

JESUS, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST; THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COMFORTER

Week 11/JROC – Backstory to Melchizedek & Abram

March 3, 2024

How do both Melchizedek and Abram fit into the big picture of Scripture?

BACKSTORY Re: Melchizedek and Abram:

Sin entered the world. God promised the Seed of woman – the Redeemer. Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden. Man continued to spiral downward.

The solution for sin – the sin-bearer, the Seed of the woman - who would be born supernaturally – of a virgin.

God gave to man a godly line. Abel was killed. Adam and Eve had another child, Seth, who was “appointed.”

Genesis 6 – (TURN TO) The global flood destroyed all that was living on the earth save Noah and his family (8 in all) and all the animals they took into the ark. The flood DID NOT destroy man’s sin!

Gen. 8:20-21 – (TURN TO)

Through the life of Abram, God is unfolding His plan for the redemption of the world, from eternity past (Rev. 13:8)

Genesis 14...the timeframe - prior to God cutting the Abrahamic Covenant while Abram was in a deep sleep (Gen. 15). and prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19). . . **BUT** after God had appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldeas – Babylon - calling Abram away from his country to a land that He/God would give Abram and of whom He/God would create a GREAT nation!

Gen. 14:1 - *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel King of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, ... THESE FOUR Mesopotamian kings of the east who were dominant came against five subservient vassal kings in the area south of the Dead Sea. The five vassal kings (over city-states) served the Mesopotamian kings for 12 years, most likely paying them tribute money, and in the 13th year, the vassal kings rebelled.*

Gen. 14:8b-12 – *The vassal kings in Canaan joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim (thought to be at the south end of the Dead Sea) against the Mesopotamian kings - four kings against five. ¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits (tar pits; bitumen); and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. ¹¹ Then they (the Mesopotamian kings) took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

Lot was caught in the middle of a power struggle (greater than we realize) between two opposing kingdoms – having been taken captive by the Mesopotamian kings.

Gen. 14:13 - *Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew... ¹⁴ Now when Abram heard that his brother (as in “brethren” – one of his kin) was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus (modern day Syria) . ¹⁶ So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his*

goods, as well as the women and the people. ¹⁷ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Why is the king of Sodom meeting Abram?

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We know WHO fought the battle for Abram and Lot and the women and people from the land of Canaan?

Gen. 15:1 - *After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.'* This was a physical battle – but it was also spiritual warfare. Gen. 3:15 – “I will put enmity against the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman”

But, before the King of Sodom can even speak, who appears SUDDENLY on the scene?

Gen. 14:18-20 - *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.'*

WHY did the King of Sodom approach Abram?

Gen. 14:21-24 - *Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— ²⁴ except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."* Abram was protecting his calling from God – whether or not Abram realized all that it entailed! Moreso, Abram did not wish to rob God of HIS GLORY!

NOTE: one of the kings included in the battle on the side of the Mesopotamian kings - the King of Shinar!!!! SO? What's up with Shinar? Why am I zeroing in on Shinar?

Shinar was the location of the Tower of Babel!!

Turn to Gen. 10 and whom do we meet? NIMROD! Nimrod's name means “rebellion”!

Gen. 10:9-10 - *He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before (turn from; against) the LORD.'* ¹⁰ *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.*

A plain in Shinar was the site chosen to construct the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-4). Shinar is significant in its connection to the world's historical rebellion against God.

“Shinar” means “country of two rivers.” “Shinar is the ancient name for the territory later known in Abram's day as Babylon or Chaldea.

God called Abram out from Babylon!

Shinar became known as Babylonia or Chaldea.

Abram came from Ur of the Chaldeas (Babylonia). Abram's father, Terah, served other gods (Josh. 24:2). God called Abram to go to the land of Canaan where Abram encountered and defeated kings one of whom is the King of Shinar/Babylon (Gen. 14)!! God called Abram to become a great nation to bless the world and along comes Babylon! SPIRITUAL WARFARE?!!!!

