

Hebrews 7:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Analysis

The author urges 'consider how great this man was' - Melchizedek's greatness is shown by Abraham giving him tithes 'from the spoils.' Since Abraham (the patriarch) tithed to Melchizedek, Melchizedek must be greater than Abraham. This establishes Melchizedek's superiority, which transfers to Christ whose priesthood is 'after the order of Melchizedek.' Reformed theology sees this typology demonstrating Christ's superiority to the entire Levitical system.

Historical Context

Genesis 14:18-20 records this encounter after Abraham defeated the kings who captured Lot. Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of God Most High, blessed Abraham and received tithes.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham teach about Christ's priesthood?

2. How does this passage challenge over-reliance on religious heritage or human mediators?

Interlinear Text

Θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὗτος ὡς καὶ δεκάτην
consider Now how great this man was unto whom even the tenth
G2334 G1161 G4080 G3778 G3739 G2532 G1181

Ἄβραὰμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων ὁ πατριάρχης
Abraham gave of the spoils the patriarch
G11 G1325 G1537 G3588 G205 G3588 G3966

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 14:20 (Parallel theme): And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Acts 2:29 (Parallel theme): Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

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