

**In The Beginning: Session 23: War In Canaan**

בְּרֵאשִׁית

Get audio files and notes at: [www.htchurch.com/genesis](http://www.htchurch.com/genesis).

Note: class will be on break after tonight and resume on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

**War In Canaan (Genesis 14:1-4)**

*1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, 2 that they made war with 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 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.*

- Another unsavory picture of the human race in Genesis: our very first use of the word for *king*, and our first war. They are considered necessary evils at best.
- Four kings from Mesopotamia acting in a coalition against five more kings, the kings of the Cities of the Plain.
- They are going to engage in battle in the Valley of Siddim, which no longer exists.
- These five kings of Canaan are *vassals* – they are lesser kings who are obligated to pay tribute to the more powerful kings. For 12 years they paid, but in the 13<sup>th</sup> year, they stopped and refused to pay.

**Battle In The Valley Of Siddim (Genesis 14:5-12)**

*5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and*

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*attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.*

*8 And 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 joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. 11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

- In the 14<sup>th</sup> year, the northern kings come down to punish the kings of Canaan.
- The kings of the south are completely defeated. The battle of the Valley of Siddim took place on ground where there were pits of asphalt. The Hebrew may indicate that some people threw themselves into these pits, but it is pretty clear that at least some of them died, and it was an easy victory for the kings of Mesopotamia.
- The northern kings took all kinds of plunder, including carrying people away as captives. Included in that group was Lot.

## **Drifting**

Last time we were together, we talked about Lot and his greed.

- He has already gone from pitching his tent *outside* of Sodom, to actually living *inside* Sodom.
- He was always flirting with moral catastrophe.

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### **Abram Comes To The Rescue (Genesis 14:13-17)**

*13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

*17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.*

- Abram is living at this time by the trees of a man called Mamre, and we are told that the family of Mamre are his allies.
- This is the first time that anyone in the Bible is described as a Hebrew.
  - This may mean that Abram is descended from the line of Eber.
  - Some think being a Hebrew meant that you were a stranger, someone who had crossed over the river to get to Canaan.
  - Perhaps he is called a Hebrew here to draw our attention to the fact that Abraham is a stranger to this fight.
- Abram decides that he's going to undertake a rescue mission. Notice again his kindness and generosity.
- Abraham musters a force of 318 men from his own household, trained men.

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- Abraham pursues the kings of Mesopotamia all the way up past Damascus.
- It seems that his force was probably smaller than the force that belonged to the kings he was chasing, but he prevailed.

**Abraham and Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-24)**

*18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said:*

*“Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;  
20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”*

*And he gave him a tithe of all. 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.” 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’— 24 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.”*

- Melchizedek is described as having two roles. In his first role he is called the king of Salem (Jerusalem?). His name means *king of righteousness*.
- The second role that Melchizedek has is that he is the *priest of God Most High*. This is the name *El Elyon*.
- Similar titles include: *El Roi*, *El Gibbor*, and *El Shaddai*.
- Abraham did not seem to have any problem calling God *El Elyon*.

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- Melchizedek brings out bread and wine, but is this like Communion?
- Melchizedek blesses Abraham, and he also blesses God as the God of Abraham.
- This means that as far as Melchizedek was concerned, Abraham also had a relationship with the God that Melchizedek served.

The issue of the plunder and a tithe.

- Under the customs of the time, what Abraham had taken now belonged to him. He immediately pays over to Melchizedek 1/10 of everything that he has.
- The king of Sodom now steps forward, and tells Abraham to give back the people but to keep the money and property. Abraham says no, because he doesn't want anyone to be able to that they had made Abraham rich.
- Notice: tithing didn't come from the Law of Moses, but from the fathers.

Is Melchizedek actually Christ?

- He is compared to Jesus in the Book of Hebrews.
- Melchizedek has an unusual priesthood, like Jesus does.
- They were priests because God conferred it upon them.
- In Psalm 110, King David prophesied that someone would come who was a priest forever, according to the priestly order of Melchizedek, not the priestly order of Levi. That person that David predicted was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice Abraham growing in his character!

We see his courage, his faith, and his generosity on display. He is willing to even suffer loss in order not to harm his testimony. As we come into Chapter 15, we will see God continuing to secure His covenant with Abraham, in a very dramatic fashion.

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