Nimrod's rebellion is seen in the attempt to build a city and a tower that would reach to heaven (Gen. 11:3-4)...the purpose of which was to make a name for themselves in defiance against God's plan. God had told mankind to scatter – to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. This

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kingdom of Babylon was the first attempt at world unity/globalism and rebellion against dependence upon God! Shinar is associated with the wicked worship of false gods.

God had created man. Sin entered the world and sent mankind spiraling downward. Noah's three sons produced 70 nations. And Nimrod came on the scene (Gen. 10 & Gen. 11).

God called Abram and through Abram's physical descendants the Messiah would come into the world – the Seed of the Woman.

And, God promised to use Abraham and his descendants as an instrument of blessing for the world – to be the vehicle of redemption for the world – the nations! (Rom. 11:15)

The land of Shinar is referenced eight times in the Old Testament (Genesis 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Joshua 7:21; Isaiah 11:11; Daniel 1:2; Zechariah 5:11), always in connection to the geographical location of Babylonia. NOT NYC, the UK, or Rome!!!!!!

Shinar was the location of the *Tower of Babel*. As punishment for the people's wickedness, God confused their language, and thus the land of Shinar earned the name of "Babel" or "Babylon" (Genesis 11:5–9). Babylon and Babylonia both derive their names from *Babel*, which means "confusion."

Shinar was ruled by a king that Abraham fought. Two kingdoms battling – depicting God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom!!

Shinar was associated with *Babylon's* wickedness. Zechariah the prophet recorded a vision of a basket with a lead cover. The angel guiding Zechariah identified the meaning of the basket: "This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land" (Zechariah 5:6). Then the angel raised the cover of lead, revealing to the prophet that there was a woman in the basket. The angel said, "'This is wickedness,' and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth" (Zechariah 5:8). The basket with the woman was then carried through air to the land of Shinar where a temple would be built for it (verse 11). This strange vision pictures the

suppression of wickedness and its banishment to Shinar/Babylon. In Shinar, the wickedness would eventually be freed and even worshiped (Revelation 17). Shinar is associated with the wicked worship of false gods, and in the end times, Babylon the Great is the center of wickedness and demon worship (Revelation 18:2–3).

Shinar was the location of Judah’s exile (II Chron. 36:15-21).

Shinar is one of the locations that contains a faithful remnant of Israel! During Jesus’ reign in the Millennial Kingdom/the Kingdom of God on earth, we are told in Isa. 11:10-11 that *...in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. ¹¹ It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea.* This promise assures us that God’s people will be regathered even from Shinar to worship the Lord in His future kingdom.

Shinar is significant in its connection to the world’s historical rebellion against God: everything from the construction of the Tower of Babel to its association with idols, its mistreatment of Israel, and its future association with the Antichrist. Despite the many evils in the land of Shinar,

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God has preserved His people there. Believing Israelites in Shinar will participate in Jesus’ millennial kingdom in the future, demonstrating God’s grace and redemption.

Melchizedek *brought out bread and wine*, which was an ordinary custom offered as a show of friendship and hospitality, a token of goodwill (Judges 19:19; Ecclesiastes 10:19; Lamentations 2:12). It does not seem to be connected to the New Testament ordinance of communion (1 Corinthians 11:26). *He was a priest of God Most High*, this is the first occurrence of the word “priest” (Hebrew *Kohen*) in the Bible. The text tells us that Melchizedek was a *priest of the God Most High*. It is fascinating to see that God had an intimate relationship with Melchizedek. Just because the Bible focuses on the story of Abraham, does not preclude God from working in many ways with many people during that era. Job, a contemporary of Abraham, had a relationship with God! Melchizedek was a great king and priest. Isn’t it likely that he would have had followers who also served the one true God?

It is possible that Melchizedek and his followers are part of the reason God delayed judgment on Canaan (Genesis 15:16). When God cut the covenant with Abram, He told Abram who was in a deep sleep that the children of Israel would not return from a foreign land (Egypt) until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete. God deferred judgment for “four generations.” By the time of the Exodus (roughly 500 years later) the Jebusites are following false Gods rather than

the one true God (Exodus 23:23-24). Israel failed to drive the Jebusites out of the land (Judges 1:21).