

# The Order of Melchizedek

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Brethren, we are approaching a time when the Spring Festivals are going to be celebrated and I want to start today with an aspect of the Spring Holy Days that I have found interesting in my own personal studies. I want to start with Exodus 12:16.

**Exodus 12:16** *On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. (NKJV)*

The instructions here in Exodus 12—Moses and Aaron were given instructions by God—concerning Israel's exit. This is essentially what Exodus is talking about—the instructions that were given to Aaron and Moses. Here He is speaking of the first day of Unleavened Bread.

*17) So, you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. (NKJV)*

This is speaking of the seven days of Unleavened Bread which are annually observed. So, God is saying that on the first day of Unleavened Bread, He will bring the people out of Egypt. Now go down to verse 40.

*40) Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. (NKJV)*

*Sojourn* is not a word that I normally use so I had to look it up. I looked it up and the word means “to live in a place for a short while that is not your home”.

*41) And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. (NKJV)*

We already saw in verse 16 and 17 that this day is to be observed as a Holy Day, the first day of Unleavened Bread.

*42) It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations. (NKJV)*

This night is described then as part of Unleavened Bread which is to be observed as a solemn assembly. The question is, what happened 430 years ago on this day. According to Jewish scholars, the 430 years refer back to a time when Abram had no children. These 430 years refer back to the events described in Genesis 15. According to the scholars, the reference to 430 years was 430 years from the time the Egyptian exile had been decreed by God Almighty. The decree we will be reading about is known as the "Covenant Between the Parts" and is described in Genesis 15.

**Genesis 15:1** *After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision ... (NKJV)*

"After these things" is actually referring back, as you may recall, to the things that happened in chapter 14, surrounding the loss of a battle by the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their allies. The victors of the battle had looted the cities and taken the people captive. Lot and his family were among those who had been carried off by the victorious kings. Abram had put together a small army and fought against the victorious kings and killed them all and rescued Lot and restored the spoils to the rightful owners. Abram had just returned from the battle and had just met with the king of Sodom and Melchizedek the King of Salem. Continuing in this verse.

*1 continued) ... saying, Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (NKJV)*

From this account, it appears that Abram's immediate response was to ask God about His promise to make him a great nation. In order for his family to be a great nation he needed to have heirs. You can read about that promise in the first three verses of Genesis 12. Abram's question is recorded in chapter 15 beginning in verse 2.

**Genesis 15:2** *But Abram said, Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"*  
*3) Then Abram said, Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed, one born in my house is my heir!" (NKJV)*

God's response to Abram was that he would have heirs and they would be his own children and they would not be coming from his servants. Continuing on in verse 4.

*4) And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."*  
*5) Then He brought him outside and said, Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, So shall your descendants be." (NKJV)*

In these verses, God reassures Abram that his physical heirs will be so large in number that just like attempting to count the stars. There will be more than can be counted. In verse 7, God reaffirms His promise to Abram. A land where He reaffirms His promise to

Abram that he would be inheriting the land where he was dwelling, as an inheritance. I want to read verse 6.

*6) And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (NKJV)*

I think this verse is very, very important. Abram's belief and faith in God stirred God to impute righteousness to him. This is of importance to us as you know. In Romans 4, it is saying the same to us.

**Romans 4:23** *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him,  
24) but also, for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*

This is the same God Who raised up Jesus and Who we are discussing here as having made a covenant with Abram.

*8) And he said, Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" (NKJV)*

God responds by instructing Abram to prepare a sacrifice. We can see that instruction in verses 9 through 11.

*9) So, He said to him, Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."*

*10) Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. (NKJV)*

Cutting the sacrifice down the middle, was in those days a way of ratifying a covenant. The parties of the covenant would then walk through between the parts. God's plan here is to reaffirm His promise to Abram with a covenant. So, it's beyond just a promise, now it's a covenant.

*11) And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. (NKJV)*

Most of you who live in the country probably know that vultures generally don't fly at night, they only fly during the day time, so this basically shows that the work of preparing the sacrifice was during the light of the day and this was a day time event when they prepared this sacrifice.

Notice in the next three verses, God explains what is in store for the descendants of Abram over what turns out to be 430 years. I want to look at Genesis 15:12 through 13.

*12) Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.*

*13) Then He said to Abram: Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. (NKJV)*

This is a prophecy of the great affliction that Abram's heirs would have to endure. The end of the 400 years is recorded in Exodus 14 when the children of Israel left with the spoils of Egypt. You may recognize there is a difference of thirty years between the time described here and what we read in Exodus 12. In Exodus 12 the time is listed as 430 years. Here in Genesis, we see 400 years listed as the time. The scholars, according to my research, reckon the 400 years is from the time Isaac was born. Isaac was born thirty years after the covenant between the parts was ratified, which is the covenant we are talking about here. Scholars do calculate that the actual time the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt was about 210 years. So, there was an affliction. They didn't have their own land. They were sojourning for the 430 years it speaks of in Exodus.

Go ahead now to Genesis 15:15-16.

*15) Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.*

*16) But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (NKJV)*

So, there was going to be a time when they would actually return back to where Abram was at the time. So, what came next, I really think, is very important. In verse 17 and 18 is the description of the covenant being ratified. Notice on what day the covenant is ratified.

*17) And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. (NKJV)*

This is when the sun went down and it was dark. Any reckoning and you are going to figure out a day change. This describes a new day; a day after the animals were sacrificed. They were sacrificed in the daylight hours of the day before. They were laid out and that description was that they were laid out there and laid out the rest of the day because Abram was chasing the birds away. God ratified the covenant that He had described, after the sun went down on a new day. He ratified that while it was dark.

