

# GENESIS

## 14:1-24

### Genesis 14:1-24

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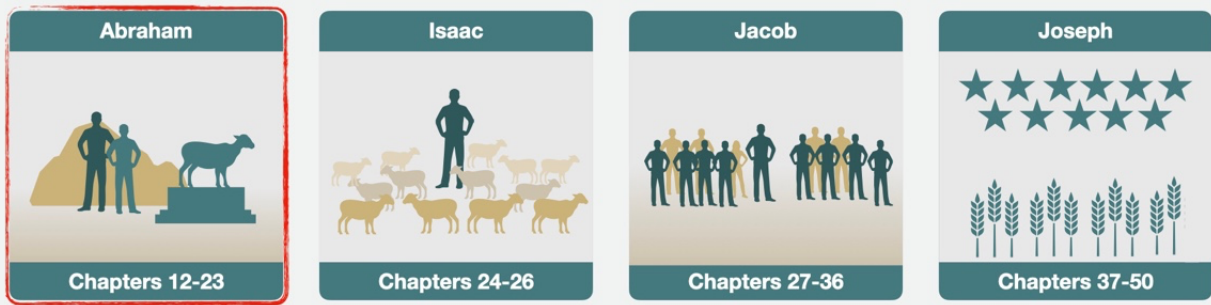
Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 22nd October 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** Hebrews 6:19-7:3

### Introduction

For a little over 3 months we have been studying the book of Genesis, and having looked at the four major *events* it records — from creation to the fall, the flood and the tower of Babel — we are now starting to look at the four *individuals* that it focusses on:

# The patriarchs of Genesis



Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And last week we reached the end of chapter 13, where we saw Abram and his nephew, Lot, part ways after their herds became so large that the same land could not support them both. And we saw how Abram dealt with the strife between his and Lot's servants in the most mature of ways — not making matters worse, not blaming Lot, not demanding anything of him — but simply talking to him, and even giving preference to him by letting him choose the land he would settle in, with Abram taking whatever Lot didn't choose.

While Lot didn't *react* badly to all this, he *chose* poorly. For we *read* in verses 10 & 11:

## Genesis 13:10-11

And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.

That is, Lot chose with his eyes. Rather than seek where the Lord would have him, he chose what he thought was best. In other words, he acted in the flesh.

## Overview of chapter fourteen

And as we enter chapter fourteen, we will see the consequence of his decision to *look* toward Sodom, to pitch his tent *as far as Sodom*, and ultimately *move* into the city of Sodom:

### Overview of chapter fourteen

- **v1-12** — Lot taken captive
- **v13-17** — Abram rescues Lot

For in verses 1 to 12 we will see battles unfold in the area, ending up with Sodom being attacked, and Lot being taken captive. Then, verses 13 to 17 record Abram's response to that — which was decisive, with him rescuing both his nephew, *and* all that he had. And then in the final 7 verses, we will read of a man Abram meets by the name of Melchizedek. At first glance, it is an encounter we could easily skip over, but as we look deeper we'll see both God's grace foretold, and perhaps our attitudes challenged. This might get uncomfortable!

## Chapter fourteen

Let's get started then. In these first 11 verses we'll get the the context of verse 12 and beyond. We read:

