



Prophets, Priests, and Kings

VOLUME 4
1st-6th Grade Guide Book

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts
to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6



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Semester 1: Early Leaders

In the first four units, we learn how God was merciful to Israel by raising up godly leaders, even though they struggled to obey Him.

UNIT 1

THE FIRST LEADERS

As the story of Israel unfolds in the Old Testament, we find that the nation did not remain steadfast in following God. As a result, it suffered periods of defeat and oppression. In His mercy, God did not leave His people alone but raised up leaders of faith to deliver them.



AN EARLY PRIEST

 Memory Verse: Hebrews 6:19



What is your favorite "underdog" story?

Undefeated. In the 1970s, a university men's basketball team set the record for most wins in a row. Their team won eighty-eight games in a row! But no sports team can win forever. Thankfully, God is not like a sports team. He *always* wins! Even in the darkest, most wicked times, God cannot be defeated.

Six hundred years before Israel entered the Promised Land, Abram and his nephew Lot came to live there. Four fierce kings from near Babylonia teamed up to attack five kings near the Dead Sea. They captured many people, including Lot and his family. They also stole everything they could. It surely seemed as if evil were winning!



Abram came to the rescue. He and his 318 servants had teamed up with a man named Mamre and his brothers (Gen. 14:13). But most importantly, God was on Abram's side. Abram had to fight four kings. But with God's help, he and the others freed all the captives and brought them home! *No one* expected this amazing turn of events.

Unknowns. Melchizedek is mysterious. Not because he wore sunglasses, a trench coat, and a hat. He was mysterious because the Bible tells us very little about him. What it does say is important. This is because he was a clue that pointed forward to the coming of Jesus! Abram happened to meet Melchizedek on his way home from the battle. Melchizedek was both a king *and* a priest (in charge of worship). He ruled over the city of Salem. This was actually Jerusalem long before the Israelites lived there.

Melchizedek worshipped the one true God. This was a very unusual thing in wicked Canaan! Melchizedek honored Abram with a special meal and a special blessing. Afterward, Abram gave Melchizedek a **tithe** of the great wealth he took back from the wicked kings. Tithing is giving God one out of every ten things you get. Tithes in Israel were used to pay the priests and Levites, as well as to help orphans and widows. Israelites who did not tithe were stealing from God (Mal. 3:8). Abram's tithe shows that he saw Melchizedek as a true servant of God. He knew God had given Melchizedek a higher position than his own.

Untaken. Even though Abram beat the bad guys, he did not do it on his own. God was the reason he had won! Abram could have kept all the riches he took back from the evil kings. The king of Sodom even told Abram he could keep everything. But Abram said he would give everything back to whoever it belonged. He wanted God, not Sodom's king, to get the glory for making him rich (Gen. 14:23). That is why Abram gave his tithe to Melchizedek for the Most High God.

Prayer Point

Ask God whether you should practice tithing.

Christ Focus

Like Melchizedek, there is much about Jesus that is a mystery (Heb. 7:1-3).

THE SEA IS DEAD?

The Valley of Siddim (Gen. 14:3, 8) may now be covered by the Salt Sea, better known as the Dead Sea. Why is it called *dead*? Because nothing lives in it. It is too salty. In fact, for every 32 ounces of water in the Dead Sea, you would find 12 ounces of salt. That is more than eight times saltier than the ocean!

Here are some other interesting facts:

- The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth (about 1,300 feet below sea level).
- Its deepest point is 1,000 feet (equal to the length of 3 and 1/3 football fields).
- It is actually a lake (not a sea).
- There is so much salt in the water that you can easily float on top of it.
- Lumps of asphalt (see Gen. 14:10) seep from the bottom of the lake and float on the surface.

God has created amazing things on this earth! It all brings Him glory!

MY NEPHEW, MY BROTHER



In some Bible versions, we read in Genesis 14:14 that Abram found out his brother was taken captive. That is actually talking about Lot. Was Lot really his brother? Lot was the son of Haran, Abram's brother (Gen. 11:27; 12:5). That made Lot his nephew. But the Hebrew word for "brother" can often be used in a general way to mean simply "relative." On the other hand, Lot was actually Abram's brother in the faith, because they both worshipped the one true God (see 2 Pet. 2:7).

