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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE SUPERIORITY OF ROYALTY

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 47
HEBREWS 7:1-3

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

Melchisedec was a King and a Priest. He was a forecast of what the Son of God would be. Christ is God's High Priest forever, in the same battalion as Melchisedec.

Here is the superiority of royalty. Every believer, every born again person in the Church Age is royalty. When you are saved, you walk right into the Royal family and you are there to stay. Remember the outline of this chapter--

1. The superiority of the Melchisedec battalion. Verses 1-10
2. The inferiority of the Levitical priesthood. Verses 11-19
3. The superiority of the Royal Priesthood of the Church Age. Vs 20-28

OUR SUPERIORITY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ROYALTY

The royal Priesthood is made up of the Lord Jesus Christ and all the believers of the Church Age. The Levitical priesthood has now been deactivated and also the family priesthood has been deactivated. There are three great references to Melchisedec in the Bible:

1. The historical reference - Genesis 14.
2. The prophetic reference - Psalm 110:4.
3. The doctrinal reference - Hebrews 7.

HEBREWS 7:1 "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;" "For" is the conjunction gar. "This Melchisedec" means that he is to be emphasized here. In Greek it is Melchisedec and in Hebrew it is Melchizedek. "King of Salem" always refers to a human being, not a theophany. Salem is an actual place and Melchisedec is an actual human person, not an angel and not a Christophany. A Theophany refers to an appearance of Jesus Christ before his resurrection. A Christophany refers to an appearance of Jesus Christ after his resurrection.

Why Melchisedec Is Not A Theophany

- a. A theophany is never given a formal name
- b. A theophany is never mentioned with a definite locality, like Salem.
- c. A theophany always declares God to be the messenger. Melchisedec is never so declared.
- d. The content of Psalm 110:4 indicates Melchisedec is an historical person. Christ is addressed by God the Father. God does not say to Christ, "You are Melchisedec, but he says you are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."
- e. A priest must be true humanity in order to represent the human race before God. Melchisedec was functioning as a priest when he met Abraham and was therefore a true member of the human race.

A Spiritual Royalty To Last Forever

In the Church Age the Holy Spirit does something that was never done before--He picks us up and enters us into union with Christ and this means that we are members of the royal family of God. The Holy Spirit indwells us and this is our badge of royalty. The Holy Spirit provides us with a spiritual gift and this is the function of our royalty.

This spiritual royalty will last forever. As a royal priest, it makes no difference who your father and mother were, your birth certificate or death certificate are not important. OURS IS NOT ROYALTY BY HERITAGE BUT ROYALTY BY REGENERATION. We are eternal royalty, eternal nobility.

Other Evidence

We have dug up information about Melchisedec. The Tell El Amarna letters document Melchisedec as an historical person. He actually lived. He is called "a priest of the Most High God."

- a. This means that he was a believer.
- b. This means that he was appointed by God.
- c. He is the one who met and gave spiritual assistance to Abraham.

The word for "met" is the aorist, active, participle of sunantao. This is a constative aorist and gathers into one point all that occurred between Abraham and Melchisedec. Melchisedec was the aggressor and went to meet Abraham. Remember this--people are very susceptible to defeat after great victories. This participle is antecedent to the main verb here which we find in verse two which is "gave." The word for Abraham returning is a present, active, participle of hupostrepho and it tells of his returning from the great slaughter of these foreign unbelieving kings. This is a confederation of unbelieving kings. "Blessed him" is an aorist, active, participle of eulogeo. This indicates that at that moment Melchisedec was superior to Abraham. The superiority was the fact that he administered spiritual things to one inferior to him. Actually it is the superiority of the royal priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

To get the historical setting for this we must now go to Genesis 14.

GENESIS 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;" Here are four kings and they had vast kingdoms which made almost a ring around the valley around the place we now call "The Dead Sea."

GENESIS 14:2 "That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar." "Made" is the kal perfect of asah and it means they manufactured war. They manufactured war out of their old sin nature. This gives us a great commentary of the source of war. (There will be wars until Christ returns because people have old sin natures.) This war took place in the Vale of Siddim. This is the Jordan Valley down by the Dead Sea. The next verses will give us what we call retrospective exposition.

GENESIS 14:4 "Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled." For twelve years they "served" and this is from abadah and means they paid tribute for military protection. In the thirteenth year they refused to pay the tribute. The word "rebelled" is from maradah and it means they refused to continue to pay the tribute.