### Genesis 14:1-2

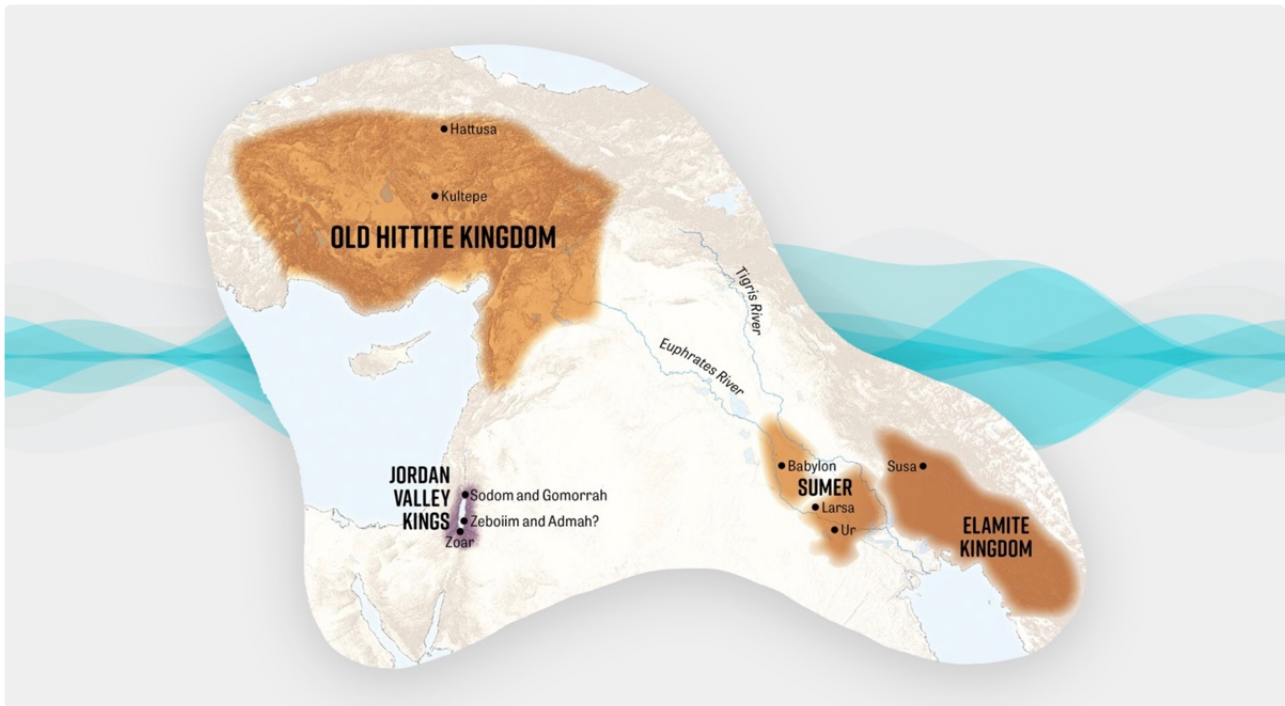
And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

So our timing is around 1900-2000 BC, with Abram likely in his 70s. And we read that war broke out between two groups of kings. The first war recorded in the Bible.

This is very early history still, and there are critics — even those who call themselves Bible scholars — who suggest that these events never took place, because these kings never existed. But that's wrong at best, and a lie at worst, for there is an increasing amount of evidence that confirms this Biblical account, with the names of a number of these kings found on monuments and tablets.

The leading king of this first group, Chedorlaomer (king of Elam) is a recognized Elamite name, *Kudur-Lagomer*. While it seems Amraphel (king of Shinar) was also known as Hammurabi, from whom came the code of ethics called the *Code of Hammurabi*. Arioch (king of Ellasar) was the final king of *Larsa*, whose Semetic name is *Eri-aku*. And then Tidal is a recognised name of multiple kings in the area we know today as Turkey, then the Hittite empire that consisted of multiple peoples — hence the term *king of nations*.

The second group had 5 kings, but their kingdoms were much smaller in that they were essentially rulers of cities, rather than sprawling empires — as such we know less about them, though archaeological evidence of *cities* such as Sodom has been found.



Map via Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology [AMIBA/CHRISTOPHER EAMES, REESE ZOELLNER]

As for where they were located, you can see here on this map, that the empires of the first four kings were based in what we know as Iraq, Iran and Turkey today. You may recognise the name Susa as the setting for the book of Esther, that we started studying almost a year ago to the day.

The five city-kings were located around the Jordan valley — either side of the Dead Sea, or Salt Sea as it is called in verse 3:

#### **Genesis 14:3**

All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

And until this point they had been subject to another king:

