

The Bread and the Wine



Read the experience from Abraham's life found in Genesis 14:17-24 which beautifully illustrates the truth that the grace of God teaches believers to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Abraham is 'the father of all them that believe'. (Rom. 4:11) The bible records that 'he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness'. (Gen. 15:6) This then was the experience of a believer; that which it illustrates ought to be the experience of every believer.

Man of Faith – About to be Tested

Melchizedek identified as 1. King of Salem, 2. Priest of the Most High God

Why does Melchizedek give Abraham bread and wine? To refresh and strengthen him after the battle.

What was the test that Abraham was about to face? The king of Sodom offered the riches of the wicked city to Abraham. Would Abraham become a friend of the ungodly king, accepting his unholy riches and by implication the king would become Abraham's overlord and Abraham the vassal?

Knowing that Abraham was about to be tempted, God did not send someone to remind him of God's law. (Rom. 6:14) God did not send a prophet to remind him of judgment he would face if he departed God's ways. (2 Tim. 1:7) God sent a priest, but why?

God Free to Act in Grace

What was one of the main roles of the priest and why did they do it? (see Ex. 29:38; Lev. 16:15,21; Heb. 10:11) A priest is one who approaches God on the basis of a sacrifice that has been made to atone for sin, and pleads with God on behalf of man.

The combination of law and the priest's actions were God's provision for showing mercy to those that broke the law. The pleading of the priest freed

God to act in grace rather than judgment. Melchizedek then, as ‘the priest of the Most High God’, represented the grace of God . Just prior to the moment of Abraham’s temptation, grace was disciplining (strengthening) Abraham.

More Evidence of Grace

Type (definition) - A figure, representation, or symbol of something to come, as an event in the Old Testament foreshadows another in the New Testament. Types generally find their fulfillment in the person and ministry of Christ.

The bread and the wine are a type. What did they point to for Abraham? What do they point to for you? (Heb. 6:20, Psa. 110:4). For Abraham, they pointed forward to the death of Christ. For us, they remind us of Christ’s death. Christ’s death satisfied divine justice and made grace toward us possible.

Eating the bread and drinking the wine came with a blessing from God Most High, who is referred to as possessor of Heaven and earth .

As the bread and wine point to the Son, whom God did not spare, but delivered up for us all, so the blessings of the possessor of Heaven and earth point to the ‘all things’ which are freely given with the Son (Rom. 8:32). Here then, is ‘grace upon grace.’ Here was God’s grace which brings salvation, teaching Abraham that God, because He is the possessor of Heaven and earth, is fully able to give him everything he needed. It was a reminder that the riches which God, who owns Heaven and earth, gives are far greater than any possible favors from an ungodly king. God’s gifts, being both spiritual and temporal, satisfy both body and spirit.

What was Abraham’s response to this blessing? Why did Abraham respond as he did, to bread and wine, and the blessings of this priest? Abraham gave tithes of all. His heart was overflowing with devotion to God. Abraham was not forced to tithe. The bread and wine were given unconditionally, and likewise Abraham’s tithes were freely given. Abraham voluntarily acknowledged his full dependence upon God, man’s true state under grace.

Discipline to Resist Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts

Immediately after Melchizedek blessed Abraham, what happened? Abraham was tempted by the riches of Sodom. These were the same riches that lured Lot to settle in the land.

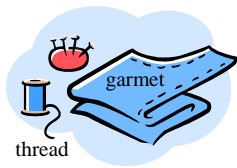
What was Abraham's response to the king of Sodom? He refused to take anything.



No commandment, but communion with God's high priest showed Abraham the riches of God's grace toward him.

Who is our Melchizedek today, the mere reminder of what His death accomplished and what God does in love because of Him should tip the scales, should discipline us in love and devotion to godliness?

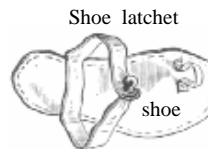
On Our Standing and Walk Before God



Thread – smallest part of a garment

Garment – symbolizes what?
See Isa. 61:10, Matt. 22:11.

Believer's righteous standing before God



Shoe latchet – representative of something insignificant (Mark 1:7)

What is the shoe representative of?

Believer's walk (earthly life).

Based upon your understanding of the above, what is Abraham's meaning in Gen. 14:23? The world (the king) cannot contribute (ie. wealth) the smallest particle (thread & shoe latchet) to the believer's (Abraham, saved) standing (garment) before God or to his holy living (shoe).

Meditate on Christ

As Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abraham, so Another, 'called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek' (Heb. 5:10), also took bread and wine. When He took the bread and broke it, He said: "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you' (1 Cor. 11:24). He also took the wine, and said: 'This is my blood ... which is shed for many for the remission of sins'

(Matt. 26:28). Ever since, throughout this age of grace, the bread and the wine have been a memorial to all believers; a constant reminder of what God in grace, through Christ, has done for them.

As Abraham was strengthened by the bread and wine and the communion with Melchizedek, so likewise is the believer strengthened by meditation upon what Christ is to him, as symbolized by the bread and wine. By this he is able to spurn the proffered riches and pleasures of the world. A vision of Christ, of His broken body and shed blood, prompts the believer to refuse to be enriched by the ungodly world. The realization that God is the possessor of Heaven and earth, and that He is able to supply all need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19), makes it possible to reject the favors of the world. It is when the truth of Romans 8:32 grips the life, that the importance of the riches of the ungodly world lose their attractiveness. The Son, 'delivered up for us all,' is the guarantee that He who gave the Son, He who is the possessor of Heaven and earth, shall also give all things needed for this earthly life.

Beautiful Symbolism

The experience in the life of Abraham is then a perfect picture of the discipline of grace to the exclusion of anything else related to the law. Abraham was a believer. Melchizedek, the high priest, is a type of Christ by whom came grace and truth. The bread and the wine are types of the broken body and shed blood of Christ by which God was made free to act in grace. The blessing in the name of the Most High God points to full provision in grace for the believer's every need. In the giving of tithes is seen the believer's acknowledgment of complete dependence on God. The spurning of wealth offered by the wicked king is a denial of all worldly lusts as unable to contribute anything either to the believer's standing before God or to his godly life.