MOST HIGH GOD

God is called by several different names throughout the Bible. In Genesis 14, He is called God Most High. The name in Hebrew is *El Elyon*. *El* is often used by itself as a name for God. *Elyon* means "highest" or "most high," stressing the greatness of God's character. When these words are used together, they mean that God is supreme. No one is higher or mightier than the Lord our God!

AN EARLY PRIEST

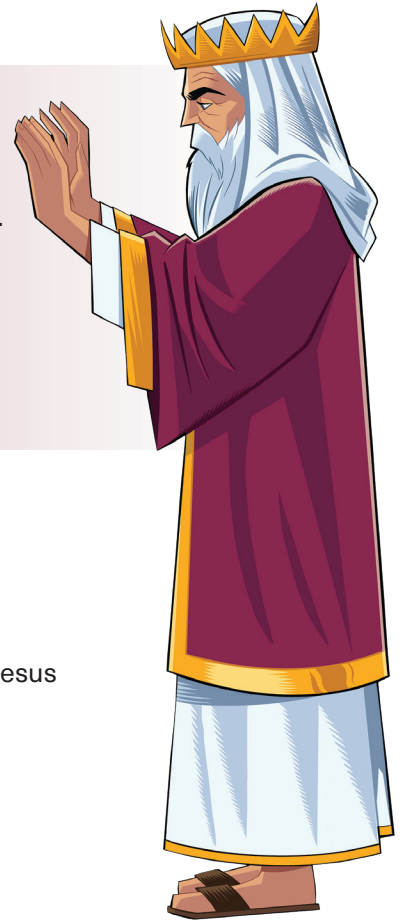
 Memory Verse: Hebrews 6:19

Meet MELCHIZEDEK

Name meaning: “My king is righteousness” or “king of righteousness” (Heb. 7:2).

Location: He ruled over Salem, which is the old name for Jerusalem (Ps. 76:1-2);
Moriah is in the same area (Gen. 22:2; 2 Chr. 3:1).

Role: both priest *and* king



A LIVING Hint

Melchizedek is *not* Jesus, but his life *pointed* to Jesus in a special way.

Melchizedek	Jesus
had an earthly kingdom (Gen. 14:18)	has a heavenly kingdom (John 18:36)
was priest of God Most High	is God's eternal Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14)
was king of Salem, which means “peace” (Heb. 7:2)	is King of heavenly Jerusalem (Matt. 5:35; Rev. 21:2, 5-6) and the true Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6)
name means “king of righteousness” (vs. 2)	is the true King of Righteousness (Isa. 32:1)
has nothing recorded in Scripture about his birth or death (beginning or ending) (vs. 3)	existed before the beginning (John 1:1) and has no ending (is eternal), yet <i>is</i> the Beginning and the End for this world (Rev. 22:13)
was royal, but seemingly timeless due to no recorded family tree (vs. 3)	is from King David's royal family (Matt. 1:1-16; Isa. 11:10) and yet actually is timeless
was like the Son of God (vs. 3)	is the true Son of God (Mark 1:1)



Battle of Siddim and Abram's Pursuit

WHO'S Who, Where's WHERE?

Mamre: This is the name of the Amorite man who helped Abram defeat the enemy kings. A place known for its giant trees is probably named after the man (Gen. 13:18). Abram lived in Mamre with his family for a time (14:13).

Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Bela (Zoar): These were the cities where the enemy kings took over and captured people. Although Abram rescued them, the people who lived there were wicked. God later destroyed all of them except Zoar (Gen. 19:23-25).

Siddim: This was where the armies met for battle. Some scholars think the area may have later been covered by the Dead Sea (Gen. 14:3).

Damascus: This is the world's oldest capital city. Two major highways ran through Damascus.



