

TEXT: Genesis 14:1-17

TITLE: King Abram rescues Lot

THEME: Abram, under the blessing of God, defeated military enemies who plundered the Promised Land and rescued Lot from captivity

INTRODUCTION

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, Genesis 14 is one of the most fascinating chapters in the book of Genesis because it gives us the first account of warfare between mankind in the Bible. This chapter also gives us a long list of names of the kings in the ancient world and their conflicts. A lot of people actually think that this chapter is a made-up story because they cannot find extrabiblical sources proving what happened.

But as Christians, we know that this chapter is true because it is given to us in the holy, inspired Word of God. And this chapter also continues where the last chapter left off. As we saw in our last sermon, Abram held fast to the promise of God and stayed in the Promised Land while Lot decided to leave Abram and the Promised Land to Sodom, the place where the wicked were dwelling. And this afternoon, we are going to see the fruit of their choices. And this text is going to show us that as much as violence is in the world, and as much as sin reigns and conflicts are happening on the earth, victory always belongs to the Lord and his appointed King.

This is what we will be looking at this afternoon.

Today, we will be considering the text in three sections:

- I. Lot's kidnapping (v.1-12)
- II. Abram's rescue (vv.13-15)
- III. Abram the king (vv.16-17)

- I. Lot's kidnapping (vv.1-12)

Now the text begins with a list of kings. From the list, we know that there were two groups of them: the first was an alliance of four kings from Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and Goiim, and other was an alliance of five kings from Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela. The first alliance of four kings were actually from Mesopotamia, which is near the Persian Gulf (in modern-day Iran), a thousand miles from the land of Canaan. The four kings were super powers. And Shinar was also included there. If you remember the name Shinar, Shinar was the place where the tower of Babel was built, it was where Ur was located, from which the Lord called Abram to follow him. The second alliance of five kings were local kings of some small cities near the Jordan River, near the Dead Sea area.

What happened here was that they were waging wars against one another. And we were also told the reason for the war. V.4 tells us that the alliance of the five Jordanian kings for 12 years served Chederlaomer, who was the king of Elam, he was likely the leader of the Mesopotamian alliance. In other words, the five Jordanian kings were obligated to pay Chederlaomer tribute from over a thousand miles away, so that Chederlaomer would not attack and conquer them. But then what happened was that in the thirteenth year, the Jordanian kings decided to rebel. What happened was that they stopped paying massive sums of protection money to King Chederlaomer. And because of that, Chederlaomer and the other Mesopotamian kings decided to travel more than a thousand miles to Canaan to fight against the five kings in the fourteenth year.

And v.5 tells us, in the process, Chederlaomer and his allies conquered many other nations that could potentially help the five rebel kings. And when they came from up from the west of the Dead Sea in Siddim, the Jordanian kings went out to fight against Chederlaomer and his allies at the valley of Siddim. But King Chederlaomer and those with him were so powerful that they defeated the five kings in Canaan. The text tells us that the kings of the Jordan alliance either died by falling into the asphalt pits or they fled into the mountains. And Moses told us in v.11 that the Mesopotamian kings "took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and

went their way.” They not only took their land, their food supplies, they also took the people who would likely be sold into slavery.

As we read this, we are not trying to find out which alliance we want to stand on, or in other words, we are not trying to root for anyone of these kings. We have to recognize that all of these nation states were pagan nations. And all of these kings were pagan idolaters, they worshipped false gods. Some people would argue that the invisible hand of God was judging and punishing Sodom. But whatever his purposes, we know that God is Sovereign over the nations, including raising up and bringing down Kings, even using Wicked Kings against one another but what's most concerning the narrative here was the Captivity of Lot.

Notice in 12 *“They also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.”* This is where we are linked back to the previous chapter. But notice why Lot was taken captive? It is because he was dwelling in Sodom! Remember in chapter 13, we saw that Lot was tempted by the lust of the eyes when he saw the beauty of the land, so he chose to live there. And, remember that he was not yet living in Sodom, he only pitched his tent near Sodom, but now, the text tells us that he was dwelling in Sodom (v.12). You see, he really wanted to pursue what the world had to offer him. He followed the rest of the world and took the opportunity of his life, even though he knew that the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord, yet he still decided to live there.

