

Genesis 14:1-24

"The Mystery Of Melchizedek"

How we need to learn from the spiritual lapse (or lack) in Lot's life. It seems we have 2 basic examples to learn from in life; the example of what *to* do & the example of what *not* to do. It's our desire to learn *from* & be an example *of* the former. Unfortunately for Lot, he becomes an illustration of the latter. Ch 13 comes to a close w/*Abram* enjoying the "fatness" or the "riches" of "communion" w/God, as to where we find *Lot* pursuing the passing pleasures of this world.

There's a lot of change that takes place in Abram's life in Ch 13. In Ch 12 we find him falling, we find him failing in the forging of his faith; in Ch 13 he begins to excel in his example. He comes back to the beginning, back to that place of being *separated from* the world & *consecrated to* the Lord. He returns to his 1st love, picks up the pieces & presses on, forgetting those things which are behind & reaching forward to that which lies ahead. He's walking by faith, laying hold of that for which God laid hold of him & he calls upon the name of the Lord once again. He's restored, refreshed, renewed; he brings forth fruit worthy of repentance & deals appropriately w/his "Lot" (literally) in life.

Perhaps you recall, it was a matter of strife between believers. Abe's herdsmen & Lot's herdsmen weren't getting along & their witness to the on-looking unbelievers in the land was being ruined. So Abe goes to Lot & says, "Hey Listen, it's not worth it for there to be strife between you & me, it's not healthy for our families *or* the unbelieving community that surrounds us. Let's go ahead & separate. Look at all this land before us; you choose where you wanna go. If you go to the left, than God will provide for me to the right, if you go to the right, than God will provide for me to the left; either way it doesn't matter to me."

Again, Abram was walking by faith, trusting God to take care of his life regardless of what Lot chose to do. & We read in the 10th Vs (13th Ch) that Lot lifted his eyes & saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere...like the land of *Egypt* as you go toward Zoar." Now remind me (you bible students), what is it that *Egypt* typifies, or represents in scripture (apart from a physical location geographically)? Spiritually it speaks of the world... It's a type of the world isn't it? & All that is in the world (the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh & the pride of life) being embodied therein...

So even though Abram could remove Lot from Egypt (Ch 13) he couldn't remove Egypt from Lot. Lot didn't learn the life lesson that Abram learned... Oh he was *saved*, the NT makes that clear, but he was carnal.

Therefore he continued to allow his drive/desire for the things of this world to dictate his decisions. When choosing where to go, what to do, he wasn't saying; "How will this impact my *family*? Will this compromise me *spiritually*? Will it facilitate a greater *intimacy* between God & myself?" But rather he was saying, "Man it looks like Egypt down there!" He represents those who will so readily say "Yes" to heaven but will never say "No" to the world.

The position of his heart was made known wasn't it? It wasn't that he made a bad choice therefore his heart went astray, it's that his heart was already astray therefore he made a bad choice. The position of our heart will be reflected in the choices we make.

So Lot went from lifting up his eyes *toward* Sodom, to pitching his tent as far *as* Sodom & here in Ch 14 we'll discover that he's actually living *in* Sodom.

Don't be deceived; if you give way *to* world, you will be defiled *by* the world & *may* suffer consequences along *w/the* world... It's in Rev 18 that you find the fall of Babylon; & John writes saying, "*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.'*"¹

It's another lesson we learn from Lot & may we have ears to hear. You guys it's easy to sit in our soft chairs, in our climate controlled buildings & think, "I can't believe this guy, that he would do such a thing!" But the bible declares that these things (people's failings & falling short, sinning against God & all) were written *not* so we could think ill of them, but that we might learn *from* them & not be repeat offenders. Paul the apostle (in writing to the Corinthians said, "*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*"²

Ok. For all of that; Ch 14 is a very interesting Ch that if it weren't for Lot's sin, probably wouldn't even be recorded. Because Abram's actions are prompted by what happens to his nephew. Yet it becomes one of the most pivotal passages in scripture. Because it's in this Ch that this mysterious Melchizedek walks into the pages of our bible & then walks right back out never to be seen again. Yet it's through him that we're given insight & understanding into the nature of the priesthood of J.C. It's simply another example of how God can take the things that man means for evil, or take the shameful things we've done & turn them for our greater good & His greater glory.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Re 18:4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Co 10:11-12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 1-4

Let me just break this down for you so that it saves me stumbling through all these names & helps us to fall into the flow of what's happening here.