#### **Genesis 14:4**

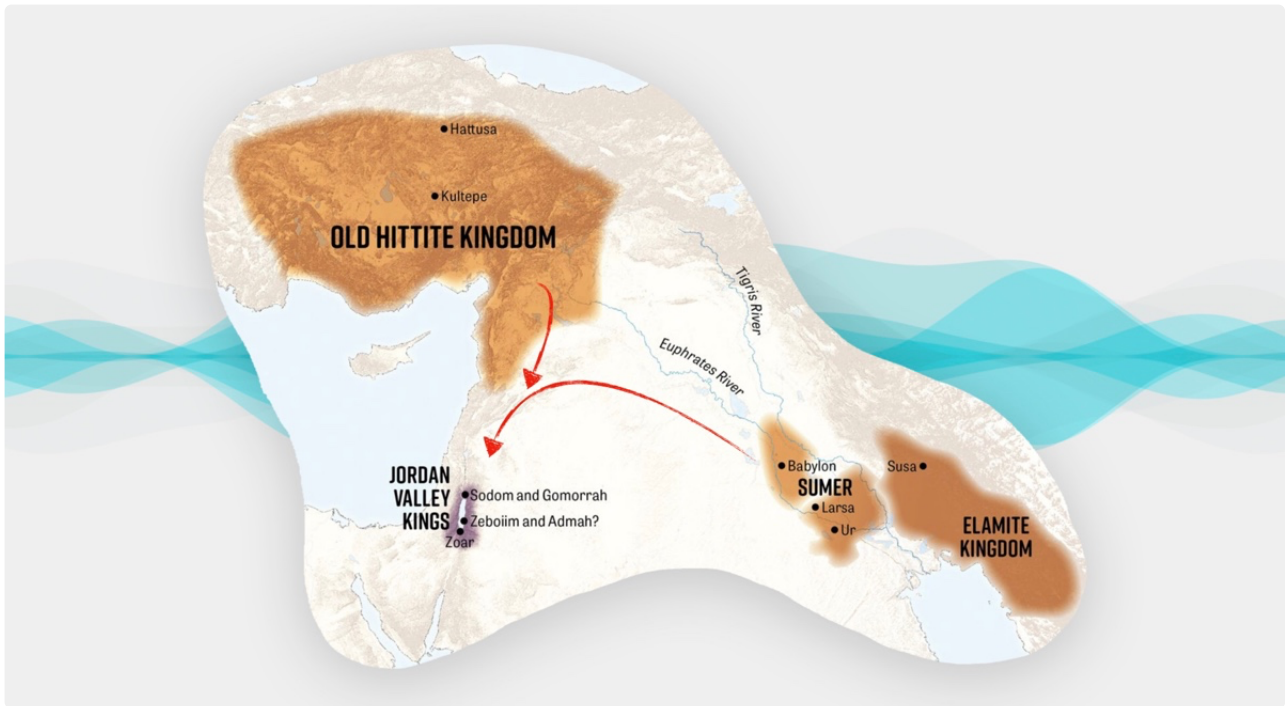
Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

So, in response to this rebellion, we read:

#### **Genesis 14:5-7**

In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.

And so, these four kings waged war on those living in the land of Canaan, coming from the north and the east as you can see here on this helpful map from the Armstrong Institute for Biblical Archaeology:



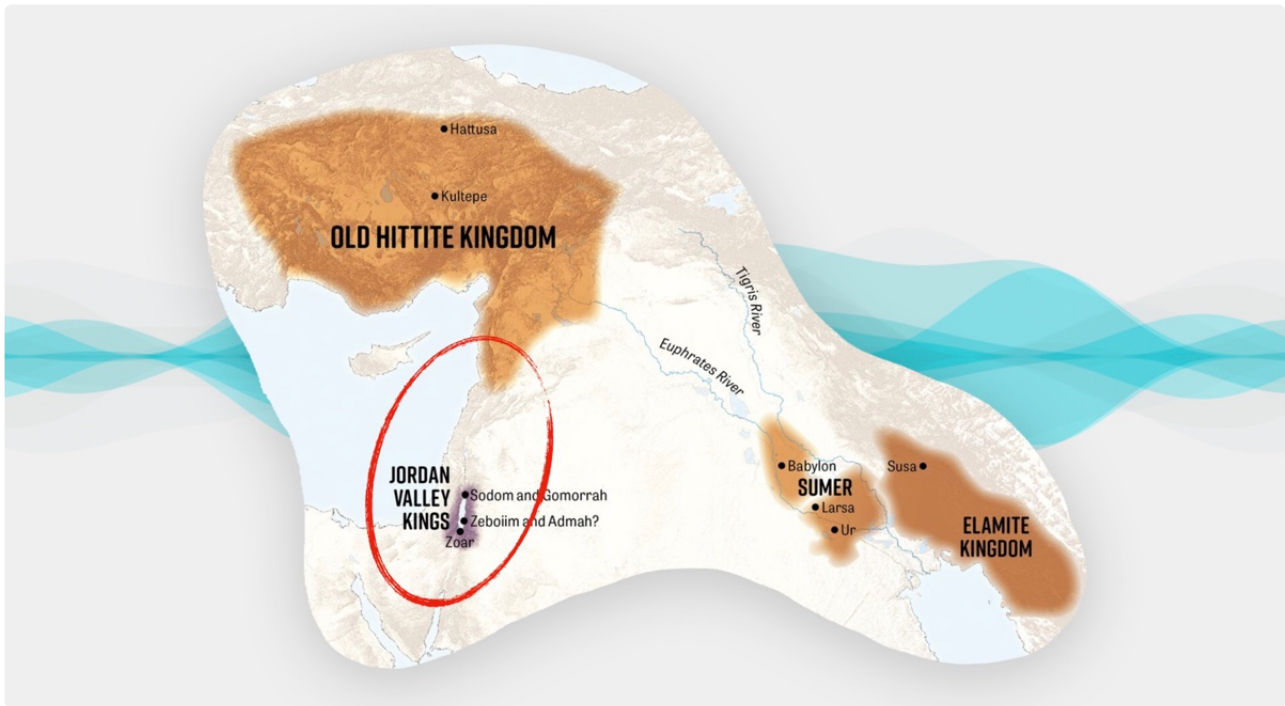
Map via Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology [AMIBA/CHRISTOPHER EAMES, REESE ZOELLNER]