And now, we are seeing the fruit of his choice from chapter 13. It is because he was in Sodom, he was going to share the same fate as the Sodomites, and he was taken captive by the Chederlaomer and his allies. His wicked may gave him temporary comfort with the world, but it also made him share the same fate as those who were outside of the covenant people of God. Brothers and sisters in the Lord, this is what happens when you leave the church, you are only going closer and closer to the world, there is really no middle ground! And if you leave the church, your fate is going to be the same as those who are outside of the covenant people of God. Remember Galatians 6:8, *“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption.”* And this is really the fruit that Lot was reaping here. We can say that he deserved what he was going through here. He did not regard the promise to Abram, and he was contented to separate from the medium of blessing to dwell in the city of man, and now, he was in despair by being caught in the hostility between the cities of man.

But the question is: would this be the final fate of Lot? And that leads us to third point.

II. Abram rescues Lot

The text tells us in v.13 that *“someone who had escaped came and told Abram.”* And what did Abram do when he heard of his *“kinsman/brother”* was kidnapped by foreign armies? Did he say *“This is God’s punishment on Lot. He chose foolishly when he chose the plain of the Jordan, and he was certainly acting foolishly when he went to live in Sodom. He deserved what he got?”* Or did Abram say, *“this is what he deserved, he selfishly left me and chose the best portion of the land. He is now reaping the fruit of his sinful choice?”* No! That was not what he did. The text tells us that he immediately armed his men, 318 of them, and joined forces with his allies, and went out against the world power of his days.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, let us pause for a moment and ask ourselves: would we act the way Abram did? Sometimes we see our brothers and sisters making foolish decisions, and they are in trouble. How are we reacting to the consequence of their decisions? Are we asking ourselves if the person is worth helping because of how he/she has treated me? Or do we start asking if it is convenient to go help? Brothers and sisters in the Lord, Abram here helped Lot without asking either of those questions. The fact is that he had been mistreated by Lot and he was about to put his life on the line for Lot. Yet that did not matter; it is because that was his duty, and he did his duty. This is a reminder for us that we must do the same. The puritan commentator Matthew Henry once commented, *“Though others have been wanting in their duty to us, yet we must not therefore deny our duty to them.”*

And notice the number of men Abram had. 318 men and the forces of his allied. Yes, his men were trained and maybe he really was a very strategic commander and we do not know the exact number. But whatever the exact total, one thing is clear: There weren't many of them. And remember against whom was he fighting! Vv.1-12 made clear that Chederlaomer and other super power of his days, who had easily plundered other nations and defeated the five nation states in the Valley of Siddim. Yet, Abram went out with his men and pursued 175 miles to Dan to rescue his brother Lot and plotted a surprise attack at night and defeated the Mesopotamian forces and pursued them a long way in their retreat.

Can you believe that? Can you believe that he actually defeated the super power of his days and came victoriously? We know that Abram did not do this by his own strength. By faith, he went out against the Chederlaomer and his allies, and the Lord delivered the enemies into the hand of Abram! Brothers and sisters in the Lord, does what happened here remind you of Gideon and his 300 men in judges? Does this incident remind you of how the Lord uses David the unarmed man with five stones to defeat the giant Goliath?

But does what happened here also remind you of a redemption that would come later on? Like someone who would redeem the whole world through death on the Cross? Our Lord Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, left behind the glories of heaven, humbled Himself, took on human flesh, took the nature of a servant, and became obedient to death – even death on a cross. And he suffered this great agony only for his brethren, Hebrews 2 says, *“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”* To many, the cross is foolishness, but what we see here is also God using what seemed to be lowly and weak to shame the wise. Remember what the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:27-30, *“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”* You see, the world would never expect Abram and his small band would have defeated the Mesopotamian kings, the world would also despise the cross because how can humiliation save anyone, but what we see in genesis 14 is a man of faith and courage, using the help and wisdom that God had given to him to win the battle against the super powers of his days. But not only was Abram a brother who went out to rescue his own brother, but he was also the king who led his people into a triumphant victory. That leads us to our final point.

