

God Keeps His Promises

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Text: Genesis 14

Date: November 10, 2010, 7pm

Series: Genesis (Book of Beginnings)

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Genesis 14**. The title of our message is “God Keeps His Promises”.

This is the first time in the Bible that we are told about military warfare and conflict in of the Middle East. This is the beginning of it! This war tests the faith of both Abraham and Lot. We are going to see that no matter what, God is faithful to His promises!

Every day, people disappoint us. We have certain expectations and they let us down, but God is not like that. God never breaks His promises.

I want to show you this in Genesis 12. Specifically, we want to look at His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12.

God always keeps His promises. Remember God’s promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12**? “...the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God’s promise to Abraham was God’s greatest promise to the whole world. You are not stranded. Christ is coming. He’s going to save us. We are not condemned in our sins even though we deserve to be condemned. God’s promise to Abraham is basically, Christ is coming through you, and I’m going to save the world from it’s sin. Nothing and no one can stop God from keeping His promise.

Abraham’s family is the line of Jesus Christ. Those who mess with Abraham and dishonor him will be cursed. They will be defeated. Those who bless Abraham will be blessed.

We see God keeping His promise to Abraham and to us in **Genesis 14**. Lot is part of Abraham’s family. Lot’s been taken captive. Though Abraham has a very small army of 318, God is going to give huge success. Nothing and no one can stop God from keeping His promise.

I. God will fulfill His promises no matter how **impossible** they seem! (vs. 1-12).

Let's look at the story line. What is going on in Genesis 14? Why does God include a war with Abraham being victorious over a series of several kings to rescue Lot? What does this have to do with us? Why did God include it in the Scriptures?

A. God's promises do not depend on our **strength**, but on God's. Any blessing or power or success that Abraham got was a gift from God! We have to remember the theme of the Bible. God is jealous for His Son. God's going to redeem a people through His Son, and one day Jesus will be born as the Seed of Abraham! Abraham's family is the genealogical line of Christ. And though he at one time was poor, God gave Him wealth and prospered him. Though his wife is barren, God is going to give children to his wife. Though he is only one man with a very small army of 318 men, God is going to give great success. This isn't about Abraham as much as it is about Christ!

You see God's promises do not depend on our strength, but on God's. Any blessing or power or success that Abraham got was a gift from God! God will fulfill His promises no matter how impossible they seem!

B. God always **protects** those who trust in His promises.

God's purpose in Genesis 14 is to keep his promise to Abraham. God says, if you dishonor Abraham, God will stand against you and curse you. This is going to be put to the test in this chapter.

This is really put to the test because in **verses 1-12**, you have four very powerful kings up against five weaker war lords. And you have one especially powerful king, **Chedorlaomer** among the four, and he seems unstoppable.

The question that comes up is, will Abraham and his family, namely Lot be protected in the midst of war? God's promises all seem real to us as long as they seem probable. But when everything seems to go against them, we seem to lack faith. We need to remember that God keeps His promises no matter what odds are stacked against them.

What we find is that nation rises up against nation and seems to have such a great lust for power and glory, but God is in control of it all!

II. Not even the greatest pagan **world powers** can thwart God's promise to save people.

A. God rules over all nations and even uses wars to fulfill His redemptive promises.

1. For example, because of the conquests of **Alexander the Great** an infrastructure of highways was built, a universal language was put into place, and there was a unification of the monetary system that all helped the Gospel

to travel very quickly in the first 200 years of its existence. The Greeks and Romans fought so many wars, and at the time of Christ you had the Pax Romana. God planned all of this so that the Gospel would have roads and a universal language to spread quickly.

Wars are chaotic and often make no sense at the time. But God can use what is chaotic and use it for His purposes.

2. Later, the battles between the Roman empire and the **barbarians**, brought the Gospel into Germany and across the English Channel into Britain.
3. There were battles by the **Vikings** who terrorized the ancient world, but some of the Vikings would be converted and bring the Gospel to other places where they had travelled.
4. Remember there was once a time when the sun never set on the **British Empire**. God would even use the greedy ambitious empire building desires of the British, and missionaries would be sent out as far as India and China and the depths of the African continent.
5. Because of **World War I and II, and Vietnam**, Americans left the safety of their towns and went and fought in place they couldn't even pronounce. Some of these soldiers who were Christians returned to America, only to raise support and return to these far away places, and many of them preach the Gospel there today. So God used these wars to open up and expose people to the need to bring the Gospel to these far away lands.

A dear mentor of mine, Dr. Ron Brooks was once a soldier in Vietnam, a marine, and he returned to preach the Gospel there after the war.