And not only the 5 kings who had rebelled were attacked, but first many of the tribes around them — including the Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, Horites, Amalekites and Amorites — were also attacked. You'll recognise those names as giant tribes describes elsewhere in the Bible.

#### **Genesis 14:8-9**

And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

So having arrived in the area, the four kings fight their way down the east side of the Dead Sea, turning west under it, and then north again, coming to the Valley of Siddim, at Sodom.



Map via Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology [AMIBA/CHRISTOPHER EAMES, REESE ZOELLNER]

And it is here that they face the 5 kings who had rebelled. We read the outcome in verses 10 & 11:

#### **Genesis 14:10-11**

Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.

So this rebellion is short lived, and these 5 city-kings are defeated. But, until this point, you might be wondering *why* this is recorded... but then we see the impact on Abram and his nephew, Lot:

#### **Genesis 14:12**

They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

So Abram's nephew is taken captive, and the four victorious kings now set off for their homelands. Doesn't the current news bring that home! Abram, on the other hand, was *not* attacked. And so we see a stark contrast to the circumstances Lot found himself in, ultimately as a result of his choice to not only move *toward* Sodom, but live *in* it. And we should pause for thought.

For on one hand, Lot had not instigated this war that had broken out. But in choosing the wrong company he had ended up being taken captive as a result of it. And you and I will find that our choice of friends will greatly affect us. That's true in your teens. And in your retirement. And everywhere in between. In fact, you can see even in the youngest children, how they pick up habits, words, ideas and actions from others — for better and worse. Let us note what Solomon wrote in Proverbs chapter 12:

#### **Proverbs 12:26**

The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.



As I noted in our study of Proverbs, choose friends who will love you, correct you, and encourage you. And don't fill your days with those who would pull you away from the Lord.

Paul warned the Corinthian church:

**1 Corinthians 15:33-34**

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

And in even more stark terms, James wrote:

**James 4:4-5**

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

"Oh but they're funny", "They're really nice to me", "They're a useful connection to have". "They're a family friend". Those things might be true. But what is that person doing to your walk with the Lord?

Are they telling crude jokes? Do they blaspheme or swear? Do they want you to skip church? Do they want you to go and see ungodly movies with them? Are they pointing out the girls or guys to you? Do they tell you to 'have some fun' away from home? Do they encourage you to date a non-Christian? Do they suggest you have just one more drink?

As the song says, *be careful little eyes what you see, what you hear, what you say, where you go, whom you trust and what you think.*

Simply put; if Lot had not followed his eyes, if he had not followed his flesh, he would not have been taken captive. Of course, we can't *not* live in the world. We should indeed be friendly. We should witness. But we shouldn't compromise our walk with God in any regard. We shouldn't try and have even one foot in the world, for we'll end up doing the spiritual splits, and it'll hurt.

Now, we read on here:

**Genesis 14:13**

Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram.

So in contrast to Lot who lived in the wicked and rebellious city of Sodom, Abram resided in a place that meant richness and communion — indicative of the richness of communion he enjoyed with God. While he was *in* the world — evidently making peace with those around him — he was not *of* the world. We see no compromise in any regard. And now he hears the news about Lot:

