

Living In The Real World Genesis 14:1-24

This account comes in 3 parts: the battle of 9 kings v1-12, Abram's rescue mission defeating 4 kings v13-16, Abram's return faced with 2 kings v17-24. As we take each section we will find lessons of abiding importance for us all.

I. The Battle Of The Kings v.1-12

A coalition of 4 kings led by Kedorlaomer came from Mesopotamia and had exercised rule over the region for 12 years, until there was a rebellion of local rulers, also called kings. V5 the Mesopotamian rulers came in force to reassert their authority. Why give our minds to this?

1) Because we live in the real world. We are following God's dealings with Abram & his family. But this walk of faith did not exist in a vacuum. Abram lived in world of real places in real world. Faced famine, dangers & fears. He had family, family tensions & conflicts. This real world forced him to make choices. Here he is touched by war, politics and invasion. As Christians today we also live in real world. If you don't have a faith that is worked out in real world you don't have a faith at all.

2) Because we have a reliable word from God. As archaeology has advanced, the accuracy of this account has been extraordinarily established. The Mesopotamian forces travelled down the east side of Jordan Valley on what is known as the Kings' Highway. Archaeologists have established an extraordinary record of devastation in these places at exactly this time. Rom 15:4 tells us 'everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through the endurance & encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope'.

II. The Rescue Mission v.13-16

Lot was carried off by the invasion force with all his possessions Abram heard v14, called out his men, went in hot pursuit & wins a crushing victory v15.

1) **Why bother?** Sodom was a place of gross wickedness: maybe this invasion was exactly what they deserved. What can Abram be doing rescuing the wicked people of Sodom? Anyway, Lot had acted selfishly in chapter 13 & then most unwisely. Abram would put himself in acute danger by getting involved. So why did he? One word: v14 & v16, same word as back in 13:9, used of 3 Anchorites in v13, though in NIV translated differently: 'brother'. 'We are brothers' 13:9, family word, belonging together word. Abram was still head of his family & Lot despite his folly belonged to the community of faith. Cain asked Gen 4:9 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Cain wanted to repudiate all obligation to others: Abram honours his obligation to others. Didn't help Lot because he was worthy. Helped him because he was his brother. Challenge to our fellowship as Christians. If God has drawn us to himself, he has also drawn us together: we do not live to ourselves if we are Christians. True fellowship is costly Eph 5:2 'live a life of love just as Christ loved us & gave himself up for us'. See Galatians 6:1-2.

2) How possible? How did Abram do it? .See

v.20: _____ Bible's ans is in v20 God Most High who delivered yr enemies into yr hand. God probably used the circumstances. This invading force had travelled a colossal distance, & Abram caught up with them right in north probably travelling slowly with captives & plunder, not expecting any attacks. Abram v15 attacked at night having divided forces so that they created maximum havoc simultaneously. He also has allies v13 & v24. God has no difficulty in giving victory to anyone he chooses.

III. The Greatest Danger v.17-24

Abram returns a conqueror of kings, with a great deal of plunder under his control & a huge amount of potential power. Now he faces his greatest danger. Sometimes we are most vulnerable after apparent success. Abram is met in v. 17&18, by the King of Sodom, a representative of depravity & wickedness (see 14:13): & by the King of Salem, the representative of righteousness & peace. You will meet the same 2 kings this week: like Abram you will make a choice between what leads to evil or what leads to righteousness. Abram could react rightly to king of Sodom because he engaged first with the king of Salem.

1) The Representative of Righteousness: Melchizedek, King of Salem. Heb 7:2 endorses fact he was true king of righteousness & peace: a man of purity in an impure age.

Firstly he **brought out bread & wine** v18. This was ordinary provision of the day, an act of friendship. Note contrast: v21 first thing K of Sodom did was to say '*give me*': first thing King of Salem did was to *give them*.

Secondly this King was a **representative of God**: priest of God Most High: God has raised up another man who knew God. *He blesses* Abram: see v19-20. *He speaks truth*: about God: refer to Abram once, but to God again & again. Speaks truth about Abram: that is God 'who delivered your enemies into yr hand'. This man's puts God at the centre, not Abram. Sin puts us at centre. Truth puts God there. He *receives the tithe*: v20 it is fitting that he receives what Abram wants to give to God:. Ps 110:4 & Heb 5 & 7 all identify Jesus with Melchizedek. Like him, King of righteousness & peace: both King and Priest, not in the Levitical line that came from Abraham, but in line of Melchizedek. So Jesus Christ comes to you today in same function as K of Salem did to Abram. Comes to give us to what we need: comes to bless us, to speak truth to us & receive tribute from us.

2) The Representative Of Wickedness: King of Sodom. Note combination of *demand & invitation* v21. Why is K of Sodom making this offer? Wants to bring Abram under his influence, into his circle. He has a hidden agenda. Satan loves to offer us advantage but with hidden strings. He'll offer you a good time, great pleasures, lots of friends, quick gains, but he'll seize yr soul. He'll lead you into sexual sin, drugs, gambling, lies, if he can. Beware who draws you into their circle. See Abram's response: *prior obligation*: v22 'the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven & earth'. Notice how he freely speaks of God. If you are tempted, speak the name of God in the enemy's face. Abram was committed to God first. If you are a Christian that is your position. You have a higher allegiance. Therefore the answer to King of Sodom is: 'I will *accept nothing*' v23/v24. It is absolute refusal. He knows if he takes the riches he loses his soul. We have to grasp that this is what we will face this week: though the name & appearance & circumstances will be different: the issue will be just the same: why don't you compromise yr allegiance to Jesus? Behind that smiling face is the King of Sodom, and behind the King of Sodom is Satan knocking at yr door. Stand firm for Jesus.