:24-26 because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26 Such a high priest meets our need-- one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

C. Secondary Message of Hebrews 7: Old Covenant Priesthood is Obsolete

Hebrews 8:13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

All earthly priests are limited by their sinfulness and mortality

All earthly kings are also limited by their sinfulness and mortality

Jesus Christ is the sinless Priest-King... sinless so His reign is perfect and so is His priestly ministry; deathless so His priestly ministry and Kingly reign are eternal

V. Application

1. Worship Christ, the Conqueror of Our Abductor

- a. see the immense courage of Abram in rescuing sinful Lot from his captors
- b. see the even greater courage of Christ in rescuing us from our danger: rescued from Satan; dark kingdom, rescued from eternal death in hell, rescued and given eternal life
- c. see how much Christ's rescue of you cost
- d. YET note that Lot's own foolishness and sinfulness is what made him vulnerable to this captivity
- e. are you lining in Sodom, taking in their ways, drifting little by little into the lifestyle of Sodom, and sharing also their scourges, their wars, their punishments, their fate??
- f. then cry out to Christ to rescue you again from Sodom... and when he does, don't go back and live there again as Lot did

2. Trust in Christ, Our Eternal High Priest

- a. Melchizedek was a picture of Christ, a Priest-King
- b. Christ is also your eternal, high priest... He constantly lives to stand at the right hand of God and plead His own blood on your behalf
- c. it Christ's priestly ministry ALONE that can rescue you from the wrath to come and bring you safely to eternity in the presence of God
- d. trust in Christ, trust Him wholly... His blood and His prayers will finish your salvation

3. Submit to Christ, Our Eternal King

- a. Melchizedek was named King of Righteousness... Jesus lives it every moment
 - b. submit gladly to His righteous rule over your life
 - c. is He commanding you to do something? Perhaps to move away from living in downtown Sodom
 - d. perhaps you are spending your time in the entertainments or allurements of the world... in pursuing personal pleasure or power or prosperity in America as Lot did in Sodom
 - e. perhaps Christ is calling you to serve Him with your spiritual gifts, or to give more money, or to evangelize, or to put a certain sin to death
 - f. He is your KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS... will you not obey Him today??
4. Pattern Yourself After Abram, the Faithful, Not Lot the Faithless
- a. Abram was bold as a lion and courageously rescued one of God's people
 - b. EVANGELISM also takes courage
 - c. so does rescuing a brother or sister from sin
 - d. resolve not to defile yourself with the loot of Sodom... set your hearts fully on God as your only true reward
 - e. don't be like Lot, who as soon as Abram rescued him from capture, immediately returned to live in Sodom...