**Genesis 14:14**

Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

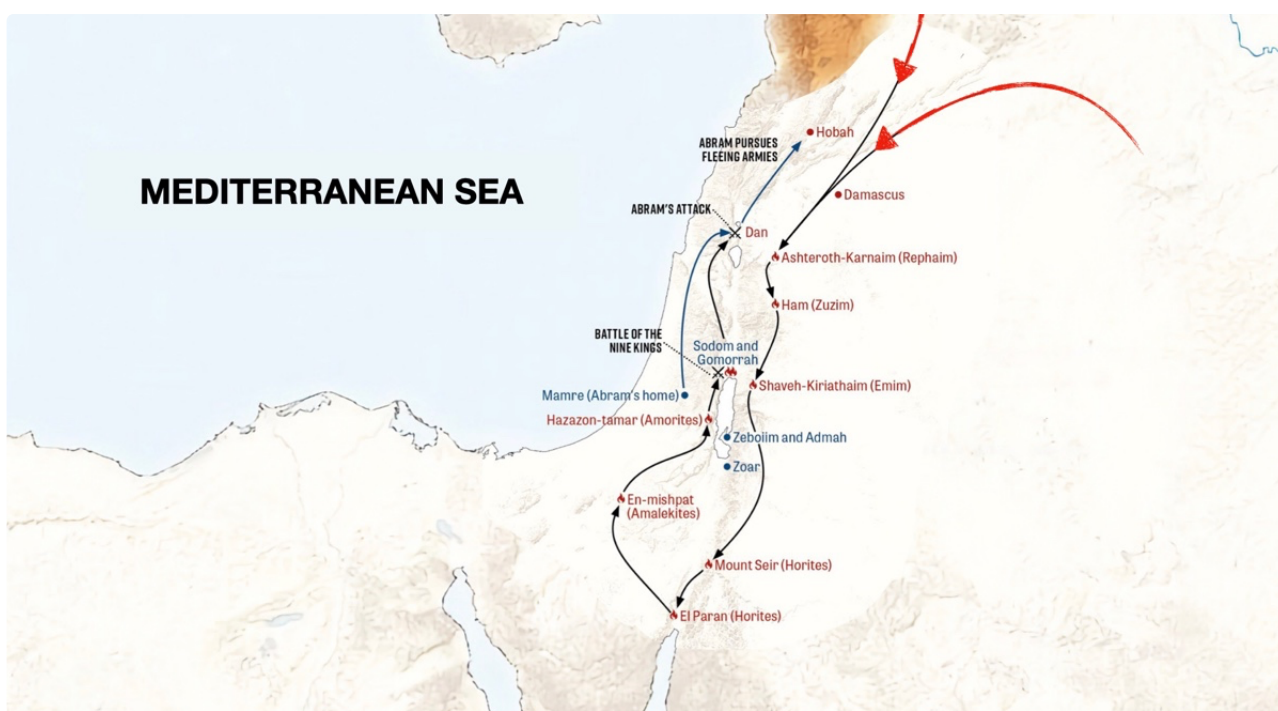
This is no contradiction to verse 12, for while his nephew Lot is described here as his brother, that is in the sense of him being family, just as Christians you and I can call each other brother or sister. And Abram's response to Lot's captivity is immediate. Perhaps we can imagine the strength of feeling Abram had when we look at how quickly Israel have responded of late, in part to so many being taken hostage by Hamas in these recent weeks.

Here, Abram goes in pursuit to the northern part of Israel, north of the Sea of Galilee. And we read:

#### **Genesis 14:15**

He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

So Abram is shrewd in his plans here. He divides his forces, attacks by surprise, and attacks at night. As his enemy flees, he pursues them yet further north as you can see here:



Map via Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology [AMIBA/CHRISTOPHER EAMES, REESE ZOELLNER]

To quickly recap; the four kings, led by Chedorlaomer king of Elam, come to the land of Canaan from the north and east, and attack many tribes and head south along the eastern side of the dead sea, before coming back up the western side to the Valley of Siddim, defeating the 5 city-kings that had rebelled, taking Lot captive in the process.

And Abram now attacks them by surprise in the area of Dan, and pursues them to Hobah where we read that he was more than successful in what he set out to do:

#### **Genesis 14:16**

So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.



This was a resounding success for Abram. With just 318 trained men he had defeated the armies of 4 kings that had wrecked havoc in their campaign throughout the land of Canaan. Impossible? No. While unusual, there are several of examples throughout even recent history where small numbers have defied the odds en route to victory.

Furthermore, the first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, records that Chedorlaomer's men were drunk and gluttoned on the spoils. Add that to the tactics used by Abram, and we start to see why he may have had success from a human perspective.

However, this misses the most important point of all — that it was God who gave him victory; a point that we don't find out until verse 20. Abram may have good tactics, but it was God's goodness that gave the victory. What stands out to me here though, is Abram's willingness to go after Lot. Abram had not been entangled in the war that was raging in Canaan. And he could have looked at this differently. After all, *he* was alright. And even though Lot had been taken captive, it was a result of his own poor choice to live among the wicked in Sodom.