GENESIS 14:5 "And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim," It took Chedorlaomer a year to organize his forces so he could get ready for war. There were giant groups in all those mountains around. The Rephaims are giants, as well as the Karnaim and the Zuzims and the Emims. The word for "smote them" is from nakah and this was just a warm up for the real battle. In other words, he was just putting down the opposition around him so he could get ready for the real battle that was coming. He didn't want any of these giant groups to strike him in the back after he got the real war going.

GENESIS 14:6 "And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness." The Horites were also giants and they were defeated.

GENESIS 14:7 "And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar." "They returned" is a kal imperfect of shuwb and it means they gradually pulled their army back together from all these areas where they had been fighting these giant groups. The giants who survived will later inter-marry with the Philistines and these are the ones who produced Goliath and his four brothers.

Chedorlaomer had a confederation of four nations and with all the rim opposition put down, they are now ready for the real battle. There is a confederation of five groups in the Vale of Siddim and this is explained in verses 8 and 9.

GENESIS 14:10 "And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain." It says that this vale was full of "slimepits." The word is chemar and this means pits of asphalt. Oil was almost on top of the ground.

Summary of This Battle

1. The Vale of Siddim was one of the most beautiful valleys in the world which would later, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah become what we know today as The Dead Sea.
2. Chedorlaomer used great military genius in securing all his flanks. He conquered the giants first, so they wouldn't strike him in the back when the main war was going to be fought.
3. The Horites were cave dwellers, who were giants also, who will later on exterminate the Edomites.
4. Notice that after extensive securing of the flanks, one section was left open and that was the section to Chedorlaomer's rear where Abraham lived.

The principle

The wall of fire of God's protection was around Abraham.
Jesus Christ is in control of history.

There was no reason why Chedorlaomer should not have conquered Abraham except for the hand of God's protection.

5. The line of march was from the north, around by Edom and then into the Vale of Siddim. They did not march directly through Abraham's country.
6. After plundering all the surrounding areas, they gave war to the five kings in the Vale of Siddim. (The King of Sodom was the leader of that group of five kings.)
7. The valley was full of asphalt pits, not to tell us that oil was in that region, but to remind us that maneuverability was almost an impossible thing. Asphalt pits would make a retreat almost impossible.
8. The battle was won by Chedorlaomer (Look at verses 11 and 12). Lot was living in Sodom, and he was a reversionist believer and he chose to live by human viewpoint. Lot chose Sodom, but what appeared from a human viewpoint to be a good thing turned out to be his downfall.
9. Abraham's choice of faith protected him completely from the conflict of Chedorlaomer. He was completely bypassed. God's protection was about him. Lot's bad human viewpoint decision caused him to lose everything.

This is the background of the four great victories of Abraham which we will now study in the remainder of this chapter.

VICTORY NO. 1 Verses 13-14 THE VICTORY OF MENTAL ATTITUDE

This states the victory of Bible Doctrine in the soul. He didn't gloat over the defeat of Lot. He didn't say, "I told you so, Mr. Lot." Lot had made his own trouble. Lot had produced his own misery.

GENESIS 14:13 "And 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 Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. The word "one that had escaped" is from hapalet and it means one who had miraculously escaped. He evidently years before had decided to leave Abraham and cast his future with Lot. The word really means "the fugitive." He had chosen that fertile green valley along with his master Lot. He thought, like Lot did, that he would find happiness but he found misery. When disaster hit, he thought about Abraham, and when his life was in danger, the fugitive ran back to Abraham. The word "told" is the hiphil of nagadh and it means he was forced, by the circumstances, to run and tell Abraham. Well, what could Abraham do? The army of Chedorlaomer had probably 50 to 100 thousand. The point is this--In times of crisis, in times of pressure, the one in trouble always runs to the strong believer. Abraham the Hebrew is an idiom for Abraham the believer. Mamre, Eschol, and Aner were converts of Abraham and they were his friends and he had a treaty with them.

GENESIS 14:14 "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." The word for "when Abraham heard" is the kal imperfect of shama. This pictures Abraham as a great man. No judging, no gloating over Lot's failure, no, "I told you so." This is the mental attitude of grace. Gal. 6:1 and 6:9-10. Abraham was not jealous, was not gloating over the defeat of Lot.

VICTORY NO. 2 THE VICTORY IN WAR

When Abraham heard that Lot had been captured, he went into action at once. The phrase "he armed his trained servants" is a wrong translation. It is a hiphil of rug and it means he led out his trained servants. They were already armed and had been trained for just such a time as this. They were ready for the fighting for they had been well trained. They moved all the way to Dan very rapidly. The word for "pursued" is the kal imperfect of radaph and it means the proper maneuver.