- B. God can use the tragedy of war to **accelerate** the Gospel. And even today with all the wars in the Middle East, there is a great focus now on getting the Gospel to the Muslim world! God can use war to accelerate the spread of the Gospel.

If God controls sparrows, and not one sparrow can fall to the ground apart from the will of God, how much more does He control the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, presidents and nations.

What we have in Genesis 14 is a whole bunch of city-states uniting together. If we had no federal government, you can imagine we might have a king or a warlord of Chicago, and there might be another king or warlord of Minneapolis, and a king of Rockford, and a king of Indianapolis. We saw this in Iraq—you had the warlord of the Kurds, and the warlord of Bagdad, and you had warlords in the south of Iraq.

This is how it was in Abram's day. You had some more powerful warlords in verse 1 of Genesis 15 and some lesser kings in verse 2.

Verse 1, "In the days of **Amraphel** king of Shinar [*This is where the tower of Babel had been built, it became Babylon*], **Arioch** king of Ellasar, **Chedorlaomer** king of Elam [*near Ur of the Chaldees*], and **Tidal** king of Goiim..." So as we see Amraphel and Chedorlaomer, these kings are the precursors to the Babylonian and Assyrian empires. *These were the biggest fish in the pond!*

These kings wanted the rule in the Promised Land. It was the fertile crescent. It was a land flowing with milk and honey. It had good natural resources. It was also strategic because it was the crossroads of the ancient world and the gateway to Egypt and the rest of the western world.

So now in verse 2, you have the lesser kings that had to serve **Chedorlaomer** (see verse 4). Here they are listed.

Verses 2-3, "these [*four*] kings made war with [*five other kings*] **Bera** king of Sodom, **Birsha** king of Gomorrah, **Shinab** king of Admah, **Shemeber** king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, **Zoar**). 3 And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea)."

Verse 4, "Twelve years they [*the five warlords*] had served **Chedorlaomer**, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled." So the five lesser kings said "enough of Chedorlaomer" and they rebelled against the great king Chedorlaomer and his other allies. *The lesser kings were tired of paying taxes!* They would give some of their resources, some of the flocks or harvest of their people as a tax to **Chedorlaomer**.

Verses 5-9 tell us that Chedorlaomer doesn't take this lying down. He gathers his allies and he starts conquering everyone on his way to destroy the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their allies.

Chedorlaomer cleans house. He's powerful and successful, in fact he has an undefeated record—including against the five warlords that tried to rebel. Among these five lesser kings were the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah where Lot lived.

Verses 5-9, "In the fourteenth year **Chedorlaomer** and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the **Amalekites**, and also the **Amorites** who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. 8 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**) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of

Siddim 9 with **Chedorlaomer** king of Elam, **Tidal** king of Goiim, **Amraphel** king of Shinar, and **Arioch** king of Ellasar, four kings against five.”

We find out in **verse 10** that the victory is so great, that the five lesser kings flee and some of their army fall into the bitumen pits—pits of a tarlike substance that is very abundant in the area South of the Dead Sea where Sodom and Gomorrah would have been. It is the asphalt or tar of ancient world. Noah used it to seal the ark. Moses’ mother used it to seal his little ark.

Verses 10-12, “Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. 11 So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.”

So the four great kings with **Chedorlaomer** as the head, were undefeated! But we have a problem. **Chedorlaomer** gets Lot. Remember God’s promise? **Genesis 12:3**, “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” I love this next point. No impossible situations can’t thwart God’s love and plan for you. World powers cannot thwart God’s love and plan for you. Even God’s wayward children cannot thwart God’s love He has for them!

III. God even keeps His promises to His **wayward** children (vs. 12-16).

Verse 12, “They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.”

You might say, pagan kings can’t stop God, but what if I run from God? God never allows his children to run too far. God will either break you or kill you but He will not let you go too far.

Hebrews 12:6, “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

I love how God loves us even when we don’t seem to love Him.

A. God **loves** us even when we don’t seem to love Him (vs. 12).

Now remember Lot is a born again man (**John 3:3; Eze. 36:26-27**). He has a new heart, but he made some very bad, carnal, and fleshly choices.

- **Verse 12** says that now Abram’s nephew Lot “was dwelling in Sodom”.
- **Genesis 13:12** says that Lot “moved his tent as far as Sodom”.

We have an inspired commentary on Lot in **2 Peter 2:7-9**, “and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials”.

So we see a progression in Lot’s bad choices. Lot would never have been abducted had he not made those bad choices. Lot probably should have controlled his herdsmen and stayed with Abram. He should have at the very least stayed out of Sodom.

