

Genesis 14 - War of the 9 Kings; Abram His 318-Man Army Win, Rescue Lot; Melchizedek Blesses Abram; Abram Returns the Spoils of War

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)

(B) Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1—25:11)

(a) Establishment of the covenant (Gen 12:1—17:27)

(ii) Preparation for the covenant (Gen 13:1—14:24)

(c) Abram rescues Lot (14:1-17)

(d) Abram's encounter with the kings (14:18-24)

Genesis 14

(c) Abram rescues Lot (14:1-17)

1 And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of **Shinar**, Arioch king of **Ellasar**, Chedorlaomer king of **Elam**, and Tidal king of **Goiim**,

1 And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,

1 At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar, Arioch was king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer was king of Elam, and Tidal was king of the Goiim,

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;

- The list of the antagonists (invaders). This is the first military campaign in the Bible; this campaign took place in 2088 BC.

- "...Shinar" - the Greeks call this area Mesopotamia; *meso* = between; *potamia* = rivers. It's the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in modern day Iraq. The same place where the Tower of Babel was built (Cf. 11:2) and where Babylon is located.

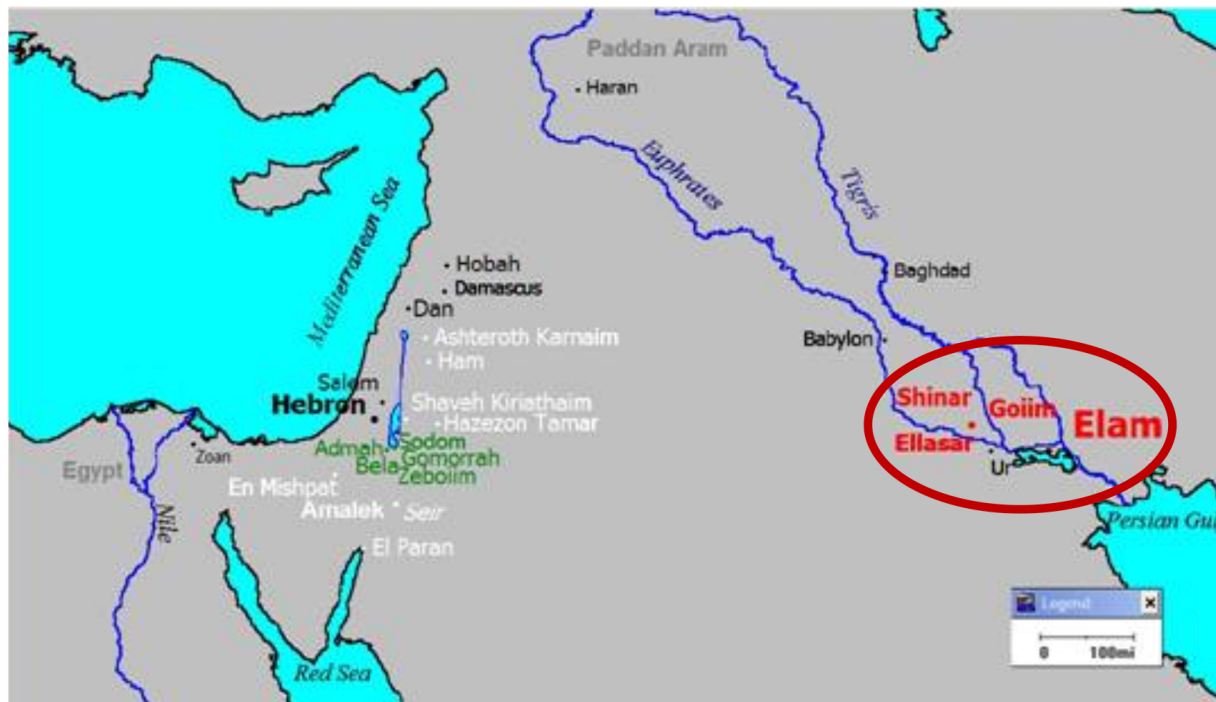
- "...Ellasar" - probably a leading tribe in southern Babylonia; in and around modern day Kuwait.

