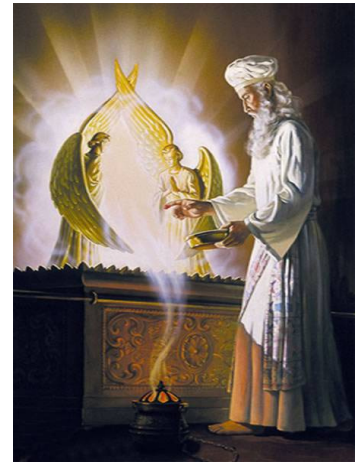


St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
***Psalm 110:4* Advent Vespers II. December 8, 2010**



⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

When I was little – when we came home from Church Sunday morning, while my mom made gravy for the pot roast that had been cooking in the oven during Church and Sunday School, we would turn on the radio – in the big stereo cabinet and we would listen to one more sermon. It would always begin, "Bringing Christ to the nations!" The Seminary Choir would sing *The Church's One Foundation* – and between the verses the timpani would rumble like thunder. A pastor named Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffman would make the sermon. He had a very deep very powerful voice. We would listen to a sermon that was always almost ½ hour long. There would be just a minute or two at the very end – when Dr. Hoffman would answer a very practical question some listener had sent in. Then we would pray the Lord's Prayer – and hear the benediction. And it would be time to go to the table for Sunday dinner! When I was growing up I thought Dr. Hoffman was like the greatest preacher in the whole wide world! The fact is – his sermon on the radio around the world – was probably heard by literally millions of people every Sunday. Imagine preaching at the same moment – to people in their warm and cozy homes – hardened criminals in their prison cells – little grandmas and grandpas spending their first weekend in a nursing home – young children in their bed because they have a fever – people in the middle of nowhere – with a little radio that you have to wind up every ten minutes to recharge the battery! The most important thing we can do – is preach the Gospel – share the essential Gospel before it's too late! Today – this second mid-week Advent Vesper – we see Jesus' second office – that of priest – as illustrated by Melchizedek. Today we are reminded:

Jesus Is Our Great High Priest

- 1. The LORD never changes**
- 2. Jesus is both High Priest and Sacrifice**

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on – was breathed/inspired by the Holy Spirit – and written down by Moses – Genesis-beginnings--chapter 14! It's still about 2100 years before the Christ-child would be born. God's plan to rescue people from sin and guilt is moving along – at a snail's pace – in the view of people. It was right on schedule – in the sight of God – to whom **a day is like 1,000 years and 1,000 years are like a day!** It was wise King Solomon who understood from the insight of the Holy Spirit – **there is nothing new under the sun!** What you read about in the Watertown Daily Times, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the Wall Street Journal is people making the same sinful mistakes over and over and over again. The Bible history we are studying today is the first war recorded in Scripture. Over 4,000 years ago – in Mesopotamia – modern day Iraq – kings were raising armies to invade their neighbors to literally pillage and plunder! Four kings from the east with names that sound strange to our ears and are difficult to pronounce – joined forces in a military campaign that took them a thousand miles from home to the land around the Dead Sea. You know where that is. You can

see a map with your mind's eye—the Sea of Galilee—roughly oval shape in the north—the Jordan River—John the Baptist—winding down—and then a kind of long lake with a little dent on the east side—the Dead Sea. The four invading kings from the east attacked five city/states—five fortified cities—and soundly defeat them all! To the victor belongs the spoils! The losers have to pay the winners—whatever the winners demand! The demands need to be paid each year—on time—and without fail. It could be anything and everything—hundreds of thousands of lambs—the wool of hundreds of thousands of rams—food like wheat and figs and wine and oil—money—even people to be used as slaves. It didn't have to be reasonable. It was expensive and painful and humiliating—year after year—with no end in sight! After 12 years the 5 city/states' kings and people had had enough. They stopped paying the tribute. Want to guess what happened next? The armies of the 4 eastern kings come west—down the best road—the King's Highway—east of the Jordan River. They clobbered and plundered anyone in their way. They made sure they couldn't be attacked from behind. They turned their attention north—to confront these people who weren't paying their tribute!

¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. ¹¹ The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. ¹² They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom. The battle wasn't long. The outcome not surprising! Lot—who lived by Sodom and Gomorrah was now a prisoner of war. What was Lot thinking—being by Sodom and Gomorrah? Do you know? If you read Simon Peter's second letter you would know. Chapter 2 talks about God's justice. God doesn't overlook sin—as tempting as that might be. When Satan led angels of light into revolt against their Heavenly Father—God didn't say—that's ok. Anybody can make a mistake. No—he sent them crashing into hell—into **gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment!** In the days of Noah—where there was so much violence—God was patient—waiting some 120 years while Noah built the ark. But then the flood did come. And in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah-- Simon Peter wrote, **If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desires of the sinful nature and despise authority. 2 Peter 2:6-10a**

Now Abram—part of the family tree of the Savior becomes involved. **¹³ A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.** After Abram—by the power of his Heavenly Father—defeated the 5 kings—and rescued Lot and his family-- **¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."** Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Melchizedek is a *type* of Jesus – a kind of flesh and blood visual aid about Jesus. We have talked before about the three very important offices for which you were anointed – had spiced oil poured on your head. You were anointed Prophet, Priest and King. Usually you were a prophet – like Isaiah and Jeremiah. Ezekiel was a prophet and a priest. There were many kings like good King Josiah and good King Hezekiah. King David and King Solomon were also prophets – people who wrote God’s Word – Scriptures like Proverbs and Song of Songs and many of the Psalms. Melchizedek was the King of Salem and a priest of God Most High. Only Jesus was Prophet, Priest and King! Jesus is always *the Ultimate – the Supreme!* Remember Pastor Gartner’s Sermon last Wednesday?

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. ²⁰ And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” In Old Testament times the LORD established a family of priests – from Abraham’s great grandson Levi’s descendants. People learned early on – the need for a Mediator – a go-between because of the rift caused by our sins. God’s people learned early on – without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness! People saw countless lambs put to death – until Jesus came – to be both High Priest and Sacrifice. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus – **the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!** Jesus came to do what those countless thousands of lambs could not do. Jesus came to shed his innocent blood to pay for all the sins of all people. Jesus came to die – **once for all** – to forgive us! **Blessed be Abraham!** That would happen through Abraham’s family tree – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah – ultimately Jesus – our Savior from sin and guilt!

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything! We don’t make sermons that tell people you should *give money so we can pay bills!* There is no example in the Bible where Jesus or Moses or the Apostle Paul or Simon Peter or the Apostle John told people you should give money so we can pay bills! We don’t make *money sermons*. That wouldn’t be right. Nor do we shy away from mentioning thank-offerings when from time to time – God’s Word mentions thank-offerings! That would be wrong, too! To be a faithful pastor we need to preach all of God’s Word – not adding to it – and not leaving parts out. Faithfulness means we preach Christ crucified and risen – the whole counsel of God! Sacrifices are something people did right from the beginning! Cain and Abel made sacrifices. Genesis chapter 4 says, **“Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.”** Genesis 4:2,3 Thank-offerings are exactly that – a *thank* offering – a gift that says *thank you!* One of the most thankful people I ever knew was my piano teacher Mrs. Pendel! Every year – our last piano lesson before Christmas Mrs. Pendel would take each of us into her kitchen where the whole counter would be full of gingerbread men – 6” tall and ¼ “ thick gingerbread man – each one frosted differently because each of her students was unique! You got to pick a gingerbread cookie to take home and share. My parents were very concerned that very promptly I should write a thank you note! “Dear Mrs. Pendel – thank you for the delicious gingerbread man. Our whole family enjoyed it. I ate the head! Thank you for teaching me to love music and to play the piano. Love, your student *Tony!*” About two days after that – I would get a very nice note in the mail – a thank you for the thank you! Dear Tony – thank you for the *thank you* note. I’m glad you liked your cookie. I like to eat the heads, too. Thank you for being my student – sharing my love for music. Love, your friend Mrs. Pendel! Thank you for the thank you! You don’t see that every day!

But you know who does send thank yous for thank yous? Your Heavenly Father – by grace alone – that’s very important to understand and remember – by grace alone – your Heavenly Father sends thank-yous for thank-yous! It’s in **Malachi** – 400 years before the Christ child was born. **“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,”** says the LORD Almighty, **“and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”** ¹¹ **I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,”** says the LORD Almighty. ¹² **“Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,”** says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 3:10b-12. How can you thank Jesus for all he has done to redeem you? How can you thank Jesus not only for warm homes – safe from the cold and snow and wind? How can you thank Jesus for your family – for all the people you love that Jesus takes care of? How can you thank Jesus for a place stored up for you in Heaven? By giving Jesus your heart! Give Jesus your life! Give Jesus all of you! That’s what Jesus wants – he wants *you!* *Amen!*

To God alone all glory!



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