Application: Often we think we can handle the world. We think we won’t be overcome by the world. One thing we learn here is that we need to stay *separated* from the world. We ought not look like the world or talk like the world. We ought to be pure and separated from this condemned world system.

Surely, if I fall into sin, that will separate me from God’s love! That will thwart God’s plan!

No! **Romans 8:33-35**, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? “

Look at **verses 38-39**, “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God’s children are kept from going too far into the world so they won’t be condemned with the world.

We see this in the Corinthian church. God has a leash on His children. Look at **1 Corinthians 11:29-31**, “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.”

So now we know perhaps why these nations are stirred up against each other. God loves Lot!

- B. God’s people are **responsible** to rescue one another (vs. 13-16). Again we see one of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah let Abraham know the news of his

nephew's capture as well as his possessions and people. Turn back to **Genesis 14:13-16**

I love this. They call Abram "the Hebrew". That's like being from the north and you walk into a MacDonald's in the deep south. You tell them what you want and they look at you sideways and say, "You ain't from around here are ya?"

Turn back to **Genesis 14:13-16**, "Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. 14 When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. 16 Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people."

These verses confirm that God keeps His promises!

- God will fulfill His promises no matter how **impossible** they seem! (vs. 1-12).
- Not even the greatest pagan **world powers** can thwart God's promise to save people (vs. 1-12).
- God even keeps His promises to His **wayward** children (vs. 12-16).

There are times when we go astray and we want to doubt God's love. God promises to conform us to the image of Christ! God will keep His promises!

IV. Finally, we see that God keeps His promises to us because of Jesus Christ, our **Melchizedek** (vs. 17-24).

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal to us the only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He comes to seek and save the lost. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies, types and shadows of Jesus.

1. The prophecies are easy to find. There are over 300 of them in the OT—Jesus will be born of a virgin; He will be born in Bethlehem. He will die on a Cross. He will die for
2. Types and shadows
 - a. Animal sacrifices—every time an animal is sacrificed and its blood is poured out for the people hundreds of thousands of times every year—it depicts the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

- b. We see Christ in the Tabernacle and the Temple. We meet Him at the mercy seat between the cherubim. The veil is split in two for us and we have access to God through Him!
 - c. We see Him prefigured in the historical events of the Bible. We see a type and shadow of Christ right here in **Melchizedek**, the king of Salem, or peace!
- A. The secret to **victory** in all our battles is to draw near to our Melchizedek, Jesus Christ (vs. 17-20). He is our king and our priest!

From this great battle, comes the one who is the secret to Abraham's and our victory, **Melchizedek**, the "priest of God Most High" (vs. 18).

Let's read about it in **Genesis 14:17-20**, "After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything."

God unveils who this **Melchizedek** refers to in Psalm 110, which is one of the most quoted Messianic Psalms in the New Testament.

Psalm 110:4, "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

We get even more understanding about **Melchizedek** in Hebrews 6. Turn there if you would.

Many have attempted to identify Melchizedek. The Rabbinical writers believed that he was Shem who was very much alive during the days of Abram. This idea does not accord with the statements in **Hebrews 6:19-7:4**.

We know what the genealogy of Shem is, but Melchizedek has no recorded genealogy, because He is prefiguring the eternal king of the ages, Jesus Christ.

Look at **Hebrews 6:19-7:4** "We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem,

that is, king of peace. 3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. 4 See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils!”

Application (Drawing near to Christ): Draw near to Christ! No matter what weight is upon you, put it upon Him. You were not meant to bear it child of God. He’s called you to action yes, but the power comes from Him!

B. We must always give God the **glory** for His great victories through Christ (vs. 20b-24).

1. Just a side note, one of the ways you show can give God glory is through tithing. **Verse 20**, “Abram gave him (Melchizedek) a tenth of everything.”

Tithing was evidently in existence before the law of Moses. This is the first mention of it. Tithing is a way of acknowledging that God has given you all that you have.

Do you tithe? If not, you are not living by faith!

Now look at **verses 21-24**, “And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, **God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth**, 23 that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ 24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

The king of Sodom wanted to steal the glory from God. We can try to make alliances and manipulate and do all kinds of fundraising to try to create success.

But where does success and promotion come from?

According to **Psalm 75:6-7**, Promotion doesn’t come “from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness...:” But where does it come from? **Verse 7**, “but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.”

Conclusion: Perhaps you are struggling with God’s love for you. He says if you trust Him He will save you. He will conform you to Christ’s image. He will rescue you from the wicked. **Trust God. Impossible situations, world powers, nor even our wayward hearts will not stop God from fulfilling His promises.** “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).