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Tuesday 3 pm, Critical Thinking and Academic Writing

15 October 2017

The Mysterious Figure of Melchizedek

According to the Bible, Melchizedek, whose name means “my king is righteousness” in Hebrew, is the king of Salem during the patriarchal age and priest of the most high god. Since he was only mentioned twice in the Old Testament and several times in Hebrews, Longenecker thinks that “there is probably a no more enigmatic figure in all of scripture than Melchizedek” (161).

Melchizedek was first introduced when he brought out bread and wine and blessed Abram (later named by God Abraham) and the most high god, after his great victory against king Chedorlaomer; in return, Abram gave him a tenth of his spoils of war (Geneses 14:18-20). Nonetheless, the Bible told us nothing about the character until Psalms, when the Lord declared David as “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (110:4). It was also stated in Hebrews that Melchizedek was “without father or mother” (7:3). The contradiction between his prominent priesthood and the lack of information in the Bible has stimulated various theories on his true identity, such as Melchizedek being “a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ” or even a heavenly being, perhaps identified with the archangel Michael (Park).

The significance of Melchizedek has transcended the scope of religious academic studies. Regarded as a symbol for holiness and graciousness, the figure of Melchizedek has made his way into the Alchemist as a mentor for Santiago, adding a mysterious and romantic stroke to the novel.

Works Cited

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