But as soon as Abram heard he was in danger, he pursued him. Why? Love.

So what of us? We can't make someone's decision for them. We can't stop them from moving to Sodom. We can't stop someone from playing with the world. But when their poor choice catches up with them, and starts to destroy their lives, do we let them be, or do we pursue them in love?

Let us consider what we read in Jude:

**Jude 1:20-23**

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Abram didn't say "stupid Lot, he got what he deserved". He went after him. He didn't merely text him to see if he was OK, or ask if he was looking forward to life in another country. No — he rescued him, and brought him back home. And for us, it's going to require more than "hey, we miss you at church". There will be people in our lives where we will need to intervene, speaking directly to them, and showing them the seriousness of their situation.

However, in order to do that I believe we need to walk with them first, being such a part of their lives that we have an open door to be direct. How does that happen? Fellowship. That's why when you miss out on times of fellowship, you are not merely missing out yourself, but failing to show your duty of care for others. The purpose of the preacher is not to do the work of ministry. The purpose of all preaching is to enable the saints — that's all of us — *for* the work of ministry.

And part of that ministry that we *all* have will be to rescue those who have stumbled, who have fallen, who have turned their backs on the Lord through compromise with the world.

We read in Galatians 6:

**Galatians 6:1**

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

That is, when we know someone who is reaping what they have sown, we are to pull them out of the fire quickly, and treat them gently. They may forever have scars of their choices. But we are to restore them in love that they may learn to walk with the Lord again.

What we see here in this chapter is a man who was willing to go after another whom he loved, that he may free them from the clutches of the enemy. So may we.

Now, we continue reading about Abram:

**Genesis 14:17**

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

So now Abram is big news to the king of Sodom who had survived this conflict, for Abram had been victorious where he had not. Presumably with far fewer men also. And we'll come back to this king in verse 21. But next we read of a far more profound encounter:

**Genesis 14:18**

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.

From no-where, another king enters the scene. Specifically this man named Melchizedek, king of Salem. Where is Salem? Well, we know it well — for it's name today is Jerusalem, taking that name from a combination of its ancient name, Salem, meaning peace, and *Jebus*, as it was later renamed after the Jebusites that conquered it. That is, it finally became known as Jerusalem, meaning *habitation of peace*. Now, we read that he was king of this city, but also priest of God Most High. And this should seem familiar. For indeed, we find that this man at minimum was foreshadow of Jesus. How?

First of all, he was both king and priest — just as Jesus is our King and Great High Priest. His very name means king of righteousness (which we learn in Hebrews 7), just as Jesus is our righteousness. He was king of Salem — that is, king of peace. Just as Jesus is our peace. And in Hebrews we also read Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, and had an endless priesthood — that is, it is significant that there is no record of his beginning or end, no father or mother, just as Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. And further, it is also written in Hebrews, he was made like the Son of God.

But even more provocative is that this man, Melchizedek brings out an offering of bread and wine, the very symbols we have to remember Jesus sacrifice.

So what is going on? I can think of no better summary than that which Jon Courson gives:

*Two thousand years before Christ came to die for our sin, Melchizedek brings a symbol of His death— bread and wine, the elements of Communion... When we partake of Communion it is in remembrance of Jesus. Abram partook of Melchizedek's bread and wine in anticipation of Jesus.*

**Jon Courson**

God's had planned our salvation since before the foundation of the world. Here we get a glimpse of that reality through Melchizedek. And so significant is this man, that not only does David write about him in Psalm 110, but he is mentioned 9 times in the book of Hebrews, pointing to Jesus as a "*priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek*".

Indeed many believe, including myself, that this is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Himself — a Christophany as it's called — revealing Himself here, point to to His grace to come, that as Abram had gone after Lot out of love, despite and indeed *because* of Lot's wandering after the flesh, so Jesus would come after us, despite and indeed because of *our* wandering after the flesh. His body the bread, broken for us, and his blood the wine, shed for us. That He would be our Great High Priest, forever — without end.

As we are blessed in Christ, so Abram received a blessing here from Melchizedek:

#### **Genesis 14:19-20a**

And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

Not only had Abram been delivered, but he was blessed. However, the One whom received the *glory* was God Himself — just as it is with our salvation. Here indeed is the first instance of praise to God in scripture.

What was Abram's response?

#### **Genesis 14:20b**

And he gave him a tithe of all.

Yes, I mentioned the T-word. I warned you it might get uncomfortable!