- "...Elam" - Persia, modern day Iran (Cf. Dan 8:2)

- "...Goiim" - a generic reference to the nations

- For the first time, non-Hebrew names appear. This shows the effect of the judgment of the confusion of languages. This again shows that Hebrew indeed was the original

language before the Tower of Babel. [Fruchtenbaum]



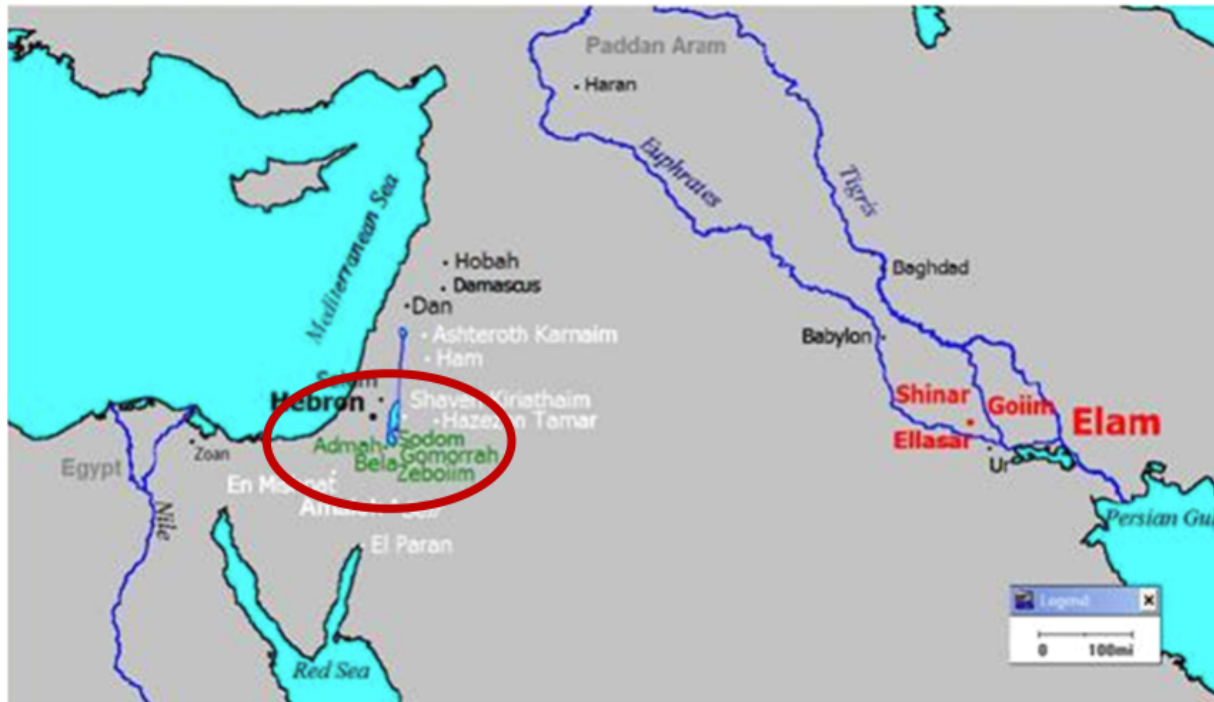
2 *that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

2 *that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).

2 they engaged in war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, along with the king of Bela (which was also known as Zoar).

2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

- All five of these locations were near the southern tip of the Dead Sea



- 3 All these *kings* came as allies to the **Valley of Siddim** (that is, the Salt Sea).
- 3 All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).
- 3 All of this latter group of kings allied together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).
- 3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.
- "...Valley of Siddim" - located at the southern end of the Dead Sea

- 4 For twelve years **they** had served Chedorlaomer, but *in* the **thirteenth** year they rebelled.
- 4 Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled.
- 4 They were subject to Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but they rebelled in the thirteenth year.
- 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.
- "...they" - the five nations of v2, all located near the southern tip of the Dead Sea. These five kings were vassals of the four kings of v1 for 12 years.
- "...they rebelled" - after 12 years of submission to these eastern kings, the five kings (v2) rebelled and sought to be independent. It was this rebellion that brought on the invasion of the four kings.
- God is going to place Abram right smack in the middle of this conflict to grow his faith. God wants to show Himself as powerful in the life of Abram. The only way God can do this is to put Abram into a position that he cannot get himself out of.

5 And in the **fourteenth year Chedorlaomer** and the kings who were with him came and defeated the **Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim**, and the **Zuzim in Ham**, and the **Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim**,

5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

5 In the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

- "...fourteenth year" - one year after the rebellion of the five kings, the four kings invaded.

- "...Chedorlaomer" - the king of Elam (v1), who was apparently the leader of the four king confederacy.