It's in Ch 14 (of the book of Genesis) that we find the 1st mention of war in the scripture. It's undoubtedly *not* the 1st war, but the 1st mention of war. How do I know that? Because we find that this, "Chedorlaomer" had already subjugated these 5 kings for the past 12 yrs.

But in the 13th yr they rebelled (meaning they quit paying tribute) which would be received as a declaration of war. It's a "We're done w/you" kind of a message. (P.S. in biblical numerics the #13 is the # of rebellion. It's also Satan's #. The numerical value of every name of Satan in the Greek when added up is always divisible by the #13, so you have the superstition of unlucky 13 & all of that.)

Now in Vs 5-9 you find this Chedorlaomer along w/3 other kings responding to the rebellion (destroying a few more tribes along the way to meet w/them) & when they finally square off (5 kings against 4), the 4 kings destroy the armies of the other 5 in the Valley of Siddim & we'll see that they take all that they have & the people they carry off to enslave them or whatever.

Vs 10-12

You see, there it is. From pitching his tent as far *as* Sodom, he was at this point living *in* Sodom (that place recorded in Ch 13 as being exceedingly wicked & sinful against the Lord). *Now*, he's taken captive...

Listen, this is what sin does to you. It baits you, entices you, pulls you in, but ultimately it ensnares you, entangles you, enslaves you (takes you captive).

Refresh yourself sometime concerning the life of Samson. It's life that begins well, seems so strong, but as Samson flirts w/sin, rebels against God's word, what happens? You find it in the 16th Ch & the 21st Vs of the book of Judges, "*Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.*"³ Which is to say that sin will *blind* you, it will *bind* you & it will *grind* you. Sin, left unchecked, will destroy your life.

Remember that Vs back in Rev 18? Lot was sharing in Sodom's sin, now he's receiving of it's plague, he's being carried off into captivity.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jdg 16:21]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This is why the bible says, *"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."*⁴ When you're in league w/the ungodly don't be surprised when you find yourself entangled in their web & ensnared in their consequences.

You'd think this would be a wake up call for Lot, "What am I doing? I gotta get out of this place." But like so many, once he's delivered he goes right back to it... Eventually it will be the destruction of all that he holds dear; sin will destroy your life, there are no exceptions.

Vs 13-16

Wow. There is a whole lot in this little section of scripture... I'd point out that Vs 13 gives us the 1st mention of the "Hebrew" in scripture. Most likely taking us back to his great, great, great, great grandpa Eber found back in the 4th Vs of the 11th Ch.

We're also given just a little insight into the enormous wealth of Abram aren't we? By the time you have 318 readily war-trained servants who were born in your house that's saying something ☺. That's not speaking of those *not* born in your house, or women & children or those untrained. We can probably assume that Abe had somewhere near 1,000 people in his caravan at this point. It takes quite a bit of resources to tend to & take care of those needs everyday.

So Abram had an enormous amount of *wealth* & he was a man who was ready for *war*. That's something that we don't think of much when it comes to this great man of faith, is it? He was separated, but not isolated; he was independent, but not indifferent.

He was a man of peace, but he was prepared for war. Now he didn't fight from selfish motives, nor was he interested in personal gain; but he would protect his family, one of his own who'd been taken captive by the enemy...

Understand something family; when we come to Christ, warfare is the reality. It's a non-option, it's not like we come to Christ & then we're invited to *join* the war (take it or leave it kind of a thing), coming to Christ is tantamount to being *enlisted in the war*.

Now we know that as believers we don't wrestle flesh & blood. That's not to say that God opposes a physical military, we know emphatically that He doesn't. But it is to say that as the church, our fight is not one that is physical, but it *is* one that is spiritual. We have an enemy; & he wants to take your friends, your family into captivity (that is, if he can't have you personally).