Now, if you're here for the first time, or visiting, you might accidentally get the impression that all we talk about is tithing, and giving money to the church. But the reality is that the last time we covered this specific passage in detail was in early 2012. And before that it was 2007. And so it's the case for any passage or topic. This just happens to be where we're at this week. Likewise, if you've been considering buying a boat, or you've had a pay rise this week, don't think that I'm targeting you specifically. No, no. I'm prepared to upset all of you in equal measure this morning — *if need be*!

Here, we see Abram give a tenth of all. At minimum that is a tenth of what he gained through this victory. But it doesn't say that here. It appears that he gave a tenth of *all* that he had. Nothing was held back. And sure, we can talk about giving our time, and our energy — and those things *are* important — but let's not miss the point that Abram gave a tenth of all his material possessions.

"Ah, but tithing was under the law", you say. Indeed it was. But it also *preceded* it. For the law would not be given to Moses until hundreds of years after this point. What Abram does is surely in response to all *God* had done. And he did it with a willing heart. In that, he is an example for us all — for if we're honest, we have a poor relationship with money. For as soon as we have it, we find that it has us, just as the rich man in Mark chapter 10, who was sad at what Jesus said, *and went away sorrowful for he had great possessions*.

So, maybe, you or I will go away from this study sad. You may feel like your nose has been put out of joint. That's not the intent, but if we do feel like that, we should ask ourselves if the *reason* we feel like that, is not because of what was said, or what we read in the Bible, but because of how much we love our money and possessions.

What then is tithing all about? I don't for a minute hope to cover all that could be said about it today. But we should spend some time here, because we so rarely do spend time on this subject. And I think there are two fundamental questions that will, if we consider them carefully, give us much of the answer we need. And that is *why* do we give? And *how much* do we give? Because to suggest that we shouldn't give at all is to be ignorant of what the Bible teaches.

So then, ***why do we give?***

Simply put — it tests our obedience, reveals our hearts, and accomplishes God's purposes.

God instructs us to give, plain and simple. It is a matter of obedience. And indeed any refusal to give, or *conditions* we put upon our giving reveals where our hearts really are. You see, it's perhaps easy to give for a specific reason — we might get excited about an outreach event, or a new piece of technology for the PA, or lights etc. But we get don't get the same warm and fuzzy feeling when we think about paying the heating bill, or hiring a skip, or maintaining the building. But all these things are necessary. And giving to the Lord without any stated constraint is a test of our willingness too. Giving, without knowing exactly what that money will be used for, teaches us to let go — because it is not our money any more.

Now, that doesn't mean there shouldn't be transparency in church finances. Or in what a churches financial needs are. Indeed, in this church I believe we could do more to be clear on both fronts. But what it boils down to in our giving, is; are we prepared to give to the Lord to do whatever *He* wants with it? You see, Abram didn't say to Melchizedek "I want to know where my tithe will go". He didn't say "I want to tithe to a specific aspect of ministry". No, no. He simply gave.

I think the problem we have is that we think we're giving the Lord *our* money. Or worse, we think we're giving the *church* our money. However, what we should remember is that all that we have is from the Lord in the first place. "Oh, but you're wrong Sim — I earn that money!" With what job? With what skills? Whose air do you breath? Every good gift comes from God in the first place.

Keith Green, the late Christian singer-songwriter, was once introducing one of his songs titled "To obey is better than sacrifice" and he was talking about the time he wrote his first tithe check, and the reluctance he felt. When he did give it he thought 10% for you, 90% for me. I've still got 90%! And felt convicted by the Lord... "whose money?!"

The biggest challenge, and perhaps one of the biggest blessings in tithing is it reveals what we truly think about all that we have. And how much all we have actually has us.

Now, as mentioned — tithing tests our obedience, and it reveals our hearts. But it also accomplishes God's purposes. Don't get me wrong, God isn't going to go bankrupt if you don't give. But by giving, God allows us to become involved in what *He* is doing. And that's because tithing supports ministry.

So let's start with the local church. First, there must be a place to meet — for a home will only accommodate so many people. And that means hiring somewhere, or buying a building. As a fellowship we have been incredibly blessed that we own our own building outright with no debt. But we are still to be good stewards in maintaining it. That doesn't just mean putting the hoover round, but using the tithing given to stop the building from crumbling away. Why this is important, is because a building enables us to meet together on a Sunday morning and evening to study God's Word, to praise Him together, and to fellowship with one another. It allows us to have various mid-week groups here. It allows us to reach out to kids and teenagers in the town around us, running clubs that provide what is possibly the *only* Christian input they get. And we get to invite our neighbours, friends and families to events where we can share the gospel with them.