- "...Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim" - first to be attacked; the battle occurred in the area of Bashan, the modern day Golan Heights

- Later, Og, king of Bashan, was the last king of the Rephaim; he was killed in battle with the Israelites before they crossed the Jordan (Num 21:33-35).

- "...Zuzim in Ham" - second to be attacked; the Zuzim are the same as the Zamzummin of Deut 2:20; 3:11.

- "...Emims in Shaveh-kiriathaim" - third to be attacked; also mentioned in Deut 2:10-11

- The invasion came from the north as they conquered areas and people-groups who resided east of the Jordan River, all the way south of the Dead Sea and eventually to the wilderness of El Paran (modern day Eliat), all the way to the Red Sea/Gulf of Aqaba.

6 and the **Horites on their Mount Seir**, as far as **El-paran**, which is by the wilderness.

6 and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.

6 and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, near El-paran by the desert.

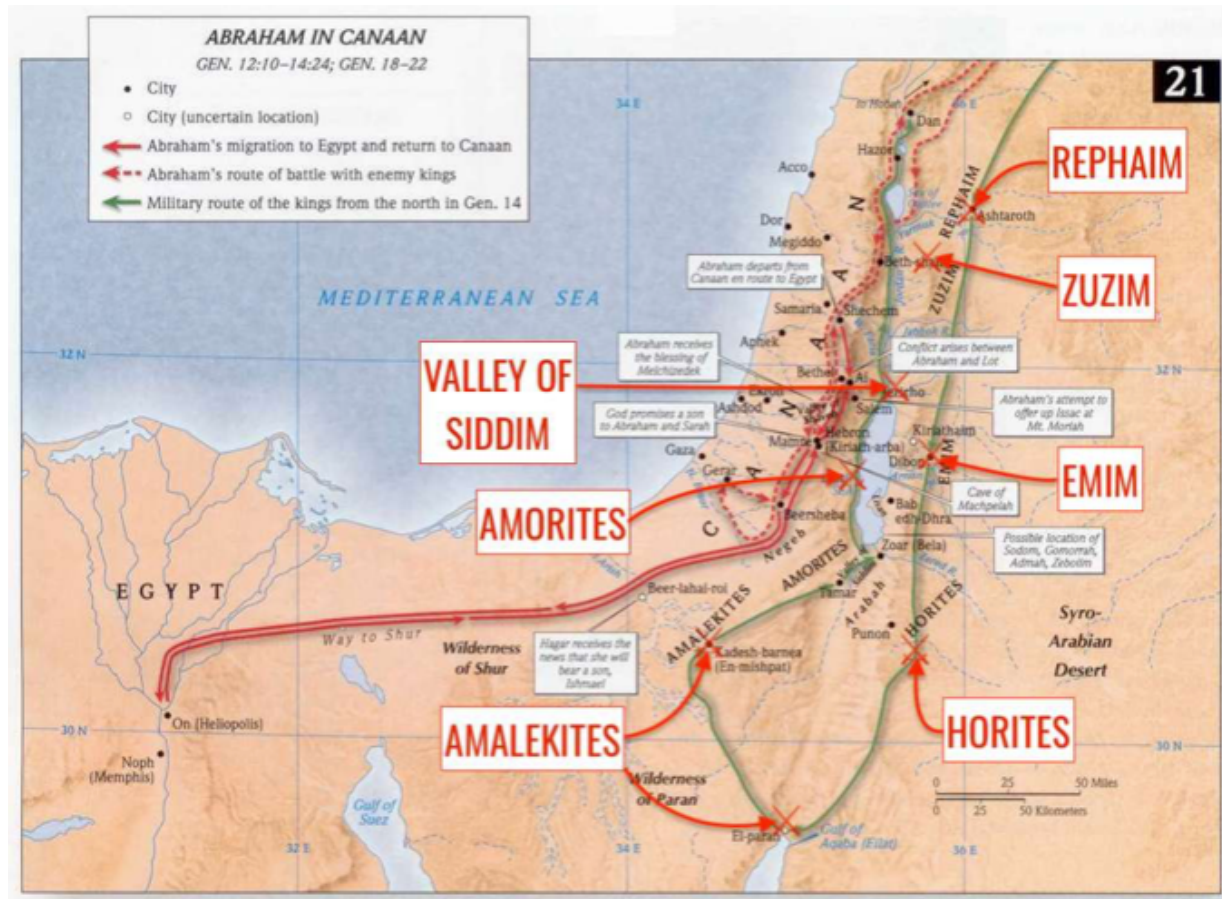
6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

- "...Horites in their Mount Seir" - fourth to be attacked; later dispossessed by the Edomites (Deut 2:12); they were descendants of Esau.