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). (Pr 12:26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So check it out, what are some of the things that we can learn about Abrams army? #1 They were born in his house. That is, they were of the family of believers & as such they were victorious. What does the bible say? *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."*⁵ I'm just gonna say that by the time you're taking your 318 men (& the men of your 2 neighbor friends) up against the armies of 4 separate kings, you're moving in faith. Amen? **God told Abram that He would make him great, that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed, yet right now he has no children of his own. He's taking a risk here, what happens if he's killed in this process? Yet he's trusting the word of God for his life & God honored that & gave him a great victory.**

We also see that his men were armed. You might have all the zeal in the world, but if you're not equipped you can't win. Eph 6, you have appropriate armor, the sword of the Spirit, the belt of truth, the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, you're prepared to share the gospel, its what we stand on, its our footing. God has equipped you through His word for the war (2 Cor 10:3-5, Heb 4:12-13) & it's through faith that we wield these weapons & wage wise/effective warfare.

We note that they were trained. One of the things we do as we go through God's word is to get equipped for the war. Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, that's one of my mandates. Doesn't matter how good the equipment is if the soldiers aren't trained they'll still get taken down. Listen, the better you know your bible, the better equipped you'll be to fight the battle. We do well to train you how to pray, how to use your bible, how to recognize the enemy & how to follow orders as soldiers in the army of Christ.

They trusted their leader, we've got to trust in J.C. & be willing to follow Him wherever He takes us (these guys pursued the enemy over 100 miles).

They were united, disciplined, marching together (not divided & contentious toward one another). They were single minded; their goal wasn't personal revenge or personal gain, but they were out to defeat the enemy so that captives might be set free.

Abram heard that one of his own had been taken captive & immediately he went to war for him... (& he involved hundreds of others in the process).

Question, what do you do when you hear of your brother, your sister being taken into captivity by the enemy? Abram interceded for his nephew.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Jn 5:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Even so we're to intercede for our family, our bros & sisters in Christ who've been taken captive/plundered by the enemy.

He didn't sit back & say, "Well, I guess he's getting what he deserves." Or, "If it's God's will that he be released, than he'll be released." But rather he sets out to rescue him in the face of incredible odds against him.

Write it down, look it up later, 1 Samuel 14. Jonathan & his armor bearer just trusting in the Lord & over coming incredible odds putting an entire Philistine garrison to flight. Refresh yourself w/the account of Gideon, or Moses & the Egyptian army, Elijah & the 400 prophets of Baal, David Vs Goliath, David's mighty men in 2 Sam 23, read of Joshua's engaging the enemy again & again. God loves to make a way where there is no way. He loves to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to Him. Abram pursues & plunders the enemy achieving great victory in the face of otherwise impossible odds. It's a "to God be the glory, great things He has done" kind of moment.

We're to bear one another's burdens, go to war for your friends, your family who've been taken into captivity, intercede on their behalf (bring praying people into it w/you) & see what God will do.

Vs 17

Let me just say that sometimes you will face (I will face), we will face our greatest dangers on the heels of our greatest victories. After we've won the battle, we let our guard down... be careful. One has said, "Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle." (Andrew Bonar)

Fresh after the fight, coming home in victory Abram is met by the king of Sodom. Interesting his name "Bera" (Vs 2) means "son of evil"; "Sodom" means "burning". You can sense something sinister in the air at this point, right? Just as we spoke of conflict that so often comes after times of consecration, here, the "son of evil" seeks out a meeting w/Abram fresh on the heels of his victory in faith...

Vs 18-20

Wait, what was that? What just happened? Out of nowhere it's as if this Melchizedek intercepts Abram, encourages & refreshes him. Abram tithes to him & then just like that he's not mentioned again... The king of Sodom is seeking Abram, but the king of Salem intercepts him. Now the name "Melchizedek" means "King of Righteousness" & the word "Salem" means "peace".

So the “son of evil” the king of “burning/perversion” is seeking him, but the “King of Righteousness”, the “King of Peace” intercepts him & refreshes him... Are you pickin up what I’m throwin down?

And notice that in this book of Genealogies, (it’s been all about establishing families), there’s no mention of Melchizedek’s beginning, from where he originated, & in the end Abram tithes to him. Gives him a 10th of all that he had.

