

Genesis – Lesson 13

Abram Rescues Lot

Read Genesis 14:1-12

1. (a) List the *kings* and their *cities* from vv. 1-4. Who is in *control* of this mini-empire? Geographically, where *are* these various cities (see v. 3)?

The first set of kings includes: 1) Amraphel of Shinar, 2) Arioch of Ellasar, 3) Chedorlaomer of Elam, and 4) Tidal of Goiim. The second set of kings includes: 1) Bera of Sodom, 2) Birsha of Gomorrah, 3) Shinab of Admah, 4) Shemeber of Zeboiim, and 5) the unnamed king of Bela (or Zoar). The leader of this mini-empire was Chedorlaomer (see v. 4). All of these cities were in the Jordan Valley.

(b) What *happened* in the fourteenth year of this mini-empire? Who *won* (see vv. 10-11)? Why is this *significant* to Lot and his family (other than being captured)?

In the fourteenth year, the second set of kings rebelled against Chedorlaomer, probably wanting their independence from him, or to establish their own mini-empire. But, the power of Chedorlaomer and his allies was too great for the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah (and their allies), and they had to flee, leaving the cities for plunder. Because Lot and his family were dwelling in Sodom at the time, Chedorlaomer took Lot prisoner and plundered his possessions. In other words, Lot got swept up in this civil war as a member of the losing city.

2. (a) Compare Genesis 13:12 and 14:12. What had Lot *done* in the meantime?

Although Lot had originally moved to live in the Jordan valley, he eventually moved south, ending up in Sodom, at the far southern end of the Jordan near the Dead Sea.

(b) What *effect* did Lot's choice have on him at this point?

His choice cost him his freedom. If he would have stayed with Abram in the hill country, he would not have gotten caught up in the civil war that occurred between the kings of the territories in the Jordan valley, and he would not have had to be rescued. His selfish desire to move to a place of "prosperity" almost cost him his life. The narrative will also show (as it unfolds) that Lot refused to leave Sodom, even after being rescued by Abram, an indication that he was not particularly wise in himself.

3. (a) From 2 Peter 2:6-10, what *happens* to a righteous man when he spends too much time near evil? What *lesson* is there for us in that? What *specific* things can we do about it?

Peter says that Lot was "*tormenting his righteous soul*" by staying in Sodom and seeing the evil that was being done there day after day. He was being *directly affected* by it; evil is *contagious*, and Lot was being swept away in it, even though he may have had a righteous soul. The lesson is obvious: those who are righteous need to *run away* from that which is evil in order to not be swept up in it. Those who are righteous need to take *definitive* steps to move away from anything that is evil, to prevent evil from overcoming us.

(b) Read Colossians 2:6-8. According to Paul, what kinds of things can take us *captive*? How do we *protect* ourselves against them?

Paul says that things like philosophy, deceits, human traditions, and elemental spirits (or principles) can take us captive. Philosophy (or vain theories of life) can take us captive in holding us away from the truth of Scripture. Deceits (or things that *appear* truthful) can take us captive by replacing the genuine truth of God in our minds. Human traditions (especially religious ones) can take us captive in that they *substitute* for genuine spirituality and faith. And elemental spirits (or simplistic thinking patterns) can hold us captive away from a mature faith. We protect ourselves from this by “walking in [Jesus the Lord],” being “built up in him and established in the faith,” specifically by being “taught” what is true and right from Scripture regarding Jesus Christ. In the simplest sense, the freedom from vain philosophies, traditions, and overly simplistic thinking comes in *learning*, in being taught the things of God and growing up in the faith.

Read Genesis 14:13-24

4. (a) What *three* things do you learn about Abram that helps you understand why he succeeded?

Abram was successful in rescuing Lot because: 1) he had already established allies amongst the local peoples (particularly the Amorites; see v. 13), 2) he had a group of 318 trained men, all born in his household (thus, trained by him; see v. 14) ready to pursue the enemy, and 3) he knew the art of war and the tactics of how to win (see v. 15). Abram used all of these things to defeat Chedorlaomer; he was prepared as he came to this place.

(b) From Ephesians 6:10-20, what *spiritual tools* do we as Christians possess? How do we use these to overcome our enemy?

Paul lists a number of tools that Christians possess to fight their spiritual enemy, a spiritual “armor” that consists of 1) a belt of truth, 2) a breastplate of righteousness, 3) the shoes of readiness, 4) the shield of faith, 5) the helmet of salvation, 6) the sword of the Spirit, and 7) prayer. All of these together give us defense against the enemy: 1) truth becomes the foundation that holds us up, 2) our standing righteousness with God gives us protection from temptation, 3) the gospel of readiness makes us quick to move when trouble comes, 4) faith guards us against the doubts that come, 5) the knowledge of our salvation gives us strength, 6) the Holy Spirit gives us a weapon to attack strongholds in ourselves, and 7) prayer becomes the means by which God leads us to victory.

(c) List as many *parallels* as you can between Abram’s rescue of Lot and Christ’s rescue of us.

The following parallels can be seen between what Abram did for Lot and what Christ does for his own: 1) Lot had been taken captive by evil men, just as those who belong to Christ were taken captive by sin, 2) Abram was advised by his allies that Lot had been taken, just as Christ is aware of the captivity of his own, 3) Abram took the initiative to rescue Lot, just as Christ takes the initiative to come and save his own, 4) Lot did not deserve to be rescued, just as those who Christ rescues do not deserve such either, 5) Abram brought the power of his forces against the enemy, just as Christ brings his divine power against our enemy, 6) Abram was successful in rescuing Lot, just as Christ is successful in saving his own, and 7) Abram brought back everything that had been taken by the enemy, just as Christ restores everything that was taken from his own.

5. (a) What two *kings* honored Abram at his victory celebration? How did Abram *approach* them?

Abram was honored by the king of Sodom (Bera) and the king of Salem (Melchizedek). This would indicate that Abram’s work not only freed Lot from the clutches of Chedorlaomer, but also the king of Sodom. Abram treated both men with great *honor*: to Bera he returned everything that belonged to him in the city of Sodom, and to Melchizedek he gave a tithe of all of the spoils he had collected in his victory.

(b) From Hebrews 7, list the *parallels* between Melchizedek and Christ.

The writer to the Hebrews sees in Melchizedek a *foreshadowing* of Christ: 1) his name means “*king of righteousness*” and he is the king of Salem (or peace; v. 2, just as Jesus is both of these things); 2) he is without father or mother (because no record of his family line is recorded; v. 3, just as Jesus is the eternal Son of God without literal human parents); 3) he received tithes from Abraham (v. 4, just as Jesus receives our tithe); and 4) he is a priest of a greater covenant (v. 6, just as Jesus is the priest of a new covenant).

(c) Why is Christ a *greater* priest than those from the Levitical line (note Hebrews 7:9-10, 23-25)? Why should this *matter* to us?

Jesus is understood by the writer as a priest from the line of Melchizedek, rather than from the line of Levi. The Levitical priests were “in” Abraham when he offered a tithe to Melchizedek, thus they are inferior to the priesthood established in Melchizedek. Jesus, from the line of Judah (not Levi) comes as a priest, then, in a line that *predates* the Levitical priesthood, a greater priesthood that represents a *greater* covenant, one that is permanent and capable. This is important to us, as those no longer under the old covenant; our priest, who makes perfect atonement for us, is descended from an ancient priesthood, one that predates even Abraham, and one that is perfectly capable of saving people *in the same way Abraham was*: by faith.