- "...El-paran" - the invasion went as far south as El-paran, modern day Akaba and Eilat, which is near the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael grew up (21:21; Cf. Num 10:12)

The invasion route was along the famous King's Highway, one of the three major trade routes in the ancient Middle East. It was on the Trans-Jordanian side of the territory. They invaded the area later to be occupied by Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. In the

providence of God, this very invasion, and the destruction from this invasion, prepared the way for the takeover of these areas by descendants of people related to Abraham; that is, the sons of Lot, the Ammonites and Moabites; and the sons of Isaac, the Edomites, through Esau. The center and military might of the previous possessors of the area had now been destroyed, emptying the territory for these new inhabitants that will come out of Abram and Isaac.



Though some have dismissed this chapter as being a historical impossibility, archaeological discoveries have demonstrated the existence of a flourishing civilization in Israel between the 21st and 19th centuries BC and of the savage destruction of the cities at the end of that period. [Ryrie]

- 7 Then **they turned back** and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in **Hazazon-tamar**.
- 7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar.
- 7 Next they turned back and came to En-mishpat (which was also known as Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, along with the Amorites who lived in

Hazazon-tamar.

7 And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.

- "...they turned back" - the invasion changed direction; the invasion went from north to south, but now they turned north and invaded the Negev until they came to Kadesh-Barnea.

- They smote all the country of the Amalekites, which refers to the territory that the Amalekites would later inhabit, since at this point they didn't exist.

— By taking this route, the invading four kings were able to flank the five kings from the southwest.

- "...Hazezon-tamar" - En-Gedi (2 Chr 20:2)

— Finally, they closed in on the Amorites, flanking the five kings from the northeast as well, then were ready to move against them.

8 And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they lined up for battle against them in the Valley of Siddim,

8 And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim,

8 Then the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (which was also known as Zoar) prepared for battle in the Valley of Siddim

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

- Again mentions the five vassal kings who were under attack (Cf. v2).

9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

9 against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five.

9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.

- Again mentions the four invading kings (Cf. v1)

10 Now the Valley of Siddim was **full of tar pits**; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country.

10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country.

10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, so when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of their people fell into them, while the rest fled to the hill country.

10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

- "...full of tar pits" - these tar pits were the source of building materials, which was a natural resource that made this area very rich and desirable. This is why the five people-groups that are under attack settled in this area.

- The five kings came under attack, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and died by falling into these tar pits. This left just three of the five kings remaining. These three kings fled to the hill country.

11 Then **they** took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.

11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.

11 The conquerors captured all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, including their entire food supply, and then left.

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

- "...they" - the four invading kings

— They plundered the possessions and riches of the two dead kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, took all of their food, and left. In victory, they began their trek back home.

12 They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

12 They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

12 They also took Abram's nephew Lot captive, and confiscated his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

- In 13:13, Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom." By 14:12, he was "living in Sodom."

— Lot and his riches, which was the reason he and Abram went their separate ways, were plundered by these invaders and Lot was taken captive as a POW and slave.

— This starts a crisis for Lot and Abram that only God will be able to resolve.

13 Then a survivor came and told Abram the **Hebrew**. Now he was residing by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and they were allies with Abram.

13 Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram.

13 Someone escaped, arrived, and reported what had happened to Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, whose brothers Eshcol and Aner were allied with Abram.

13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

- "...Hebrew" - first use in the Bible; it's used 33x in the OT. It's a technical word, meaning it means the same thing every time it is used: a physical descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which ultimately became the Hebrew (Jewish) race.

- Abram had three allies: Mamre the Amorite, Eshcol, and Aner. This shows that Abram was a man of prominence, not just an immigrant peasant living in a tent. He had created coalitions and friendships with some of the native Canaanite tribes and leaders.

14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, *numbering* 318, and went in pursuit as far as **Dan**.

14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

14 When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken prisoner, he gathered together 318 of his trained men, who had been born in his household, and they went out in pursuit as far as Dan.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

- Abram had a trained force of 318 men, which is impressive, but this was nothing compared to the forces amassed by these four invading kings. Abram was massively over-matched in troop strength and supplies.

— A force, of Abram's own house, numbering 318 shows that Abram's house was huge. The 318 men would've only been men of military age, obviously not counting older men or any women or children.