GENESIS 14:15 "And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus." The words "he divided himself" is from chalaq and it means he separated his army into groups to make a night attack. The army of Chedorlaomer had the prisoners and much loot. He divided his forces so he could hit them at the proper spot. He surprised the enemy. He hit them at night and he had the proper concentration of his best fighting men. The word for "smote" is nakah and it means he killed them and stacked up their dead bodies. He went after them as far as Damascus. Those he didn't kill he frightened almost to death.

GENESIS 14:16 "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." "He brought back" is the hiphil perfect shuwb and it means he caused to return. He defeated the enemy and brought Lot back and took back all the wealth they had taken from these five kings in the Vale of Siddim.

VICTORY NO. 3 ABRAHAM'S GREAT VICTORY OVER MATERIALISM

Someone greater than Abraham is now going to come into the picture to minister to the spiritual needs of Abraham. This Melchisedec was a king and also a super grace believer. He was superior to Abraham on Abraham's blind side.

GENESIS 14:17 "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." The King of Sodom came out to make a deal with Abraham. By his own cleverness he was going to make himself greater than Abraham. He wants to be able to tell his people, "I made Abraham wealthy." But a man greater than Abraham is going to come along and save the neck of Abraham.

GENESIS 14:18 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." I call this verse "Melchisedec to the rescue." The word for "brought" is the hiphil stem of jatsa. Melchisedec was a spiritual giant and he came forth with bread and wine, because he was the priest of the Most High God (Who is Jesus Christ).

1. This is the second battle. The Battle of the two kings. It is a spiritual battle and it is almost like the king of Sodom and Melchisedec were battling for the soul of Abraham.
2. The King of Sodom came to rob Abraham of his victory of grace.

3. If the King of Sodom could win the material victory, then he would completely cover up the grace issue.
4. Furthermore, everyone will give the King of Sodom credit for making Abraham rich. With the people on his side, the King of Sodom will eventually win the total victory over Abraham. This king was brilliant in intrigue.
5. God's matchless grace is manifest. Abraham received reinforcement of grace from a royal priest.
6. We are most vulnerable after a great victory.
7. Melchisedec arrived at the exact right moment to counterattack the Devil's attack on Abraham.
8. Melchisedec didn't arrive while Abraham was fighting the battle, but after the military victory had been won.
9. Melchisedec arrived when the more deadly and more dangerous enemy was attacking. The King of Sodom was now attacking Abraham with intrigue and treachery and that's when Abraham needed help the most.
At the time of great need in your life, God will send someone to help you.

GENESIS 14:18 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." I call this "Melchisedec to the rescue." It is a picture of Jesus Christ to our rescue.

GENESIS 14:19 "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:" This spiritual blessing from Melchisedec brought Abraham back from material thoughts back to occupation with Christ. "He blessed him" is the piel imperfect of barak and this put Abraham's eyes back on the Lord. Melchisedec became Abraham's teacher.

GENESIS 14:20 "And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." The victory was God's victory. "Delivery" here means that God's deliverance was an even greater victory than the military victory. He took from the top of the pile of each pile of wealth and gave it to Melchisedec. Bread here is analogous to the humanity of Christ. Wine is analogous to the priestly function at the altar and it points to the cross. The blessing came from the communication of doctrine. The message of Melchisedec to Abraham was this--"Don't depend on the material things you have acquired, rather depend on the wealth of God in your mind and life.

GENESIS 14:21 "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." So Abraham said, "NO!" to the King of Sodom.

GENESIS 14:22 "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth."

Abraham took an oath to the Lord. The word is rum and in the hiphil it means "I have been motivated by doctrine to this conclusion."

GENESIS 14:23 "That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:" Abraham said that even to a thread or a thong from a sandal, he wouldn't take one thing. Abraham was saying in substance this--"You can't make me rich because God has made me rich." So Abraham had won the greatest victory.

VICTORY NO. 4 VICTORY OVER SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Mamre, Eschol and Aner were friends and converts of Abraham.

1. Abraham in self-righteousness and pride could have imposed his standards on these people who were not spiritually as mature as he was. But he refused to do so. He was spiritually mature, but they were not.
2. If he had deprived them of their part of the loot, he would have forced his self-righteousness on them.
3. When you are occupied with Christ, you don't try to superimpose your standards on someone else.
4. This is one of Abraham's greatest spiritual victories. The lack of self-righteousness.

This historical material will prepare us for an understanding of Hebrews 7.