

Melchizedek

Revised English by Jeremy Kapp

The following fragment of the Melchizedekian literature was found by Professor Sokolov in the chief MS. on which he has based his text. We have in this fragment a new form of the Melchizedek myth. For the other forms it took, see Bible Dictionaries.

Chapter 1.

1. On the third day at the time of the evening, the elders of the people spoke to Methuselah saying: 'Stand before the face of the Lord, and before the face of all the people, and before the face of the altar of the Lord, and you will be glorified among the people.'
2. And Methuselah answered his people: Wait, O men, until the Lord God of my father Enoch raises up to himself a priest over his people.'
3. And the people waited yet a night to no purpose on the place Akhuzan.
4. And Methuselah was near the altar, and prayed to the Lord and said, 'Oh! only Lord of all the world, who has taken my father Enoch, do raise up a priest for your people, and teach their hearts to fear your glory, and to do all according to your will.'
5. And Methuselah slept, and the Lord appeared to him in a nightly vision, and said to him 'Listen, Methuselah, I am the Lord God of your father Enoch, hear the voice of these people, and stand before My altar and I will glorify you before the face of all the people, and you will be glorified all the days of your life.'
6. And Methuselah arose from his sleep, and blessed the Lord who had appeared to him.
7. And the elders of the people hurried to Methuselah and the Lord God inclined the heart of Methuselah to hear the voice of the people, and he said: 'The Lord God gives His blessing upon all these people before my eyes today. (May the Lord your God) do what is a good thing in His eyes to these people.'
8. And Sam, Kharmis, and Zazus, the elders of the people hurried and clothed Methuselah in beautiful garments and placed a bright crown on his head.
9. And the people hurried and brought sheep, cattle and of birds all that was known (to be proper for) Methuselah to sacrifice before the face of the Lord, and in the name (before the face) of the people.
10. And Methuselah went out to the altar of the Lord, and his face shined like the sun, as it is rising in the day, and all the people were following after him.
11. And Methuselah stood before the altar of the Lord. and all the people stood around the altar.
12. And the elders of the people took sheep and oxen, and bound their four feet, and hid them on the top of the altar, and said to Methuselah ;
13. 'Lift the knife and kill them according to the proper way before the face of the Lord!

14. And Methuselah stretched out his hands to the heavens and called to the Lord, saying: 'Woe is me, O Lord, who am I to stand at the head of your altar and at the head of these people.

15. Now, Lord, look down on your servant and on all these people. Now let all the things sought for happen and give a blessing to your servant before the face of all the people, that they may understand that you have appointed a priest over your people.

16. And it happened that when Methuselah prayed, the altar shook, and a knife rose from the altar, and leaped into the hand of Methuselah before the face of all the people. And the people trembled, and glorified the Lord.

17. And Methuselah was honored before the face of the Lord, and before the face of all the people from that day. 18. And Methuselah took the knife, and killed everything that was brought by the people. And they rejoiced, and were merry before the face of the Lord and before the face of Methuselah on that day.

19. And afterwards the people departed each to his own house.

Chapter 2.

1. Methuselah began to stand at the altar before the face of the Lord and all the people from that day for ten years, trusting in an eternal inheritance, and having taught well the whole land and all his people; and no man was found to turn from the Lord in vanity during all the days in which Methuselah lived.

2. And the Lord blessed Methuselah and was pleased with his sacrifices, and his gifts and all his services which he served before the face of the Lord.

3. And when the time of the days of the departure of Methuselah took place, and the Lord appeared to him in a nightly vision, and said to him: 'listen, Methuselah ! I am the Lord God of your father Enoch, I order you to see, how the days of your life are finished, and the day of your rest has drawn near.

4. Call Nir, the son of your son Lamech, the second born after Noah, and clothe him in the robe of your consecration, and place him by my altar, and tell him all that will be in his days, because the time of the destruction of the whole earth draws near, end of every man and every living thing upon the earth.

5. For in his days there shall be a very great confusion upon the earth, because a man has been envious of his neighbor, and people have become inflamed against people and nation stirs up war against nation, and all the earth is filled with foulness and blood, and every kind of evil.

6. And moreover in addition they deserted their Maker, and have bowed down to vain gods, and to the firmament of heaven, and the course of the earth and the waves of the sea. And the accuser has multiplied and rejoices in his deeds to My great vexation.

7. And all the earth changes its form, and every tree and every fruit changes its seeds, expecting the time of destruction. And all peoples are changing upon the earth to My grief.

