**A Sermon Plan for Genesis 14: 17-20: Why Did Abraham Tithe?**

*17 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).*

*18 And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.[*[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+14%3A+17-20&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-355a)*] 19 He blessed him and said,*

*‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High,[*[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+14%3A+17-20&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-356b)*]*  
    *maker of heaven and earth;*  
*20 and blessed be God Most High,[*[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+14%3A+17-20&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-357c)*]*  
    *who has delivered your enemies into your hand!’*

*And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything*

**Notes**

Abraham has just been successful in a major military endeavour, motivated by his desire to rescue his nephew Lot who had been taken captive.

Melchizedek meets Abraham on his return from the battle. We know very little about Melchizedek. He is mentioned again briefly in Psalm 110 and in Hebrews 7, where the writer explains the priesthood of Jesus is in the same pattern of Melchizedek. This gives rise to some speculation as to who Melchizedek might be – possibly God himself, possibly an angel, or maybe simply human but a very holy man.

Regardless of who exactly Melchizedek is, Abraham seems to be aware this is a holy and profound moment and that he’s in the presence of God. His response is to give Melchizedek one tenth of everything he has. Abraham was under no obligation or compulsion to do this. Tithing was not formally introduced until the law of Moses some 500 years later. It is simply his natural and spontaneous reaction to being aware that he was blessed by God.

We ourselves may not have recently been successful in a military expedition. In fact we may not even feel everything is going well in our life. But if we consider ourselves to be people of faith, then regardless of whatever else we might be facing, we too are also blessed by God, as our faith is the most precious and valuable thing we will ever find

Abraham chose to give 10% of what he had to God. The amount you choose to give might be different, it is a personal decision. The CofE recommends you might consider 10%, half to your local parish Church and half to other worthy charities, however this is just a suggestion.  
  
Before you decide how much to give or increase your gift by, consider the important question of whether God has blessed you. Because once we understand we have received so much from God, then like Abraham, our natural and instinctive reaction will be, to give some of what we have back to our overwhelmingly generous God.

**End**