— We can see that even at this early stage in Abram's life, shortly after he was given the promises, that God is already working to fulfill them. In 13:16, God promises Abram that his descendants would be as the dust of the earth.

- "...Dan" - Dan wasn't even born yet, but since Moses wrote Genesis during the wilderness wanderings, Dan described the northern-most section of what was to become the land of Israel.

15 Then he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

15 He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

15 During the night, Abram and his servants divided his forces, conquered his enemies, and pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

- Abram and his 318 men divided from his allies (Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, v13), at night, and surprised and conquered the enemy kings and their troops.

— Warfare in that day did not typically occur at night, but Abram and his allies used a night attack to surprise and overtake the enemy. He had to implement this strategy because he was severely outnumbered.

— Notice that God did not directly speak or guide Abram in this chapter. God spoke to Abram directly seven times, but not once in this chapter. God expected Abram to use his resources and his brain, in ultimately dependence upon the Lord, to fight and win this battle.

— Oftentimes Christians will wait, paralyzed, seeking some type of vision or word from the Lord before they embark on something. They don't engage their mind, guided by God's Word, to start something until they feel a sense of "peace" about it, or they somehow get some sort of sign from that it's in God's will. Abram got no such sign from God to divide his forces, strike at night, and defeat the enemy.

— God doesn't always work like that. God has given us guidance in His Word, He's given us gifts of the Holy Spirit, and He expects us to use them willingly and often without getting His prior approval.

- Sometimes our problem is that we become intimidated by our circumstances, so much so that we become like grasshoppers in our own eyes because we don't analyze them through the right lense.

— If we're just comparing our own finite abilities to whatever you're facing in life, you're going to be filled with worry and anxiety. But if you look at your circumstances, no matter how overwhelming, through God's eyes, my problems will seem insignificant.

If God brought you to it, He will get you through it.

16 He brought back **all the possessions**, and also brought back his relative **Lot with his possessions**, and also **the women, and the other people**.

16 He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.

16 He recovered all the goods and brought back his nephew Lot, together with his possessions, the women, and the other people.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

- Abram and his allies had a total and complete victory over the invading kings...

- "...all the possessions" - all of the plunder that these invading kings took from Sodom and Gomorrah

- "...Lot" - he would've been consigned to a life of slavery in a foreign land if Abram had not been victorious.

- "...with his possessions" - Lot's possessions, so Lot was able to keep his wealth

- "...the women, and the other people" - Abram liberated all of the POWs

Lot received a massive dose of God's grace. You would think that after receiving God's tremendous undeserved favor, that Lot's life would be changed, that he would "clean up his act." But unfortunately that doesn't happen. God showed Himself to Lot in a mighty way, but Lot didn't react or change anything about his life or priorities. In fact, none of the people of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, or Zeboiim responded to God's grace and turned away from their sins. Although they were rescued at this point, all of these people later died in Gen 19 when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

It is sad yet completely possible for a person to receive a work of God's grace in their lives (other than salvation, which can never be forfeited) where He bestows on them His unmerited favor, and they receive it and walk away to go back to the life they led beforehand. We sometimes think that God's grace will wake people up to the gospel, but obviously here in this case, it didn't wake up Lot, his family, or the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

17 Then 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).

17 Then 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).

17 After Abram's return from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with them, the king of Sodom went out to meet with him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley).

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

- "...the king of Sodom" - the first king to come out and meet Abram; this is the new king of Sodom, since the king who participated in the war was killed (v10)

- "...the Valley of Shaveh" - the Kidron Valley, sometimes called the Valley of Jehoshaphat, northeast of the Dead Sea, which had a wadi (small river) that emptied into the Dead Sea.

Note: the discussion between Abram and the king of Sodom is now paused until v21 while we're given a conversation between Abram and Melchizedek (v18-20).

(d) Abram's encounter with the kings (14:18-24)

18 And **Melchizedek** the king of **Salem** brought out **bread and wine**; now he was a **priest of God Most High**.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.

18 King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine, since he was serving as the priest of God Most High.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

- Before Abram deals with the king of Sodom, he deals with the king of Salem, who was named Melchizedek.

- "...Melchizedek" - in Hebrew, means "king of righteousness"; he was a literal king who ruled over a literal city, Salem.

— Some people want to make Melchizedek out to be a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (a theophany or a Christophany). However, that doesn't fit the narrative here. When a Christophany appears in the OT, there is often worship (Cf. Joshua 5:13-15). Here, Abram does not worship Melchizedek.