8. Then I shall command the abysses to pour themselves upon the earth, and the great treasures of the waters of heaven will come upon the earth in their nature

and according to their first nature.

9. And all the stability of the earth will perish and all the earth will tremble and be deprived of its strength from that day.

10. Then I will preserve the son of your son Lamech, his first son Noah and from his seed I will raise up another world, and his seed will exist for ever until the second destruction when also men will sin before my face.

11. Methuselah leaped up from his sleep and his dream troubled him greatly. And he called all the elders of the people and told them all that the Lord had said to him, and all the vision that had appeared to him from the

Lord. 12. And the people were grieved at his vision, and answered him: 'Let the Lord God do according to his will! And now, Methuselah, accomplish all things which the Lord ordered you!

13. And Methuselah called Nir, the son of Lamech, the younger brother of Noah, and clothed him in the robes of the priesthood before the face of all the people, and placed him at the head of the altar, and taught him all that he was to do among the people.

14. And Methuselah called to the people: 'Nir will be before your face from today as a prince and a leader.'

15. And the people said to Methuselah, 'Let it be to us according to your word, and let the voice of the Lord be as He spoke to you.'

16. And when Methuselah had spoken to the people before the altar, his spirit was confused, and he bent his knees, and stretched out his hands to the heavens, and prayed to God. And as he prayed his spirit went out to the Lord.

17. And Nir and all the people hurried and made a grave for Methuselah in the place Aruzan.

18. And Nir came in glorious attire in all his priestly robes, with lights, with much pomp, and the people lifted up the body of Methuselah, and having glorified it, laid it in the grave, which they had made for him, and buried him, and said: 'Blessed was Methuselah before the face of the Lord, and before the face of all people.'

19. When they were about to depart to their own households, Nir said to the people: Go quickly now, and bring sheep and heifers, and turtle-doves, and pigeons, and let us offer them before the face of the Lord, and then go to your houses.'

20. And the people listened to Nir the priest, and hurried and brought the animals, and bound them to the head of the altar.

21. And Nir took the sacrificial knife, and slew all the [animals] that were brought, and offered them before the face of the Lord.

22. And all the people rejoiced before the face of the Lord, and glorified on that day the Lord of Nir, the ruler of heaven and earth. From that day there was peace and order over the whole earth in the days of Nir, during 202 years.

23. But then the people turned from God and began to be jealous one of another, and people rebelled against people, and tongue arose against tongue with abusive language.

24. And if lips were the same: hearts chose different things.

25. And then the devil began to reign for the third time, the first time before

paradise, the second time in paradise, the third time outside of paradise, he continued (doing so) until the great flood.

26. And there arose a great dispute and confusion. And Nir the priest heard it, and was greatly grieved, and said in his heart, 'In truth I have understood that the time has drawn near, and the end which the Lord spoke to Methuselah, the father of my father Lamech.

Chapter 3.

1. And the wife of Nir, named Sopanima, being barren, brought out no child to Nir.

2. And Sopanima was in the time of her old age, and on the day of her death she conceived in her womb, and Nir the priest did not sleep with her, nor knew her from the day that the Lord appointed him to serve before the face of the people.

3. When Sopanima knew of her conception she was ashamed, and felt humbled, and concealed herself all the days, until she brought out, and no one of the people knew.

4. And when 282 days were accomplished and the day of birth began to draw near, Nir remembered about his wife, and called her to himself in his house, that he might talk to her.

5. And Sopanima came to Nir, her husband, being with child, and the appointed day of the birth was drawing near. 6. And Nir saw her and was very much ashamed, and said to her: 'What have you done, wife, and have shamed me before the face of these people. And now depart from me, and go where you commenced the shame of your womb, so that I do not defile my hand upon you, and sin before the face of the Lord!'

7. And Sopanima spoke to Nir, her husband, saying: 'My lord, the time of my old age and the day of my death has come (and there was no youthfulness in me) and I do not know when the period of my years passed, and the fruitfulness of my womb began.'

8. And Nir did not believe his wife, and said to her a second time: 'Depart from me for fear I do you an injury, and sin before the face of the Lord!'

9. And it came to pass, when Nir had spoken to his wife, Sopanima fell at the feet of Nir, and died.

10. And Nir was very much grieved, and said in his heart: 'Was this from my voice, since a man by his voice and thought sins before the face of the Lord.

11. Now the Lord is merciful to me; I know in truth in my heart, that my hand was not upon her. And so I say: "Glory to you, oh! Lord, since no one on earth knows this deed, which the Lord has wrought!"