Notice also the elements that Melchizedek refreshed him with. Bread & wine. Wait, why does that sound familiar? Oh yeah, it was the Last Supper of our Lord. He took bread & broke it saying, “This is My body which is broken for you.” & The wine of which He said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” We look *back* & believe upon J.C., His redeeming sacrifice on our behalf, prior to the cross, even Abram was looking *forward* to the work of J.C. & the redemption to be accomplished on his behalf.

We read that Melchizedek blessed Abram, now the bible (Heb 7:7) tells us that beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the greater. So this priest/king of God Most High (El-Elyon) blesses Abram & informs him that it wasn’t by his might, wasn’t by his power that he achieved great victory, but it was God’s favor, God’s grace upon his life that caused him to defeat his enemies.

Then Abe tithes to him. Recognizes that he’s greater than him & gives to the Lord by giving to him. Just FYI, this is hundreds of years before the law. Tithing isn’t God’s way of raising cash, it’s His way of raising kids. It’s not His way of digging for our money, but developing our maturity. D.L. Moody used to say, “I can tell more about the spirituality of a man by looking at his checkbook than I can by looking at his prayer-book.” Where our treasure is, there our heart will be. Abe acknowledge the victory in his life was due to the grace of God & in so doing he worshiped God in giving to God.

The tithe (tithe means 10th) in its most basic manner is a form of worship. It’s a way in which we honor God, give thanks to God, & honor Him w/our lives. (Mal 3:8-12)

I would encourage you to read Heb Ch 7 & you’ll discover all kinds of illumination regarding the mystery of Melchizedek. The nature of his eternal priesthood (no beginning no end) how that Levi (being in the loins of Abram) paid tithes to him. Meaning that the priesthood of Melchizedek exceeds that of Aaron (who was of Levi). How that Christ is a priest forever according to the order (not of Aaron) but of Melchizedek.

Some wonder if this was perhaps a theophany (an OT manifestation of Christ pre-incarnate). It’s plausible.

One day Jesus was speaking to the scribe & Pharisees & He said this, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*"⁶ They were like, "You're not even 50, how can You say Abraham saw Your day?" He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM". Was He speaking of this event? I don't know. But it's interesting stuff isn't it? The mysteries of Melchizedek.

Vs 21-24

Don't miss the nuances of spiritual warfare here. Abram was met by 2 kings & had a choice to make, be blessed by the King of Salem, or strike a deal w/the king of Sodom. Should you choose to bow before Bera, everything you live for will one day burn, that's the lesson we'll learn through Lot.

But having spent time w/the King of Righteousness, Abram was prepared to resist the "son of evil" & gain victory over this temptation. We might say that he found "grace to help in time of need".

In rejecting the king of Sodom's deal Abram was basically saying, "You can have all this world, just give me Jesus". Now legally Abram could've received the spoils, but morally it wasn't right. There may be things that are legal as far as the courts are concerned, but they're morally wrong as far as God is concerned...

This "son of evil" says, "You can have the toys & trinkets, I want the souls". That's the deal the enemy seeks to strike, you can have the things, I want the souls. Abram says, "I'm not taking a thing from you. By spending time *with* the King of Righteousness, in giving his tithe *to* the King of Salem, he found the grace to say "No" to the king of Sodom...

He didn't want anyone, or anything else getting credit for what God had done in his life. He refused to settle for the passing pleasures of this world, he would wait upon the promises of God. Don't partner w/the world, opt for peace w/God through the Person of J.C. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God we're so grateful for Your goodness toward us, how You intercept us when we're headed for a collision w/the wicked one. And You give us strength to resist, You grant us help in time of need & renew our eternal perspective so that we might wait upon Your promises rather than partner w/the world. May we be as watchful after the victory as before the battle & may we be skillful in the art of spiritual warfare that we might gain much ground for Your glory.

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 8:56]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I want you to know that if you've not given your life to Christ, that Jesus has waged war on your behalf. He's gone to the cross & through the shedding of His blood, the laying down of His life He's won the victory, has defeated death & stands poised to give you life. You can be set free today, the chains of sin & death broken; believe on the Lord J.C. for whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.