— The problem is that many Christians, once they realize that Jesus appeared in the OT, they want to find Jesus under every rock and tree. Every mention of an angel or every generic person who appears in the OT all of a sudden becomes Jesus Christ. That's just not the case, although there are many legitimate appearances of Christ in the OT.

— Some of the reasons people give for thinking Melchizedek is actually an OT appearance of Christ are (Cf. Heb 7:1-3):

- King of Salem (Jerusalem), and Jesus will reign from Jerusalem one day

- He is a king of peace and righteousness; sounds like that describes Christ
- He is both a king and a priest (Heb 7:2); Jesus is also both a King and High Priest
- He has no beginning and no ending (Heb 7:3); Jesus is also eternal
- Melchizedek brought bread and wine; forerunner of communion?
- Priest of the Most High God

— But there are some very good reasons to believe that Melchizedek was not the pre-incarnate Christ:

- When Heb 7:3 says, "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life..." it's saying that he was without a *documented* genealogy, not that he was an eternal being.
- Theophanies bring a message from God to man; in this case, Melchizedek did not bring Abram any message.
- Heb 7:3 says that Melchizedek was "like" the Son of God, not "the" Son of God.
- Melchizedek ruled over a geo-political location (Salem); this isn't true of Christ. *While many have taught that Melchizedek was a preincarnate Christ, this simply cannot be. This was not a theophany because theophanies came and went; they appeared, gave their proclamation, message, or commandment, then disappeared. Theophanies never held an office here on earth. Here, Melchizedek held two offices: that of king and that of priest... Again, he was not a theophany (he was only a type), for several reasons. First, theophanies merely appeared and disappeared, not holding an earthly office like king or priest. Second, Heb 5:1, which begins listing several prerequisites for priesthood, makes the point that a priest had to be human. The Messiah did not become human until the Incarnation. So for Melchizedek to first be a priest, he first had to be human. Third, Hebrews states that he was like the Son of God. Therefore, there is no biblical basis for making Melchizedek a theophany or preincarnate Christ. Melchizedek was a human being who was said to be a type of the Messiah in that he was both king and priest. When Hebrews mentions that he had no genealogy—no father, no mother—the main point of the author of Hebrews is that there is no record of genealogy for Melchizedek, no mention of a father or a mother. It does not say that he did not have one, only that there is no record of it. The point Hebrews is making is that the correct genealogy was vital for Levitical priesthood. Unless one could prove that he was a descendant of Aaron, he could not serve as a priest under the Levitical law. However, the Melchizedekian Priesthood was not based upon descent, but it was based strictly on divine appointment. When Hebrews states: neither beginning nor end, it does not say he did not have one; it just means that there is no beginning or end of his priesthood in the biblical record. The typology being drawn is that of a continuous priesthood, as is the case with Jesus. [Fruchtenbaum, The Book of Genesis, 268,270–71].*

— So what the author of Hebrews is doing to make his point that Jesus' priesthood is higher than Aaron's is that he is reaching back into history, back to Gen 14, to a king who resembles Jesus, and skillfully using it in his argument to show that Christ brought in a priesthood higher than Aaron's because it was patterned after the priesthood of Melchizedek.

— A great book on OT appearances of Christ was written by Ron Rhodes, titled Christ Before the Manger.

- "...Salem" - the precursor to the city of Jerusalem; this is the first mention of this historic city in Scripture. Ps 76:2 equates Salem with Zion.

— At this time, Salem was obviously not a Jewish city because besides Abram, no Jewish race existed. Salem/Jerusalem would be under Jebusite control all the way through the time of Joshua (Cf. Joshua 15:63).

— Jerusalem would not become a Jewish city until the time of David (Cf. 2 Sam 5), about 1000 years after Abram's meeting with Melchizedek.

- "...bread and wine" - this isn't communion. Communion wasn't implemented until the Last Supper, the night before Jesus' death on the cross.

— So what is the meaning of the bread and wine here? The meaning is that Melchizedek ministered to Abram, who was just victorious in battle, with bread and wine.

- "...priest" - first mention of a "priest" in Scripture. A priest was someone who was an intermediary between God and man.

— He wasn't a pagan priest; he was a priest "of God Most High." This demonstrates that there were others, outside of Abram's household, who were believers. Otherwise, this man, who had no contact with Abram until this time, wouldn't have been called a priest of God Most High.

- "...God Most High" - *Elyôn*, used only 5x in Scripture; four of those times in this passage (v18,19,20,22). The only other usage outside of this passage is Ps 78:35.