III. Abram the King

After rescuing his brother Lot, the text tells us in v.16-17, *“So Abram brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.”* Here, Abram not only rescued Lot, but he also brought back all that Chedorlaomer and his allies took and brought the captives back into the Promised Land. And this is significant. It is because isn't this what a king was responsible to do? A king was supposed to and expected to protect his people and to lead his people into victory? And this is exactly what Abram did. He was acting as a king who protected his people and led his people into victory.

And if you think about it, wasn't he already the king of Canaan. Remember what happened back in chapter 12? The Lord appeared to him and said, *“To your offspring I will give this land”* (Gen 12:7). And in chapter 13, remember that after Lot separated from him, remember that the Lord repeated the promise to Abram, *“Lift up your eyes now and look from the place where - northward, southward, eastward and westward. for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.”* And remember also that we talked about what it means when the Lord also told Abram to walk the land in 13:16? It was to symbolize his ownership of the land, like a king symbolizing his ownership of the land. In other words, Abram, in light of God's promise to him, was the king of Canaan. So, when Chedorlaomer and his allies came and plundered the land, they were threatening the promise of descendants and land that God had given to Abram. And here, by faith and by the power of God, Abram the king led his people into a great victory! He not only defeated his enemies by casting them out from

the land, but he also brought back the people and the goods that were taken away. You see, the enemies whom other kings could not defeat, God's appointed king, Abram, was able to defeat them.

But more importantly, we must recognize that the Mesopotamian kings were not just some random kings without significance. If you pay attention to their names, Shinar was the place where the people attempted to build the tower of Babel, the great city of man. And it would later become Babylon, and Babylon in the Bible represents the power of the Devil and the archenemy of God's people. It was the place where sin and evil dwelled. And the name Chedolaomer means "slave of Lagamer", an Elamite god. So here, what was going on was that the victory of Abram was not only a victory over the physical kings and enemies. But Abram's victory over the world power foreshadowed the Greater victory that was promised in Genesis 3:15, the victory over the Seed of the Serpent. Can you see how this victory here was prophetic in nature? It foreshadowed the ultimate triumph of the Seed of the woman, who would come from Abram's loins thousands of years later, who would crush the kings of the world and the head of the Serpent, and would lead his people into a final victory over sin and death. Although in the process of the battle, the Seed of the woman would become injured, he needed to go through great humiliation by being nailed to the cross, but remember what happened what he was at the cross? A plaque was nailed above him stating, "the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37). And victory came three days after his humiliation and death on the cross, he rose from the grave, and ascended into the heaven, and he was highly exalted that he is now sitting triumphantly at the right hand of the Father, ruling and reigning the world.

So, brothers and sisters in the Lord, you see, it was no accident that Moses gave us this account of war and all these earthly kings whose names we cannot pronounce. All of these foreshadowed the final victory of the Seed of the woman. Just as all of these earthly kings were conquered by God's appointed king, Abram, likewise, also what we see here also foreshadowed what the true King, the Lord Jesus Christ would do in his victory over sin and death. And that battle has indeed been won, and Christ is highly exalted, sin and death no longer have dominion over us.

But Abram here also represents the church, the church militant, meaning the church that is now on earth, waiting for the Final victory when the Lord Jesus returns. What happened here in Genesis 14 reminds the church that although we have been delivered by our great King, we are still in the midst of the war with the world, not only external, but internal. Even though the victory has been won, and sin no longer has dominion over us, it does not mean that we can lay down our guards. It is because we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but our enemies are spiritual, our warfare is a seductive warfare of the soul. Every day we fight against sins and temptations. But the victory of Abram as King also reminds us to eagerly wait for the Final Victory in Christ, when he will subdue all his enemies under his feet.

But until that day, we are called to be faithful and fight the battle with perseverance. And how are we going to fight that? Remember that just as the warfare is spiritual, we must also fight with weapons that are spiritual. The apostle Paul reminded us about the weapons that the Lord has given to us? Ephesians 6:14-18, "*14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints*" Brothers and sisters in Christ, with these spiritual weapons, we may fight against the forces of evil, spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the world, championing truth, righteousness, and justice.

Let us therefore, hold fast to this promise and fight this battle with perseverance, until the day when he comes and when every knee will bow "*of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

Amen. Let us pray.