

Commentary Genesis Chapters 14 by Chuck Smith 1.8.25

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January 2025 memory verse (NKJV)

Luke 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

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And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel the king of Shinar ([Gen 14:1](#)),

Now Shinar is Babylon.

and Arioch the king of Ellasar [which is Babylonia], and Chedorlaomer the king of Elam [which is Persia], and Tidal the king of [Goyem or] nations ([Gen 14:1](#));

So we don't know exactly what nations that comprise. Four kings.

They made war with Bera the king of Sodom, and with Birsha the king of Gomorrah, and Shinab the king of Admah ([Gen 14:2](#)),

And these kings, really no sense of reading their names off because we're not going to remember them anyhow. But they are the kings of the plain, the area where there were five cities in this lush area of the Jordan Valley there that comprise the cities around Sidon.

Now these were joined together in a confederacy in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. And twelve years they served Chedorlaomer ([Gen 14:3-4](#)),

So Chedorlaomer, the king of Persia, had conquered the area and have put them under tribute. And they've been under tribute for twelve years.

in the thirteenth year they rebelled against the tribute ([Gen 14:4](#)).

So twelve years they served the king, in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

Now in the fourteenth year ([Gen 14:5](#))

He got together with these kings of Babylon, Babylonia, and they made an invasion in the area that is today Jordan, but in history was Moab, and they invaded across the high country, clear on down to the area of Edom. The coming down to the-it gives you the city, all of the cities that they conquered here. And they came on finally across to Kadesh. They came south and then began to move west as they came to the area of Edom, and Mount Seir is where it was and then across to Kadesh.

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Having conquered all of these cities and archaeology has certainly confirmed this particular part of history here in the Bible as they have uncovered vast cities that were never rebuilt. They just totally wiped out the cities and all, took the spoil and the cities were never rebuilt. They have dated the ruins and so forth to about the seventeenth century B.C. to the nineteenth century B.C. so that it puts it about the time of this invasion. And they've actually discovered many of these cities that are named here. And the ruins of these cities they have uncovered really a vast civilization that once existed there. But they were wiped out by this invasion of the Babylonian confederacy with the Persian confederacy of kings.

Now the whole purpose of the invasion was ultimately to get at Sodom these five cities of the plain that had rebelled against the tribute that they were paying to Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam.

And so they came [in verse ten] to the vale of Siddim which was full of slimepits (Gen 14:10);

Now the word "slimepits" is actually the asphalt pit. This was an area of a lot of tar asphalt pits down there in the valley, which when God sent fire from heaven to consume Sodom, probably set these things on fire and they probably burned for months. Once you get that hot enough to where it's ignited and burning, it probably went on and on and on. So it was an area that was full of slime. It's an interesting thing that in the tower of Babel they used pitch for mortar. The word pitch there again is a word that signifies tar.

Rockefeller when he read the Bible saw that and figured, hey, if it's tar there must be oil and that's why he began to explore for oil over in that area of Saudi Arabia and Iran and so forth and that's why he became such an extremely wealthy man. He read his Bible and he used his head.

and so the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled into the mountain (Gen 14:10).

Now of course if you're down there, man, you know that there's all kinds of steep cliffs and caves and hiding places and Masada, one of the mountains down there that would overlook the area that was once Tyre and Sidon.

And so these kings took all of the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all of their victuals, supplies, and they went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped (Gen 14:11-13),

Probably one of Lot's servants.

and he told Abram the Hebrew (Gen 14:13);

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And of course this is the first time the word Hebrew is used. It probably comes from the name of his great, great, great grandfather Eber. And so he was called the Hebrew here. It's a name that was adopted later, but Israel was the name that really is adopted for the people because of Jacob and Israel defines more the nation that God had blessed. The Hebrews would include actually the Arabs in a technical sense because they are the descendants of Ishmael.

for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and they were confederate with Abram (Gen 14:13).

So Abraham had these others that he was dwelling in this area of Mamre with; Eshcol from whom the valley of Eshcol became named later on and his two brothers Mamre and Aner.