The conquered kings were chased in a valley filled with dangerous bitumen pits. Bitumen is gooey tar that pushes up to the earth's surface. Bitumen pits contain many fossils. If you sank into a bitumen pit during battle, *you* would become the fossil! Bitumen was used in building the Tower of Babel (11:3) and Moses' floating basket (Ex. 2:3)!

READY FOR BATTLE!

Genesis 14:14 tells us that Abram armed his trained servants for battle. "Trained" probably means they were trained to fight. If 318 of Abram's servants were battle-ready, it is possible he had other kinds of servants as well.



Prayer Point

Thank Jesus for being both our Priest and King!

Christ Focus

Like Melchizedek, Jesus is both a priest and king. He makes us right before God, and He rules over us (Heb. 6:19-20; Rev. 1:5).

AN EARLY PRIEST

 Memory Verse: Hebrews 6:19


Scripture Connections: Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; 5:1-10; 7:20-26

First and second. Sir Isaac Newton was a famous scientist who discovered the law of gravity. But few know that he was also a crime fighter. He found ways to catch counterfeiters (people who made fake coins). Some people can be two very different things at once. Jesus is two very different things: He is both truly God and truly a man at the same time.

Firsthand experience. Michael felt gloomy. He had just played another baseball game where he had struck out every time he came to bat. But Dad encouraged him. "It's OK, Michael. You know I used to play, and I know how hard it is to hit the ball." When you are feeling down, it helps to be cheered up by someone who has been through the same kind of trouble. God gave the priests of Israel many rules to follow. No priest was able to do everything right. Jesus, however, has compassion for sinners who want to please God. Why? Because He became human like us and dealt with many troubles (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). He even had to learn to obey God (5:8). During His forty days in the wilderness, it must have been hard to obey God (Matt. 4:2; Mark 1:12). The terrible suffering Jesus went through at His death made obeying His Father a great struggle (Matt. 26:39, 42; 27:46; Heb. 5:7). But as hard as things were, Jesus never even once disobeyed God's law (John 8:29; 15:10).

First in importance. Every priest was specially chosen by God. No one could simply decide to become a priest on his own. According to Israel's law, priests had to be descended from Aaron, but there was a priest that was around before Aaron was even born. We know little about Melchizedek's background, but we know Melchizedek is the first priest referenced in Scripture and was chosen by God Himself. This is one reason why Scripture compares Jesus to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:20-26).

As God, Jesus knew everything there is to know. How could He possibly learn anything? The truth is, He had to learn what it was like to be human. He had never been human before He was born in Bethlehem. He had never felt pain or hunger or weariness. He now truly understands our struggles.

A priest is someone who mediates between God and sinners. As enemies of God, sinners have no right to come to Him for any reason. They need a **mediator**—a go-between who is God's friend. That is why the go-between must be chosen by God. Praise God that He chose Jesus to be our Mediator! He is the best possible person. God listens to us because His Son cares about us and has saved us. As our Great High Priest, Jesus is better than Aaron and the other priests of Israel. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is both a priest and a king. But He is much greater than Melchizedek too. Jesus goes to God not just for Israelites but for believers all over the world.

Prayer Point

Praise God for choosing Jesus to be your Mediator!

Christ Focus

No Israelite priest was ever perfect (Heb. 7:11), but Jesus was able to save us because He is the perfect Priest (vss. 22, 28).

AN EARLY PRIEST



Memory Verse: Hebrews 6:19

**Doctrine:** Jesus as High Priest

Danger—stay away! If someone wants to get to the other side of a raging river, he shouldn't just jump in and swim. The water could be too strong and rough, and he might get swept away. Instead, he should ask for help. He needs someone with a boat to help him get to the other side. In a similar way, sinners need someone to help them reach God and have fellowship with Him. The priests in Israel helped to do that. They offered sacrifices to God to cover, or hide, people's sins. This was called **atonement**. Israel's high priest who offered sacrifices for people's sins was like Christ in a way. That is because Christ also offered a sacrifice to God for our sins. But there was a big difference between Jesus and Israel's priests. The priests were sinful; Jesus was not. That is one reason why the priests' sacrifices could only *hide* sins. They could never actually *take away* sins.

