

Bread, Wine, and the Priest-King

Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 76:2; Psalm 110

What We Found

A priest-king walked out of nowhere and into Scripture: Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, with no genealogy in a book full of them. His signature act was bread, wine, and blessing, and Abram, father of Israel, gave him a tenth of everything.

We found Salem in Psalm 76:2 and discovered it is Jerusalem. A thousand years before David, a priest of God Most High was already blessing over bread and wine in David's future city.

Then Psalm 110 raised the stakes: David calls someone my lord, and God swears an oath he will not revoke, that this coming one is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Israel was taught to await a king whose priesthood never ends, patterned on the priest of bread, wine, and blessing. We left the question on the table: what would such a priest's offering look like?

Voices of the Church

St. Cyprian of Carthage

Letter 63, to Caecilius, 3rd century

St. Cyprian wrote that Melchizedek prefigured the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ: as priest of God Most High he offered bread and wine and blessed Abraham, and the Lord, whose priesthood is of that order, fulfilled the figure when he offered his own body and blood. For Cyprian, Genesis 14 was not a curiosity but a portrait drawn in advance.

St. Ambrose of Milan

On the Sacraments, Book 4, 4th century

St. Ambrose, catechizing the newly baptized of Milan, pointed them to Melchizedek and argued that the mysteries the Church celebrates are older than Israel's own rites, for the priest who brought out bread and wine met Abraham before the law was ever given. What the Church does at the altar, he taught, stands in a line that begins before Sinai.

St. Thomas Aquinas

Summa Theologiae III, q. 73, a. 6

St. Thomas taught that the Old Testament foreshadowed the Eucharist from three directions at once: Melchizedek's bread and wine prefigured its outward signs, the sacrifices of the law prefigured the Passion of Christ it contains, and the manna prefigured its grace. One mystery, sketched three ways, centuries apart. Watch how closely his map matches the road this study is

walking.

Live It This Week

1. Pray Psalm 110 once a day this week. It is seven verses. Let verse 4 slow you down every time.
2. Once this week, before you eat bread, silently bless God in Melchizedek's own register: blessed be God Most High, maker of heaven and earth.
3. Read all of Genesis 14 for the full battle context, and notice the contrast between the king of Sodom's offer and the king of Salem's gift.

Scripture Memory Verse

"The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'"

Psalm 110:4

Before Next Session

Read Exodus 12:1-14. As you read, watch for what God commands beyond the shedding of blood, and ask yourself why every detail is there.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1333; 1544