And when Abram heard that his brother [that is, Lot] was taken captive, he armed his trained servants that were born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and he pursued them unto Dan (Gen 14:14).

So this gives you the size of Abraham's wealth and all. He had three hundred and eighteen men who were his own servants that he could arm for battle. And you can imagine, you know, if you had that many servants you'd have a real food supply problem, you know, feeding everybody because you're responsible to take care of them all.

So Abraham was a man of very vast means, very vast wealth that he could support and keep that many servants. They pursued them as far as Dan. Now Dan is in the uppermost part of Galilee. It's just before you get to the base of Mount Hermon. It's probably five miles from Banos where the Jordan River comes right of the base of Mount Hermon, and so you're clear on up at the northern end of the Upper Galilee, which means from the area of Hebron, he pursued them about a hundred and twenty-five miles. Which without armored weapons carriers and so forth that was a pretty long jaunt for these guys to go figuring that on sort of a forced march, you can get twenty-five miles a day. You get an idea of how far they pursued these armies on up to the area of Dan where they caught up with them in the area of Dan.

And he divided himself against them, and he and his servants, by night, he smote them, and pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus (Gen 14:15).

Now Damascus is some forty-five miles beyond so he came upon them at night. Took them by surprise which was probably the wisest thing he could do, because the armies that he was facing were numbering anywhere from fifty to a hundred thousand men. And here he comes up with his three hundred eighteen servants plus those of the three brothers that went with him, confederate with him. And so probably at most an army of five hundred or so coming against several thousand who had just wiped out almost a whole civilization, wiped out five kings of the plain. A tough guy. And Abraham came on them at night.

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Now they probably number one, figured no one would dare attack us unless they had a huge force. At night they couldn't see how many Abraham had. And they were taken by surprise; they were confused, they began to flee. But from that point, it was hard to flee because you've got to go right on up the Golan Heights. You're in a boxed canyon. And so whenever you flee the direction you always try to flee in, is blocked.

And so they started heading home up Mount Hermon really because they came to the left side of Damascus which meant that they went up Mount Hermon. And as they were fleeing gave Abraham and his men a chance to really wipe at their flanks and to come up and to destroy them as they were coming up on them. Pursued them all the way to Hoba, which is to the left of Damascus that would be going north. And so Abraham destroyed actually these armies that had come.

And he brought back all of the goods, and he also brought again his brother [or his-literally his nephew] Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people (Gen 14:16).

So these kings have taken a lot of captives that they would have made slaves. Abraham rescued them all and was bringing them back. And as he was returning,

The king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is in the king's dale. And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of El Elyown, or the God, the most high (Gen 14:17-18).

Or the most high God.

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of the heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And Abraham gave him tithes of all (Gen 14:19-20).

So briefly we are introduced to this interesting mystical person Melchizedek of whom the scriptures speak very little. It tells us nothing of Melchizedek's parentage, nothing of his mother and father, tells us nothing of his genealogy. All that it tells us is that he was a servant or a priest actually of the most high God. He came up to Abraham with what? Bread and wine which are the symbols of communion. And he gave these unto Abram and then he blessed Abram.

Now the lesser is always blessed by the greater. Therefore, in blessing Abram it puts him a level above Abram. And Abram giving tithes of all that he had to him, again it was signifying of the lesser paying the tithes to the greater, to the servant or the priest of the most high God. So Abram received the blessing, recognized the man as the priest of the most high God, gave tithes of all of the spoils that he had taken unto him. Nothing more is said of Melchizedek until we get to the 110th Psalm. And suddenly out of nothing that seems to relate to the rest of the 110th Psalm, we read the words, "I have sworn,

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and will not repent, I have made thee a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).

Now Abraham's son Isaac had a son Jacob who had twelve sons, one of Jacob's sons was Levi, and when the law was established, Levi was the tribe that was to become the priestly tribe. And so they were called the order of Levi or the Levitical order of priesthood, order referring to the family. Now here is an order of priesthood that precedes the Levitical order and is superior to the Levitical order in that Levi, in essence, when Abram paid tithes; great, great grandfather of Levi, Levi in essence was paying tithes unto Melchizedek.