12. And Nir hurried and shut the doors of the house, and went to Noah, his brother, and told him all that had happened concerning his wife.

13. And Noah hurried, and came with Nir, his brother, into the house of Nir, because of the death of Sopanima, and they talked to themselves (and saw) how her womb was at the time of the birth.

14. And Noah said to Nir: 'Let it not be a subject of sorrow to you, Nir, my brother, that the Lord has today concealed our shame because no-one of the people knows this.

15. Now let us go quickly, and bring her secretly, and may the Lord hide the humiliation of this shame.

16. And they laid Sopanima on the bed, and they wrapped her with black robes, and shut her in the house ready for burial, and dug a grave in secret.

17. And then came an infant from the dead Sopanima, and sat on the bed at her right hand. And Noah, and Nir entered, and saw the infant sitting by the dead Sopanima and wiping its clothes.

18. And Noah, and Nir were tempted with a great fear, for the child was complete in its body, like one of three years old; and spoke with its lips, and blessed the Lord.

19. And Noah and Nir gazed upon it; and the seal of the priesthood was on its breast! and it's face was glorious. 20. And Noah and Nir said' See the Lord renews the consecration according to our blood, as he desires (this is from the Lord, my brother, and the Lord renews the blood of consecration in us).'

21. And Noah and Nir hurried and washed the child, and clothed it in priestly clothing, and gave it the blessed bread, which it ate. And they called his name Melchizedek.

22. And Noah and Nir took the body of Sopanima, and stripped from her the black robes, and clothed her in very bright robes, and built a beautified tomb for her.

23. And Noah, and Nir, and Melchizedek came and buried her publicly. And Noah said to his brother Nir: 'Watch this child in secret until the time, because deceitful people shall arise over all the earth and shall begin to reject God, and having perceived nothing shall put him to death. And then Noah went out to his own place.

24. And great lawlessness began to multiply over the whole earth, in the days of Nir.

25. And Nir began to be very anxious, especially about the child, saying: 'Woe is me, eternal Lord. In my days have begun to multiply all kind of lawlessness upon the earth, and I understand, how that the end is near to us more (than ever), and upon all the earth for the lawlessness of the people.

26. And now, Lord, what is the vision, and what is the solution of it, and what shall I do for (the child) Will it also go with us to destruction?'

27. And the Lord heard Nir, and appeared to him in a nightly vision, and said to him: 'Nir, I do not endure the great lawlessness that has been on the earth in many things, and I wish now to send a great destruction upon the earth, and every earthly creature shall perish.

28. But do not trouble yourself about the child, Nir, for in a short time I will send my chief captain Michael, and he shall take the child and place him in the paradise of Eden, in the garden where Adam was formerly, during a period of seven years, having the heaven always open until the time of his sin.

29. And this child shall not perish with those who perish in this generation, as I have shown, but shall be the holy priest in all things, Melchizedek, and I will appoint him that he may be a priest of priests forever, and I will consecrate him, and will appoint him over the people being made greatly holy.

30. And Nir rose from his sleep, and blessed the Lord, who had appeared unto him, saying: 'Blessed is the Lord God of my fathers, who has spoken to me, (m MSS. add, who will not allow the depreciation of my priesthood in the priesthood of my fathers,

as your word), who made a great priest in my days in the womb of my wife Sopanima.

31. Because I had no family and this child shall be to me in the place of my family, and shall be as a son to me, and you must honor him with your servants the priests, with Seth, and Enoch, and Tharasidam, Mehallalel, and Enos, and your servant, and Melchizedek shall be a priest like this in another generation.

32. For I know that this generation will end in confusion, and all will perish. And Noah, my brother, shall be preserved in that day.

33. And from my race shall rise up many people, and Melchizedek shall be the chief of the priests among the people, ruling alone, serving you O Lord!

34. Because I had not another child in this family, who might be a great priest, but this son of mine, and your servant; and do you great Lord, on this account honour him with your servants, and great priests with Seth, and Enos, and Rusii, and Almillam, and Prasadam, and Bialeleil, and Seroch, and Arusan, and Aleem, and Enoch, and Methuselah, and me, your servant Nir, and Melchizedek shall be the head over twelve priests who lived before, and at last shall be the head over all, (being) the great high priest, the Word of God, and the power to work great and glorious marvels above all that have been.

35. He, Melchizedek, shall be a priest and king in the place Akhuzan, that is to say, in the middle of the earth where Adam was created: there shall at last be his grave.