19 And **he blessed him** and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

19 Melchizedek blessed Abram and said, "Abram is blessed by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth,

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

- "...he blessed him" - Melchizedek blessed Abram; Melchizedek must have recognized something unusual in Abram...that the God that was with him was also with Abram. He recognized Abram as a fellow servant of the Most High God.

20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has **handed over your enemies to you."** And he **gave him a tenth of everything.**

20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all.

20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your control." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

- Now Melchizedek blesses God, and recognizes that the great victory was not due to Abram or his allies, but because of God's hand in the circumstance. As a fellow servant of God, Melchizedek could recognize God's hand in Abram's military victory.

- "...handed over your enemies to you" - describes salvation. Before Jonah was vomited out of the belly of the fish, he said, "Salvation is from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).

— Salvation is much more than being delivered from the penalty of our sins through the blood of Christ through faith alone in Christ alone. While that is the ultimate form of salvation, the word is also used to describe salvation/deliverance from our enemies, deliverance from the sin that so easily besets us, it's salvation/deliverance from the circumstances/cares of this world.

— What you discover as you walk with the Lord is that the Lord begins to save/deliver you from a lot of things, in God's way and in God's timing. If God provided your ultimate salvation/deliverance from the rightly-deserved penalty for our sin, why would we believe that He can't or won't deliver us from the issues of this life.

— Melchizedek recognized that God delivered Abram (and Lot) from this military conflict that honestly they had no business winning. They were severely outnumbered and out armed, yet God handed over the enemy to Abram.

- "...he gave him a tenth of everything" - Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek (Cf. Heb 7:4).

Many pastors, using Scripture to shake down people or guilt them into giving, will go to this verse and say, Look, even Abraham gave a tithe (which they call 10%) to Melchizedek, a priest. So, you need to follow Abraham's lead and tithe (give 10%) to the church.

— The fact of the matter is that the tithe was part of the Mosaic Law, which wouldn't be given to Israel for another 600 years. And in the Mosaic Law, there were actually three tithes, two annually and one every third year. So the average Israelite, under the Mosaic Law, was actually giving 23.33% of their income to the Lord as a tithe.

— The counter argument to this is that tithing preceded the Mosaic Law, so God instituted it even before the Mosaic Law came into existence. Pastors use this because they realize (rightfully) that the Church is no longer under the Mosaic Law. So they point to one

instance of a "tithe" and create a doctrine of giving from that to urge Christians to give to their local church.

— And, they say, since God ordained the tithe, we should (are under obligation) to tithe. But God didn't instruct Abram to give a tithe to Melchizedek here (he did so of his own volition), so God is not implementing anything. And there's no further mention of any patriarch offering a "tithe" or "tithing" to anyone until it is instituted in the Mosaic Law. And even after that, Israel was not good at keeping that ordinance throughout their history (Cf. Mal 3:8-12).

— Pastors will also invoke the "Malachi blessing" by going to Mal 3:8-12 and say that you are "robbing God" if you don't tithe, and that you need to "bring the tithes into the storehouse" (which they say is the church). If you do that, God will "rebuke the devourer" meaning that your refrigerator that Satan (the devourer) was going to destroy will be supernaturally "healed" because you tithed. You "rebuked the devourer" by your giving and saved yourself from giving a bunch of money to the appliance store.

— What they'll never tell you is that the tithe was instituted under the Mosaic Law, which was given exclusively to Israel, not to the Church (Cf. Ps 147:19-20).

- What is actually happening here is that Abram is fulfilling the Abrahamic promises given to him in 12:1-3, specifically 12:2d where God promised that Abram would be a blessing.

— Also here, Abram is giving from the spoils of war, not from his income or personal possessions. These belongings from which he tithed were not even really his...he just recovered the plunder/spoils taken by the five invading kings upon defeating them. So there's really no correlation between what Abram received and the "tithe" (10% of income) that many pastors use to promote giving.

— There are many other reasons why Abram giving a tithe to Melchizedek is not something governing the Church Age:

- God never commanded Abram to tithe to Melchizedek; he did it of his own volition.
- This tithe was one-time event, not something that Abram did regularly. There is no record of Abram ever giving a tithe again.
- The tithe was not from his income or personal possessions, but rather from the spoils of war. What Abram tithed to Melchizedek originally belonged to others.
- How can this event institute tithing when Abram didn't tithe off the wealth given to him by Pharaoh?