Second, tithing supports those who are in ministry. That doesn't mean only those who are paid should serve. But rather, we should desire that as many God calls would be supported by the church, so that they would serve him as effectively as they can, for as much time as possible. If we consider pastoral ministry for a moment, the benefit of full time ministry to the church family is that there is no distraction from secular employment, less exhaustion, and more time dedicated to the ministry of the Word and prayer — just as the example of Acts 6 sets forth.

But furthermore, there are many, many ministries beyond these four walls that we could and should support - not only collectively as a church, but as individuals. Without faithful giving, ministries such as Blue Letter Bible would not exist. Nor would Answers In Genesis, whom we've all been benefitting from as we go through our verse by verse study of Genesis. There are Christian organisations such as Christian Institute who do a vitally important work protecting our Christian freedom in this country. Or Compassion International who do so much to share both the gospel and practical help with those so very much in need. Then there are itinerant preachers. Those who travel from place to place to strength, build, equip and encourage the church. These days, some of that is accomplished from behind a computer screen building a web site, or creating YouTube videos, or making an app. There is a long list of wonderful, Godly, Bible based ministries exist as a result of faithful giving.

Now finally, beyond the practical and ministry needs of the local church, and even the ministry needs of those who — just like Paul — dedicate their lives to serving God and preaching the gospel throughout the world, there are practical needs that we should meet as Christians, and as a church.

Just look at the example of the early church, who gave to support the poor saints in Jerusalem in a very practical way through a collection for them. While widows with family should be supported *by* their family, those in the church *without* relatives (and *truly* in need) should indeed be supported *by* the church. Indeed there is much practical good that the church can do. But, and this is important, it will accomplish no *lasting* good if *all* it does is fulfil practical needs, propping people's physical frame up while their soul is on its way to hell. There is a balance to be struck. But that balance includes practical Christian giving. Some of that will be individually done, some of it corporately so.

That then, is just *some* of the reason *why* we should give. But there was a second question, and one that is perhaps even more uncomfortable. And that is ***how much do we give?***

The example given by Abram before the law, is that of a tenth. And the same amount was the instruction given *under* the law. And I see no reason we should aim to offer less than that. But I think the danger is we easily rationalise it — we give to a charity here and there, and that counts, or ministry costs us something and so we tithe less. And something that's been challenging me as I've been thinking through this is that we tend to think about tithing a percentage *after tax*. Yet, if we were asked how much we earn, we would always state how much that was *before tax*. That's something to think on. But in the end, we should give as we are able. And that might mean way more than 10%. But it just might mean less. For there are those whom giving 10% of their income would result in stark choices about feeding their family and such.

With that said, however, we would each do well to consider the example of the widow who offered two mites, and in doing so offered *all* that she had, trusting God. We would also do well to heed the warning we read in 2 Corinthians:

#### **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

And finally, we should carefully consider the words we read in Malachi chapter 3:

#### **Malachi 3:8-10**

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

This is a challenge to you and I. These are serious words that we should carefully consider. Indeed, the whole book of Malachi is one worth revisiting on a regular basis.

Returning to our passage in Genesis, we read in verse 21:

#### **Genesis 14:21**

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

That is, the king of Sodom wanted to reward Abram materially for his endeavour, but we read:

#### **Genesis 14:22-24**

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'—except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

So Abram declares that he will not take anything in reward, except for the food his men have eaten, and the portion of reward due to those from his allies that went with him. Why? Because he didn't want his wealth to be attributed to anyone but God, or give this king any sense of control over him.



## Conclusion

We've covered much ground in what seems a simple chapter at first. We've considered the consequences of Lot's choices, and Abram's love demonstrated in going after him. We also saw the incredible foreshadow in Melchizedek, in how God went after us — dying in our place, for our sin. And we see great example in Abram, with him willingly giving back to God from that which *God* had given to *him*.

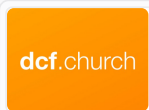
## Application questions

Let us apply these things during the hours, days and weeks ahead. I encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

- Are you making wise choices in your friendships?
- Who should you be going after to restore them?
- Have you forgotten God's grace in going after you?
- Are you giving God your first and best?

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For the audio recording of this Bible study, and for additional studies, please see the DCF web site:



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For further reading, see this article from the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology:



### Uncovering the Battle That Changed the World

Long before Sparta's 300, there was Abraham's 318.

<https://armstronginstitute.org/299-uncovering-the-battle-that-changed-the-world>