So it puts the order of priesthood of Melchizedek in a superior order to the Levitical order. And God has sworn and will not repent; I have made thee a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. That Psalm had to remain a mystery as did Melchizedek himself until we come to the book of Hebrews when the mystery begins to unravel.

For the author of the book of Hebrews when he begins to point out the fact that Jesus, though He is from the tribe of Judah of which the scriptures have nothing to say concerning the priesthood, but even though He is of the tribe of Judah, He is of the order of priesthood of Melchizedek, the superior order of priesthood. Thus, He can be the great high priest of those who will come unto God through Him.

Now Melchizedek was called the king of righteousness as well as the king of peace. King of peace is Salem, which is the early name for Jerusalem. So he was one of the first kings of Jerusalem. But he was also called the king of righteousness. Now it is interesting when he refers to Christ who is of the order of Melchizedek and he talks about Christ making intercession for us as our great high priest. "Wherefore we have a great high priest, even Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Again the repetition of that word the righteous, king of righteousness. We have a great high priest, Jesus Christ the righteous One literally, who has entered into heaven for us.

Now you see how the word of God is so beautifully tied together. Here is just a little snatch in Genesis. By itself we don't understand it very much. If that was all that was said, Melchizedek would be just lost in history as a mystical character. We know very little about him.

And then when David comes along in Psalm 110 and said, "I sworn and will not repent, I made thee a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek", you think, What in the world is David talking about? Psalm doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense until it's all put together in Hebrews and we realize that Jesus is our great high priest. He's not of the tribe of Levi, true, for He had to be the lion of the tribe of Judah to fulfill the prophecy of the Messiah. But He is also the priest, but not after the Levitical order, but after the order of Melchizedek who has neither mother nor father or genealogy.

Now there are many Bible scholars who believe that Melchizedek was none other than Jesus Christ Himself. Very possible. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Abraham rejoiced to

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see my day and saw it. They said, What do you mean Abraham saw you? You're not fifty years old" (John 8:56,57). So Jesus could have been referring to this particular incident.

Now after Abraham received the elements of communion, the bread and wine, received the blessing,

Then the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself (Gen 14:21).

You know, just give me the hostages that you've recaptured and you keep all of the loot.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the LORD, the most high God [El Elyown] (Gen 14:22),

He uses the same term now that that Melchizedek had used concerning God, El Elyown, the most high God. "I've lifted up mine hand unto Jehovah, the most high God."

the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread to a shoelace, I'll not take any thing that is yours, lest you would say, I made Abram rich (Gen 14:22-23):

Abraham had acknowledged that the blessings and the riches that he had had come to him from God. He was not about ready to let any man take credit for making him wealthy. He didn't want anyone boasting and saying, "Well, I made Abraham rich". God had blessed Abraham, had prospered him and Abraham wanted only God to get the glory. So he refused to take any, not even a thread or a shoelace. He said,

Except just the food that these young men who went to battle with me have eaten and so forth, and these others let them have their share (Gen 14:24).

But I'm not going to take anything because I don't want you saying I made Abraham rich. It's an important lesson for us to learn and that is never take the bows for the work of God. Or never let man take the credit for the work of God. Man seems to always like to take credit for what God has done. Well, I fasted for many weeks and I did this and I did that. And I made this commitment and I made this sacrifice and I, you know, and because I am so wonderful, God has done all of this.

Oh, how horrible when man seeks to take credit for what God has done. The Bible says that "no flesh should glory in His sight" (I Corinthians 1:29). So Abraham was very wise in this, recognizing that the hand of God's blessing had been upon his life and will continue upon his life because God had promised it. He said, "Hey, and I won't even take a shoelace from you. As in time to come, I don't want you to say I made Abraham rich". Recognizing that God was the One who had blessed him with these riches.