*18) On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— (NKJV)*

On this day, God made a covenant with Abram. This covenant was Abram's guarantee of God's promise that he would have innumerable descendants. This is a binding

covenant, agreed to by God and His promise was sure and certain to occur. This covenant was made after dark at the beginning of the day, exactly 430 years to the day before Israel left Egypt. We read the account of Israel leaving Egypt in Exodus 12:41 and that's what we read just a few moments ago. Every year after Israel left Egypt, on the anniversary of this same day, Israel was to observe a commanded Holy Assembly on the first day of Unleavened Bread. The beginning of the 15th, after sunset when it was dark is also the annual anniversary of the night of solemn observance described in verse 42 which we also read. This annual night of solemn observance—the anniversary of Israel's exodus from Egypt is also the annual anniversary of God's covenant with Abram, known as the "Covenant Between the Parts". According to our best reckoning of God's calendar, we observe this anniversary on the 15th day of the first month. Our reckoning of the calendar obviously has potential flaws. There are no flaws in God's reckoning of the times. According to God's calendar the day Israel left Egypt was exactly 430 years later to the day of the anniversary of the covenant with Abram. This puts the actual sacrifices used in the covenant on the day before the 15th. That sacrifice occurred on the afternoon before the covenant was ratified. The afternoon before the covenant was ratified was the 14th day of the first month. So, they left on the 15<sup>th</sup>. But 430 years before that, the covenant was ratified. Abram prepared and made the sacrifices on the 14th in the afternoon. The 14th day of the first month is also described in Exodus 12, Numbers 28 and Leviticus 23 as the day of the Passover. We will go to Numbers 28:16.

**Numbers 28:16** *On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the LORD.*

*17) And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. (NKJV)*

So, you have two distinct days here, the 14th and the 15th. We have already established that the 15th is the anniversary of this "Covenant Between the Parts". Notice here in verses 16 and 17 that the Passover and the first day of Unleavened Bread are on separate and distinct days.

**1 Corinthians 5:7** *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. (NKJV)*

Jesus Christ, as our Passover, redeems us from the penalty of death for our sins. The context of this verse is obviously that the Corinthians needed to be putting sin out of their lives. This verse clearly tells us that Jesus Christ is our Passover. Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Apostle Paul all relate the account of Jesus' identifying the bread and wine as representing Him as the Passover sacrifice.

**Matthew 26:26** *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body." (NKJV)*

So, the bread is representing Christ's body.

*27) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you.*

*28) For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (NKJV)*

So, He's relating the wine to His blood and He's relating the bread to His body—His life, Him, the Passover. The Passover lamb is what they ate--they ate the Passover. And Jesus Christ was the anti-type of that Passover. The bread and wine represent Jesus Christ as our Passover. Notice verse 26 of 1 Corinthians 11.

**1 Corinthians 11:26** *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (NKJV)*

The bread and the wine are symbols that represent Christ as our Passover sacrifice. Look at Genesis 15:1 again, it says after these events and as I mentioned before, the events here occurred on the 14th of the first month, culminating with the covenant being ratified on the 15th. As we saw in Numbers, Passover is on the 14th and the days of Unleavened Bread start on the 15th. I find it very interesting that the verses immediately preceding chapter 15, describe an event that involves bread and wine. Also, of note is the fact that Jesus is our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. Let's start reading in verse 18 of Genesis 14.

**Genesis 14:18** *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. (NKJV)*

So Melchizedek, a priest of the Most-High, brought out the bread and wine. The bread and wine, are, as we have already noted, symbols of Jesus Christ. I think we are fairly safe in assuming the verses in chapter 14 of Genesis, concerning Melchizedek are related to the story flow in chapter 15. The evidence indicates this meeting with Melchizedek also occurred on the 14th day of the first month. The meeting described with Melchizedek happened before the sacrifices on the afternoon of the 14th, if I'm correct that they are related, then they are closely related. This puts the time of the meeting, likely after sunset, the beginning of the 14th and before noon on the 14th. At the very least, it was before God appeared to Abram in vision. As we saw in Genesis 15:1, that it was after those events that Abram saw the vision. After the vision he was given instructions to do the sacrifice in the afternoon.

Notice in verse 19 of chapter 14.

*19) And he blessed him and said: Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; (NKJV)*

So, God Most-High is Possessor of heaven and earth. Melchizedek then pronounced a blessing on God Most-High who was responsible for Abram's victory. Abram then paid a tithe to Melchizedek in verse 20

*20) And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. (NKJV)*

All that belonged to Abram was saved by God. The bread and wine symbolized the deliverance that was provided by God. Everything belongs to God. What Abram destroyed in that battle, also belonged to God. The bread and the wine represented what God offered to Abram. There was an exchange. Abram gave tithes, God gave protection as noted in chapter 15:1 where God said, I am your shield, your exceeding great reward. Melchizedek brought the bread and wine but who's bread and wine was it? Melchizedek was the priest. The bread and the wine and the priests of God Most-High, all belong to God. Melchizedek brought the bread and wine but it was God's bread and wine. The offering of the bread and the wine were God's offering; they represented God's sacrifice. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a Passover is represented in the bread and the wine. He came to do His Father's will to offer Himself as God's sacrifice. As Melchizedek brought the bread and the wine as God's sacrifice, so Jesus Christ as the High Priest of the God Most-High, after the order of Melchizedek, also brought the sacrifice that was from God.