

Melkizedek and Abraham Factors: My Understanding

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The Bible does not debate the existence of God because according to Scripture, Paul; and author, Don Richardson, God has made himself known to all of mankind. God making himself known can be described as “revelation.” God has revealed himself to man, and therefore, man is without excuse for not believing in him (Romans 1:20). In “Eternity in Their Hearts,” Don Richardson endeavors to track through history several instances of this interaction between the Melchizedek factor, which is God's general revelation; and the Abraham factor, which is God's special revelation” (p.29). This “revelation” comes with a command for every Christian given to us in Matthew 28:19-20. It states, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the ends of the world." Richardson shows us that through the Melchizedek Factor, Abraham Factor, and Jesus that the Great Commission has been God’s design all along.

The Melchizedek Factor receives its name from Melchizedek (pg. 26) who was a King and High Priest among the pagan people, the Canaanites. Melchizedek and Abraham’s interaction was illustrated in Genesis 15:19, “And he blessed him, and said Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. (pg. 26). Richardson used Melchizedek to represent general revelation and proposes that Melchizedek came to know God from general revelation. Through the Melchizedek Factor God is shown through general revelation so that by that general revelation, others would come to know Him; and this would be revealed to humanity in how God reveals himself to humankind. General revelation can also be described as God's self-disclosure through same mediate, the natural mode, God making himself known through

history, natural environment, and human nature. Richardson's point: if general revelation is known to all, as mentioned the majority indeed would identify with God, and there would be others like Melchizedek throughout the world.

Throughout the pages of "Eternity in their Hearts," Richardson shares stories of different cultures which possess the Melchizedek Factor, the general revelation of God. The author highlights many examples of general revelation, one being the Incus. Incus worshiped Inti; the sun realized that there must be someone greater because their king Pachacuti pointed out how the sun, had a set course, and performed tasks, much like a laborer. He then began to recall stories that were told to him by his father, of his encounter during a dream with Viracocha- the Creator of all things. The Santals, who told Norwegian missionaries of a story that had been passed down, that parallels the story of Adam and Eve (pg. 37). The Chinese culture that had a knowledge of Shang Ti- the Lord of Heaven. The New Guinea Asmati who's symbol for peace with their enemies was done in a ceremony that symbolized a type of new birth (pg. 107). The Karen of Burma, spoke of a lost book whose author was Y'wa- the Supreme God. This lost book would set them free. The Karens also sang hymns that parallel Genesis chapter one.

As God provided the general revelation to all people through what we call the Melchizedek Factor. He added a unique impact with a Abraham. In the first verse of Genesis 12, God spoke to Abraham. It is in Genesis 12:2-3 God makes this promise to him, "and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (pg.138). The Abraham Factor can be described as special revelation which is given by God. Special revelation can be represented as divine disclosure through an immediate and the more specific truths that can be known about God supernatural

mode. Special revelation can also include physical appearances of God, dreams, visions, the written word of God, and through Jesus Christ.

A sovereign God who would give special revelation to a man named Abraham and with that revelation bless the world is the same God that gave general revelation as a starting point for others to receive the message from those who have been blessed with special revelation. Richardson says there is evidence that this revelation is found throughout the world and through countless stories of different cultures with a monotheistic belief, Richardson sets the tone of God's plan that is threaded throughout scripture (pg. 118). Richardson looks at what the Bible says about God's mission, and how these two divisions work in tandem because they both originated from God. I believe that this is true, but although they work together, I also believe that the roles are different. In Romans 1:20 Paul notes, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." This scripture speaks of the entire world having knowledge of God, and therefore, being without excuse for not believing in him.

For example, in Melchizedek case; I think that it is marvelous that a king and high priest in the midst of a pagan society, would have an awareness and a knowledge of the God of creation through general revelation. I think that acknowledgment of God because of general revelation is a good start; however, general revelation or having an understanding of God's existence does mean that one may be faithful, loyal, or adhere to God. One could know him through general revelation and still not be committed. In view of this, the Melchizedek Factor is very different from the Abraham Factor. Melchizedek's words were a confirmation of the covenant that

Abraham had with God. God promised to bless Abram and that Abram would be a blessing to others, and he was a blessing to those whom he set free. God promised to curse those who cursed Abram, and God had given Abram's enemies into his hand (pg. 138). The special revelation here is not the "knowing" because one simply acknowledges that God exists, but it is the "knowing" illuminated by David in Psalms 18:1. It is knowing Jesus Christ and being in relationship with Him, by which we come to know God intimately and have a relationship with Him.

Richardson, D. (2014). *Eternity in their hearts*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House.