

find one harsh word or criticism; they have nothing but praise for one another. Would that this were always the pattern for our earthly marriages, as our families and ecclesias would be the stronger for it.

But of course the real force of this exhortation is for us collectively, as the bride of Christ. What an amazing thought that this is truly how the Lord Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom, sees his espoused: utterly faultless in his eyes, despite all the reservations she has about herself! And when he comes to solemnise his union with her and share the marriage supper of the Lamb, do we think his opinion of his bride will be any less? "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (Song 4:7, ESV; cf. Eph. 5:27).

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Jerusalem and Salem

I have a question about a theory that was proposed in the 'Basic Bible Principles' insert that came with *The Testimony* for February 2003 ("[Jerusalem, City of the Great King](#)"). In paragraph 3 it is alleged that the Salem of which Melchizedek was king was a city on the site of present-day Jerusalem. How could this be, if the site on Mount Moriah where David purchased the threshingfloor of Ornan for his offering to God, and at which Solomon's temple was later built (2 Chron. 3:1), was also the site of Abraham's offering of Isaac (Gen. 22:2)? If Melchizedek's Salem was at this location then Abraham went to town to make his offering.

I realize this has been the traditional understanding, but why? Is it likely that a city called Salem was located nearby when Abraham went to the mountains of Moriah to make his offering? Is it not more likely that both of Melchizedek's titles were descriptive of the character of his tenure as priest, that is, peaceful and righteous, rather than geographic locations? Or were there two cities, one named 'Peaceful' and one named 'Righteous'? Have I overlooked something?

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Reply

It seems certain that Salem and Jerusalem are one and the same, the name Salem being equated with Zion in Psalm 76:2. Archaeological studies have shown that the site of the original city on

Mount Zion was well below and around 500 to 600 metres (or nearly half a mile) to the south of the summit of Mount Moriah where, as Brother Miner correctly points out, Abraham went to offer Isaac, and David built his altar.

The city in the time of Melchizedek is likely to have been little more than a hill fortress, with a small population. A further point of identification is that Melchizedek came out of Salem to meet Abraham at 'the valley of Shaveh', which is also called 'the king's dale' (Gen. 14:17), where Absalom subsequently erected his pillar (2 Sam. 18:18), and which was clearly close to the city. It is also relevant that, at the time of the invasion of the land under Joshua, the name of the king of Jerusalem was Adoni-zedec (Josh. 10:1), meaning 'Lord of righteousness' (cf. Melchizedek, 'King of righteousness'), suggesting that names of this type were traditional for the rulers of the city.

The threshingfloor of Ornan/Araunah would have been located above the city at the summit of Mount Moriah, for maximum exposure to the wind, and this is where the temple was subsequently constructed by Solomon (2 Chron. 3:1). There is therefore no difficulty in accepting that the city of Salem/Jerusalem was in existence at the time of Abraham's visit to Mount Moriah with Isaac.

David Burges

Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

Brother Carlo Barbaresi, in his further letter on the size of the future temple (Mar. 2003, p. 80), says in relation to the table of comparisons between Solomon's temple and the temple of Ezekiel's prophecy which I provided (Jan. 2003, p. 20): "I note the points that he makes, but this is not the fundamental issue". But surely this *is* the fundamental issue. Scripture clearly shows that the temple described by Ezekiel will be identical in a number of ways, including size.

There are two questions to be addressed, the first being this. Is it wise to ignore all these details because a wall described by the prophet appears to be in conflict with the conclusions reached? Furthermore, this wall is described as being 500 reeds square in the AV but 500 cubits square in RSV.

The second question to be addressed relates to how much weight should be given to the two (apparently opposing) sections of Scripture. The comparisons between the temple of Solomon and