Sinless—specially chosen! Mopping a dirty floor will do no good if the mop is drenched in mud! This is like the sinful priests trying to get rid of other people's sins. Before a high priest could offer a sacrifice for Israel's sins, he had to first sacrifice for his *own* sin. Melchizedek was the first priest the Bible talks about. But Aaron was Israel's very first high priest. He had to sacrifice a bull to God for his sins and his family's sins (Lev. 16:6; Heb. 5:3). Jesus is so different. He was sinless and specially chosen by God. He humbly worked to obey God's law in everything He did. Although He was God's Son, He had a physical body. He is the only human who has never sinned, and He is our only hope for receiving God's mercy. But this is a steadfast and certain hope (Heb. 6:19-20). That is because Jesus is God's own Son who offered His own body as a sacrifice for our sins. God will show favor to us because Jesus is in His favor (Rom. 8:34).

Welcome—come in! When Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross, something wonderful happened. The thick curtain that hid the Holy of Holies was split right down the middle! It was a sign that Jesus had become our Great High Priest (Heb. 10:19-21). He did not need to make a sacrifice for His own sins as other priests had. He instead offered *Himself* as the sacrifice for *our* sins! His sacrifice took away all our sins forever (7:27). We don't need any more animal sacrifices. The sacrifice of our Great High Priest made a way for us to boldly come to God (4:14-16; 10:22). Believers *never* need to fear that God will lock them out because of their sins.

We do not know for sure, but some Jewish writings tell us that the temple curtain was about four inches thick. That's some thick fabric! God tore it from ceiling to floor (Matt. 27:50-51). This shows that Jesus made a way for us to enter God's presence.

Prayer Point

Thank Jesus for sacrificing Himself to save you.

Christ Focus

The torn curtain at Jesus' death was a picture of how Jesus had washed away our sins, which had separated us from God (1 Pet. 3:18).

AN EARLY PRIEST

 Memory Verse: Hebrews 6:19


REVIEW

This week we learned about **an early priest**. Let's do some review! For each day, begin by narrating the lesson.



- Abram and Lot lived in Canaan how many years before Israel entered it? *Six hundred years.*
- What does it mean to give a **tithe**? *Giving God one out every ten things you get.*
- Why did Abram not keep the riches he took back from the evil kings? *He wanted God, not Sodom's king, to get the credit for making him rich.*



- Why is the name of the city of Salem important? *It is the old name for Jerusalem, and it means "peace."*
- What is one way we know Jesus is greater than Melchizedek? *He is God's eternal **Great High Priest**; or He is King of heavenly Jerusalem; etc.*
- What two things in Scripture was bitumen used for? *Making the Tower of Babel and Moses' floating basket.*



- What two very different things is Jesus? *Truly God and truly a man.*
- Why does Jesus have sympathy for sinners who want to please God? *Because He too was human and dealt with many troubles.*
- Who did God choose to be our **mediator**? *Jesus.*



- What was **atonement**? *A sacrifice offered by a priest to cover sins so that the sinner could fellowship with God.*
- What did a high priest have to do before he could offer a sacrifice for Israel's sins? *He first offered a sacrifice for his own sins.*
- Why do we not need to sacrifice animals for our sins anymore? *Jesus' sacrifice took away all our sins forever.*

APPLY

A sacrifice is something you give up. While we do not offer animal sacrifices as the Israelites did, we still offer sacrifices. We can offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15), of sharing (vs. 16), or of love (Eph. 5:2). But we are also to sacrifice our bodies! Paul wrote that we are "living" sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). That means we give up what we want for what God wants. This is how we worship God.

Here are some ways to be a living sacrifice. How many more can you think of?

- reading Scripture instead of playing video games
- giving my money to help others
- speaking kindly to an unkind person
- singing praise songs instead of the world's songs
- helping someone instead of playing

Prayer Point

Pray for wisdom to make sacrifices that please God.

Christ Focus

Our daily sacrifices of time, things, and praise are only acceptable to God because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice for us (1 Pet. 2:5).