



Study # 16

Genesis Chapter 14

Summary of the passage: The chapter begins with “And it came to pass...” It shows, therefore, the consequences of Lot’s decision to pitch his tents toward Sodom. If only he had known that he was choosing to dwell in a war zone! By the time war broke out to the destruction of the cities of the plain, Lot was a full resident of the city of Sodom (v12). The four confederate Kings of the east broke up the city of Sodom and Lot was taken captive and lost his possessions.

Abraham’s friendship and loyalty to Lot moved him to pursue Lot’s captors. He conquered them, delivered Lot along with the people of Sodom, including their women and restored their possessions. Having lived in the will of God to enjoy the promises of God (ch. 13:14-18) Abram became strong and was in a position to act as a protector to his nephew.

Abram also showed his humble dependence on his God offering Melchizedek tithes, yet when offered the goods of Sodom he refused them, due to his commitment to trust in His God and to safeguard his testimony before a critical world.

Key verse: “That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich” (Genesis 14:23).

This statement to the king of Sodom reveals Abram’s loyalty and confidence that God would supply all his needs. He had already declared that his God was the “possessor [maker] of heaven and earth” Such conviction cemented his loyalty to his God.

Observations – Lessons from this chapter.

1. **Note the rebellious nature of these early nations.** After twelve years of servitude to Chedorlaomer, the people rebelled (v4). In response, the four confederate Kings from the east, of whom Chedorlaomer seems to be the leader, rose up to defeat and subdue the five kingdom-cities in the plain of Jordan. Remarkably, when the number thirteen appears in the Bible for the first time it is directly linked to rebellion (v4). Throughout the Bible the number thirteen is often associated with a spirit of rebellion. Being one more than twelve, the number thirteen goes beyond God’s perfect government.

Application: How does this apply to me? Sinful hearts tend to despise authority and want to throw off God’s rule. Rebellion of heart is at the root of unrest and leads to strife among nations. Even when we should live in peace and should be thankful, the seeds of rebellion will lead to unrest within our souls. The Christian must renounce this proud attitude and adopt a spirit of praise and thankfulness in all things. Abram’s contentment and desire for a peaceable life, which stands out in contrast to the ways of these heathen nations, is a godly example to us.

2. **Lot’s choice, to walk by sight, led him eventually to dwell in the city of Sodom.** The path of Lot’s life went from following Abram to seeing Sodom, then to pitching his tent toward Sodom and finally to dwelling right within Sodom (v12).

The record shows that when carried off by Chedorlaomer, and others, Lot had moved into the city of Sodom lock, stock and barrel (v12). He was not just a sojourner, but a resident and eventually a city councillor, sitting in the gate of the city – the place of administration (ch.19:1). Lot’s trajectory in life is typical of backsliders, who neglect prayer, follow their own senses and with skewed intentions take one step after another into fellowship

with the world. To find Lot dwelling in the city of Sodom shows his weakness of character and his inability to withstand the depraved influences and immoral pressures of that wicked city.

Application: – **How does this apply to me?** This sad account warns us of the fearful consequences of making decisions that lead us closer to the world. We dare not compromise full fellowship with God. To leave off personal worship, the place of public worship and the friends who encourage us to worship can only be ruinous to our spiritual life. We need to remember that our decisions will impact our walk and our testimony (1John 2:15-17). Note that not only the world will pass away, but the lust for it will also pass away. The pleasure of the world will not satisfy. We know that Lot was grieved by the sin he witnessed around him while living and participating in the city life of Sodom (2 Peter 2:7-8).

3. **Abram made a name for himself as a pilgrim.** When the escapee brought news of Lot’s abduction he is given the title, “Abram the Hebrew” (v13). Commenting on this title designated to Abram, Dr. Henry Morris, stated, “Most scholars assume it is derived from the name of Eber, great-grandson of Shem and a distant ancestor of Abram. The term “habiru” has been found in a number of archaeological texts from soon after the time of Abram, but does not seem to apply exclusively to the children of Israel. It is apparently used in such a way as to suggest simply any moving tribe-as, of course, was true of the Israelites for a time after they left Egypt” [The Genesis Record Pg. 316].

Abram earned the title of Hebrew, because he was still dwelling in tents and living the nomadic life.

Application: - **How does this apply to me?** A Christian should strive to earn the testimony of a disciple of Christ. Be known as a man or woman that is not living for this world, but whose citizenship and interests are in heaven.

4. **Abram gave honour to Melchizedek who blessed Abram declaring his dependence on the Lord for his victory over the kings of the east.** This honourable figure, who typifies Christ as king of righteousness, and king of peace, was honoured by Abram when he gave tithes unto him (Hebrews 7). By giving of tithes to Melchizedek, Abram recognized that all blessing comes from the Lord.

Application: - **How does this apply to me?** “The tithe [tenth] is the Lord’s.” This is a principle of life and still to be followed in Christian worship and Christian living. Shall the New Testament Christian not meet or exceed the giving of the Old Testament believer?

5. **Abram showed his personal loyalty to God in refusing to take the recovered goods offered to him by the king of Sodom.** Though he could have clearly justified receiving a reward for delivering Lot and the people from the hands of their captors, yet he stood tall in his statement to the King of Sodom (v23). Abram had no interest in enjoying sudden riches at the expense of losing His testimony. Abram was a living and walking commentary on the power of God, the maker of heaven and earth (v22), to sustain His people as pilgrims in the earth. While he had his own riches to enjoy, he turned down riches from heathen sources, lest men should say, “I have made Abram rich” (v23).

Application: - **How does this apply to me?** There is a higher principle to follow than personal gain and earthly fame. A Christian cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:19-24). Abraham was storing up treasure in heaven. Are you? Every sacrifice we make on earth to build a testimony of loyalty to God will be eternally rewarded. Let us all, seek first the kingdom of God, in the confidence that, “all these things shall be added unto us.”

Things to do in light of this study:

Memorize Genesis 14:23.

List a few things that God has called or is calling you to do to show your loyalty to Him.

Ponder and answer the question, In what sense are Christians today called to be pilgrims in the earth? Name one thing that you know spoils your Christian testimony. Pray for victory to put it right.