

Lesson 32
Separation To The Covenant (Continued)

Genesis 14:1-24

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Chapter 14 tells us how God works in and through a believer who is in fellowship with his God. Abram, yielded to God, is faced with crisis and temptation. NOTE. The person who walks with God will be in conflict with the world, the flesh and the Devil.

B. This chapter was one of the beachheads where the higher critic made his attack upon the integrity of the Book of Genesis. The kings mentioned here could not be found in secular history for a long while. Archeology has changed all this and the kings can be identified and this particular battle has become a fascinating subject for historians.

II. VICTORY IN COMBAT 14:1-16

A. The Slaughter of the Kings (1-12)

1. Four Mesopotamian kings (Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlamer, Tidal) were warring with five kings (Bera, Birsha, Shinab, Sherneber, Zoar), who occupied the general area around the Jordan Valley or the present Dead Sea. These five kings had paid tribute to Chedorlamer for 12 years and were now rebelling (1-4).

2. The Mesopotamian kings made war against the Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims and Horitos in the Jordan Valley. They swept through the valley and conquered it. Then they turned around and came through the valley from another direction and made war with the Amalekites, Amorites and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela. Chedorlamer and the other three kings demoralized and wiped out much of their enemies' armies, and those who lived in the Jordan Valley fled to the highlands of Noab (5-10). NOTE. This invasion by-passed Abram because he trusted in God and God was protecting him.

3. The importance of this invasion is to show its effects upon Sodom and Gomorrah, for these kings were soundly defeated and fled to the hills (10), their cities were sacked (11) and they captured Lot (12).

B. The Saving of Lot (13-16)

1. One who had escaped from battle in desperation flees to Abram to tell him what happened to Lot. Abram is here identified as a Hebrew, which means "the crossing-over one". This is a testimony to Abram's faith, for he crossed over into the land, he crossed over territorial boundaries to fight for God and he crossed over the line to trust God.

2. Abram had three men and their armies confederate with him: Aner, Eschol and Mamre. Perhaps they were new converts, for Abram was a witness for Jehovah God.

3. Abram set out to rescue Lot. Abram did not have a bitter spirit towards Lot, but did what was right before God. He becomes a dashing and daring figure as he responds quickly to the emergency. His faith displays itself in his willingness to involve himself for another's sake without hesitating to play it safe.

4. Abram mobilizes 318 of his trained men who join with the confederates of the area. He moves the small force 120 miles to the north, probably at a torrid pace to overtake the conquering army as soon as possible. The encounter comes at Dan, at the northern extremity of Palestine. His tactics, much like those of Gideon and his 300 soldiers in Judges 9, involve striking with separate commando units to give the impression that a great army is attacking. The enemy soldiers are caught completely off guard, seized with panic, and put to flight in all directions from the encampment wondering what hit them. As the survivors picked their way back toward the north, they were pursued into Syria (15). Abram, heroic leader of his attackers, took Lot and turned homeward (16). NOTE. From Abram we learn, "If God be for us, who can be against us!" And from Lot we learn that the carnal man is always unthankful, for there is no record of Lot's appreciation to Abram for the rescue and his real contempt is shown in his return to Sodom.

III. VICTORY IN TRIUMPH 14:17-20

A. The King of Sodom (14:17). The King of Sodom, who is never up to anything good, went out to meet Abram. The king of Sodom is Satan's adversary and he wants to make a deal with Abram. NOTE. When the Lord gives the Christian great victory, the Devil is close behind.

B. King of Salem (18-20)

1. Before the king of Sodom could get to Abram, he was met by the king of Salem. This king's name was Melchizedek, which means "king of righteousness." Who is Melchizedek?

a. A Human. Most scholars say he was an actual earthly man of that day and was king and priest of Salem representing the true God. He was the king of Salem (earlier name of Jerusalem), which is an actual place. In Hebrews 7, when it says that Melchizedek was without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (7:3), it means that there is no recorded history of his genealogy.

b. The Pre-Incarnate Christ. Melchizedek was a theophany, actually being the pre-incarnate Christ. The word salem (Shalom) in Hebrew means "peace" so we may assume that He is not being called the king of a place, Jerusalem, but the King of Peace. He is the king of righteousness and peace, who in reality is Christ. He was without father and mother and without beginning or ending which literally speaks of eternity (Heb. 7:1-21). NOTE. This is significant because Christ is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7).

2. Melchizedek brought bread and wine which may picture to us the body and blood of Christ. This is the only time bread and wine are mentioned together except when Christ set them forth in the Lord's Table.

3. Melchizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave a tenth of all his spoils to the priest of the Most High God. NOTE. Abram gave a tenth of the spoils to God, which may indicate that tithing was practiced before the Mosaic Law, and may be part of the moral law for New Testament giving. sacrificial giving.

4. Abram knew that God had given him the victory and he worshipped God, knowing that God was carrying out his promise of personal blessing from the Abrahamic Covenant. NOTE. Abram was victorious in triumph because he was humble before God,

IV. VICTORY IN TEMPTATION 14:2-24

A. The Temptation (21). Now Abram goes from worship to warfare again. This time he will face an even more subtle type of warfare than meeting a physical enemy. His test is to involve spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies, confronting him through the worldly king of Sodom and the choice and

motive he could express. The King of Sodom makes a crafty offer. Abram was to keep the spoils and release the captives back to Sodom. Perhaps the king of Sodom wanted men to think that Abram had gained his wealth dishonestly, and thus obscure the secret of the victory, which was Abram's God.

B. The Victory (22-24)

1. Abram refuses all the spoils, though he thoughtfully allows the confederates with him to take what they might claim the right to have, NOTE. Abram has very high standards for himself as a mature believer, but he did not impose these same standards on his three young converts. He is operating on the grace principle, allowing each one to make up his own mind so as to grow in spiritual things.

2. Abram refused these spoils because (1) he wanted to testify to the true source of his blessing, which was God; (2) he desires to avoid obligating himself to the worldly king, a relationship he could live to regret; and (3) Abram discerned in the offer the temptation to take one big step toward becoming identified with the life of Sodom. NOTE. Abram was victorious over temptation because he was in fellowship with his God.