21 Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the possessions for yourself."

21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself."

21 The king of Sodom told Abram, "Return the people to me, and you take the possessions for yourself."

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

- The scene with Abram and Melchizedek now changes to Abram and the king of Sodom (picking up from v17).

— The king of Sodom wants to make a deal with Abram for the prisoners of war. His offer is for Abram to keep all the spoils of war that he retrieved from the battle, but for him to turn over the prisoners of war to the king of Sodom.

— However, under the laws of that day, these people legally belonged to Abram by right of conquest. He had the legal authority to keep all these people, and they could become his slaves. He was not obligated to return them to the king of Sodom. Nevertheless, Abram chose to do so (v24).

— Furthermore, since the general population of Sodom was captured, the king desperately needed these people back, otherwise he would have few subjects, and little tax base.

— Abram did not need the king's permission to keep the spoils of war, as those were rightfully his to begin with. Thus, this was not much of an offer by the king; more like a humble request from a defeated king.

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth,

22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

22 But Abram answered the king of Sodom, "I have made an oath to the LORD God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth,

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

- Abram responds to the king of Sodom by revealing to him what he said in his heart before he went into battle. Before the battle even began, Abram purposed in his heart to do something.

— This is when convictions are made, before the battle even began, not once the battle has started. Abram took a stand before the battle, steeled his conviction on what he was going to do, so he didn't compromise later on.

23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, so that you do not say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you won't be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'

23 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:

- Abram didn't want to give the king of Sodom the satisfaction to believe that he made Abram rich. Abram knew that God had made him rich, and he wanted the king of Sodom to know that.

- Abram purposed to not entangle himself with the king of Sodom, just as he earlier disentangled himself from Lot. The idea of Abram's purposeful commitment here is an idea that is almost never taught in churches or anywhere today: ecclesiastical separation.

- Ecclesiastical separation is the idea that a believer in Jesus Christ will not align or entangle themselves with people, groups, organizations, parties, or any other entity that does not share my core biblical values.

- There are many NT passages that call for ecclesiastical separation: Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5:11; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Eph 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6,14; Titus 3:9-11; 2 John 9-11.

- What Abram is doing here through ecclesiastical separation is setting himself apart (sanctifying himself) and putting himself into a position to be blessed by God. That blessing will come in Gen 15 when God gives him the Abrahamic Covenant.

- Abram was already super rich, so he didn't need these spoils of war anyway. He wanted God to remain on his Provider, not for the king of Sodom to somehow take credit for Abram's success and wealth.

- You can see the spiritual maturity of Abram here as compared with 12:10-20, when he fled to Egypt without instruction from God, left the land of promise for a pagan country because of a famine. Abram's faith in God as Provider is leaps and bounds stronger here than it was in Gen 12.

24 I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

24 I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

24 I will take nothing except what my warriors have eaten. But as for what belongs to the men who were allied with me, including Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, let them take their share."

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

- So Abram gave back all of the prisoners of war he captured in battle, and all of the spoils that he captured.

— He did, however, allow his allies (Aner, Eschol, and Mamre) unselfishly to keep their share of the spoils. But Abram kept nothing for himself except for the food that his army had already eaten. Everything in his possession was returned to the king of Sodom.

— Notice the blessing on these three allies of Abram, to keep the spoils from battle. Another outworking of the Abrahamic promises of Gen 12:1-3, specifically "I will bless those who bless you." These three men were a blessing to Abram, thus God blessed them.

— The four kings from the east (v1) cursed Abram (and God). Unaware that the land had been given to Abram by God, they callously invaded, thinking they could curse this part of the world through military invasion and the taking of spoils. They were wrong. In the end, they were "cursed" by military conquest by a 75-year-old man.

Observations

- Abraham does not get involved with the immorality of Sodom. God gives Abraham the whole land. The Lord is Abraham's shield and reward.
- This is the only place where Abram is viewed as a warrior
- In Gen 12-25, which cover the life of Abraham, this is the only chapter where God does not speak. However, He is represented by a high priest.
- The outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant and the facet of blessing for blessing. Melchizedek was blessed by receiving a tenth of the spoil, and the three brothers confederate with Abram also receive a blessing of spoils.
- On the other hand, there is also the outworking of the curse for curse in that the four kings suffered the curse. The principle is curse for curse in kind, meaning the way the Jew is cursed, God will take the same curse and apply it to the one doing the cursing. They cursed by a military conquest, and they were cursed by a military conquest, curse for curse in kind.