

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 14

14:1 *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel* [Son of Horus, grandson of Semiramis] *king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations* [NIV: "Goiim" – Asia Minor was populated by a variety of people at this time]

14:2-12 *went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (the Salt Sea). For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites* [NKJ: "Rephaim", giants in stature] *in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar. Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar--four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.* (NIV)

Blessed by Association

God promised that all who rightly associated with Abram would be blessed and all who separated themselves would be cursed. Lot separated himself from Abram and, as a result, suffered the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah.

14:13-15 *One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.* (NIV)

Pursuit of Lot

The account of this battle parallels some of the instruction God later gave to Israel about going to war (DEU 20). The manner of Abram's warfare is not outlined; along with his own trained men he most likely had a large army of Amorites gathered from his three wealthy confederates, influential rulers in southern Canaan.

If Abram used the same tactics that God had Gideon and his army of 300 use several centuries later (JUD 7:7,16-23), once Abram startled the enemy, numerous other Canaanite tribes would have joined in the pursuit. It was a good 130 mile pursuit from Hebron to Dan (Laish), where the enemy was engaged during the night. Josephus says "*Abram...did not delay it, but marched hastily, and the fifth night fell upon the Assyrians.*"(I.X.1) Then the pursuit covered almost another fifty miles.

14:16-18 He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people. After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, (NIV)

Melchizedek

- HEB 7:2-3—"...first being translated King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, meaning, King of Peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually." Christ is called Prince of Peace (ISA 9:6).
- PSA 110:1,4—"The LORD (YHVH) says to my Lord (Adonai)...You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."
- PSA 76:2—"In Salem also is His tabernacle." Jerusalem means "city of Peace".

14:19-20 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." And he gave Him a tithe of all.

Victory with God

Melchizedek emphasized Abram had been victorious due to the blessing God had given him. Centuries later God commanded the high priest to remind the army of Israel that "*the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory*" (DEU 20:2-4).

Tithing

This is the first place tithing is mentioned in the Scriptures. Abram is not instructed here to give God anything, yet he freely offers ten percent of all the increase he received from the four kings. This indicates that tithing was an ongoing practice of Abram. Since God was recognized as the Possessor of heaven and earth, everything ultimately belongs to Him. All He requires is a tenth of the increase a man receives.

14:21-24 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted 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 will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I 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."

Making an Oath

At this time when a man made an oath, he raised his hand. For Abram, the method of making an oath would change after the introduction of circumcision.

Spoils of War

Abram neither asked for, nor wanted, anything from the rulers of this world. It was probably after this event that the city of Hebron was renamed "Kirjath-arba," "the city of four," in honor of the pact between Abram, Mamre, Eshcol and Aner.