



Zedek

The time of the patriarch Abraham witnessed unusual behavior by the planet Jupiter. The fact that Jupiter displayed a burst of activity exactly in the time of Abraham must not appear a coincidence: it was in the times of great global catastrophes, when the world was threatened with destruction, that religious reformers gained prominence and contemporaries looked to a divine man for guidance.⁽¹⁾

Zedek was the name of Jupiter, and we read that in the days of Abraham the planet underwent some visible changes. Rabbinical sources relate that when Abraham was on an expedition against Cherdlaomer, king of Elam, and his allied kings—who had captured and despoiled Sodom, and taken Abraham’s nephew Lot into captivity—the star Zedek illuminated the night, thereby ensuring the expedition’s success.⁽²⁾

“When he returned from his victory over Cherdlaomer and the kings who were allied with him,” the book of Genesis relates, “the king of Sodom came out to greet him. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was priest of the Most High.”⁽³⁾ Abraham ceded to Melchizedek the spoils of the war he had obtained in Syria from Cherdlaomer.

Ancient Salem was a holy place, and Palestine was a holy land from grey antiquity. Thus, in the documents of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, Palestine is named God’s Land (*Toneter*), or Divine (Holy) Land.⁽⁴⁾ Abraham lived at the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt; and documents from that time already refer to Palestine as God’s Land. But in early times, it was an astral god.

The meaning of the name Melchizedek is “Zedek is [My] King.” Zedek, as said, is the name of the planet Jupiter, remaining so in the astronomy of the Jews in later ages. In the Talmud Zedek refers to Jupiter.⁽⁵⁾ Zedek also has the meaning of “righteousness” or “justice.” It is beyond the scope of this work to find which of the meanings—the name of the planet or a word in common usage—preceded and which followed. It is conceivable that this planet was worshipped in that remote time and that, in the days of the patriarch Abraham, the cult of Jupiter was prominent in the Salem of the high priest Melchizedek. Melchizedek, “priest of the most high,” was, it follows, a worshipper of Jupiter.⁽⁶⁾

References

1. For example, the time of the great catastrophes of the Exodus saw Moses leading the Israelites from Egypt, to revelations and a covenant with God. And the time of the great upheavals of the eighth and seventh century before this era heard the voice of Isaiah. In later centuries, religious reformers found an especially large and responsive following when they announced the approach of the end of the world, or the beginning of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Numerous instances may be cited, but the best known became the foundation of the religion of a large part of the Old and New World.
2. Rabbi Berkjah, quoted in *Bereshit Rabba* XLIII.3, translated by A. Ravenna (Turin, 1978), p. 328.

3. Genesis 14:17-18. [Salem is considered to be the site of the later Jerusalem. Before Joshua's conquest of Jerusalem the king of that city bore the name Adonizedek, (Joshua 10:1,3), an indication of continuing Jupiter worship among the Jebusites.]
4. In *Ages in Chaos* I have brought extensive material for the identification of the Divine Land with Palestine.
5. Cf. W. M. Feldman, *Rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy* (New York, 1931).
6. Melchizedek, the priest-king of ancient Salem, plays an important part in Christian catechism. [*The Epistle to the Hebrews* 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1ff. Cf. also F. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).]