36. And concerning that chief priest it has been written that he also shall be buried there, where there is the middle of the earth, as Adam buried his son Abel there whom his brother Cain killed, for this reason he lay three years unburied, until he saw a bird called a jackdaw, burying its fledgling.

37. I know that a great confusion has come and this generation shall end in confusion, and all shall perish except that Noah my brother shall be preserved, and afterwards there shall be a planting from his family, and there shall be other people, and another Melchizedek shall be the head of the priests among the people, ruling, and serving the Lord.'

Chapter 4.

1. And when the child had been forty days under the roof of Nir, the Lord said to Michael: 'Go down upon the earth to Nir, the priest, and take My child Melchizedek, who is with him, and place him in the paradise of Eden for preservation, because the time draws near, and I will discharge all the waters upon the earth, and all that is upon the earth shall perish.

2. (And I will establish another race, and Melchizedek shall be the chief of the priests, in that family, just as Seth is to me in this family.)

3. And Michael hurried, and came by night, and Nir was sleeping in his bed. And Michael appeared to him, and said to him: 'The Lord says to you, Nir: "Send the child to me; I entrusted him to you." '

4. And Nir did not know that the chief captain Michael was speaking to him, and his heart was confused, and he said: 'If the people know about the child, and take him, they will slay him. For the heart of these people is crafty before the face of the Lord.

And Nir said to him who spoke to him 'The child is not with me, and I do not know who you are, who are speaking to me.'

5. And he who was speaking to me answered: 'Do not be afraid, Nir, I am the chief captain of the Lord. The Lord has sent me, and I will take thy child today, and will go with him, and will place him in the paradise of Eden, and there he shall be forever.'

6. And when the twelfth generation shall be, and a thousand and seventy years shall be, in that generation a just man shall be born, and the Lord shall tell him to come out upon that mountain where the ark of your brother Noah shall stand, and he shall find there another Melchizedek who has lived there seven years, concealing himself from the people who worship idols, so that they should not slay him, and he shall lead him out and he shall be priest, and the first king in the town of Salem after the fashion of this Melchizedek, the commencement of the priests. And 3432 years shall be fulfilled until that time from the beginning and creation of Adam.

7. And from that Melchizedek there shall be twelve priests in number until the great Iugumen, that is to say leader, who shall bring forth all things physical and spiritual.

8. And Nir understood his first dream, and believed it, and having answered Michael, he said: 'Blessed is the Lord, who has glorified you today to me, and now bless your servant Nir, as we are drawing near our departure from this world, and take the child, and do to him as the Lord has spoken to you.'

9. And Michael took the child on that night on which he came, and took him on his wings, and placed him in the paradise of Eden.

10. And Nir, having risen on the following day, went to his house, and did not find the child, and there was instead of joy, very great sorrow because he had no other son and looked upon this child as his own.

11. So Nir died, and after him there was no priest among the people. And from that time a great confusion arose on the earth.

Chapter 5.

1. And God called Noah on the mountain of Ararat, between Assyria, and Armenia, in the land of Arabia, by the sea, and said to him: ' Make there an ark 450 feet in length, and in width 75 feet, and in height 45, and, two stories in the midst, and the doors about 2 feet.

2. And of those 450 feet, and of ours 22,000, and so of those 75, and of ours 3000 and 750, and so of those 45, and of ours 900, and of those one ell, and of ours 75.'

3. According to this number the Jews keep this measure of the ark of Noah, as the Lord said to him, and (so) they make each measure, and each rule even up to the present time.

4. The Lord God opened the doors of the heavens, and rain came on the earth 150 days, and all flesh died.

5. Noah was in the 500th year and fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6. 100 years after the birth of his three sons, he went into the ark in the month according to the Hebrew Itsars, according to the Egyptian Famenoth in eighteen days.

7. And the ark floated forty days. And together they were in the ark 120 days.

8. And he went into the ark, being 600 years old, and in the sixth hundred and first year of his life he went out of the ark in the month Farnut according to the Egyptians, and according to the Hebrews Nisan about twenty-eight days.

9. Then he lived 250 years, and died; he lived altogether 950 years according [to the will of] the Lord our God, to him be glory from the beginning, and now, and to the end of the world. Amen.

10. Enoch was altogether 365 years old.

11. In another way it is written here concerning Noah's ark. Of their 450 feet, and of ours 22,000, of theirs 150, and of ours 7500: of theirs 30, and of ours 1500; of theirs 15, and of ours 750: of theirs 7, and of ours 375: of theirs 2, and of ours 75! This is the truth spoken.