

# Genesis

Chapter 14:1-16

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✚ **Gen 14:1-4** <sup>1</sup> *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, <sup>2</sup> 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). <sup>3</sup> All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). <sup>4</sup> Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.*

War broke out in the land, and looking at the names of the kings and their meanings, it's no wonder it did.

These four fought:

1. **Amraphel** = "sayer of darkness: fall of the sayer" 1) the king of Shinar (Babylon)
2. **Arioch** = "lion-like" 1) the ancient king of Ellasar
3. **Chedorlaomer** = "handful of sheaves" 1) the king of Elam defeated by Abraham
4. **Tidal** = "great son" 1) chief of various nomadic tribes

Against these five:

5. **Bera** = "son of evil" a king of Sodom
6. **Birsha** = "with iniquity" a king of Gomorrah 1) giants, Rephaim 1a) old tribe of giants
7. **Shinab** = "splendour of the father" 1) the king of Admah in the time of Abraham
8. **Shemeber** = "lofty flight" 1) king of Zeboim and an ally of the king of Sodom
9. **Bela** = "destruction" 1) a king of Edom

And why were they fighting?

The bible doesn't really say, but it does say that there was rebellion against Chedorlaomer, which means "handful of sheaves"

Sheaves are stalks of grain, which are gathered together, then transported to the threshing floor where the grain or wheat is separated from the chaff. Looking at Chedorlaomer's name you would possibly think that he may have gathered many towns together, and at his own will would get rid of the person he didn't want, just as separating the wheat from the chaff. But being the evil king that he was, he probably didn't really care which was the good chaff or the bad.

It is possible that the other kings just got tired of being ruled by another king or at least Chedorlaomer being head king over the their countries or towns.

This is also the first mention of war in the bible.

In the book of James, it does talk about wars and how they get started.

† **James 4:1-2** <sup>1</sup> *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

Jesus even talks of war.

† **Luke 14:31-32** <sup>31</sup> *"Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> "Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.*

People think that war is wrong and we shouldn't be a part of it. But throughout the bible we read of wars, and God being on one side or the other.

God did not forbid war. But then we also must look at why we are going to war.

But then regardless of why we go to war, we are to be obedient to the rulers of the land, and if they say we go to war, then we go.

† **Romans 13:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*

Now you may be thinking that our rulers or leaders in this country are too corrupt and we don't have to listen to them. In a sense you are right, but wrong also. If the leader instructs you to do something against God's will, then you should obey God first.

† **Acts 5:26-29** <sup>26</sup> *Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. <sup>27</sup> And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, <sup>28</sup> saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" <sup>29</sup> But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.*

But if it's not against God word or commands, then we are subject to the Authorities even if it means going to war.

But sometimes there are smaller wars going on. I'm not talking about gang wars or even neighbors arguing. No, I'm talking about a spiritual war that is constantly going on, even right now. And why is this battle going on?

Let's look at James again, and read even further to the next verse.

† **James 4:1-4 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup> *What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you?* <sup>2</sup> *You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it.* <sup>3</sup> *And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong--you want only what will give you pleasure.* <sup>4</sup> *You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can't be a friend of God.*

Satan is constantly putting these little ideas in our heads that we would be so much happier if we only had a little more. A nicer car, or house, or clothes, or food, or job, or spouse, or friends, or church or...

In the verse 2 of James, in the NKJV it calls this "lust". Or in the NLT it simply puts it "You want".

You may be thinking, "*But isn't it OK to desire a better home for my family, or a better church building or even a building period? What about better food than what I'm eating, I would be so much healthier if I only had better food.*"

We can come up with all kinds of excuses for why we should desire better things. But what it always comes down to is, what does God's word say about it?

† **Mark 4:18-19 (NLT)** <sup>18</sup> *The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the Good News,* <sup>19</sup> *but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for nice things, so no crop is produced.*

We get blinded by the things we don't have, and our desire for them causes us to take our eyes off the Lord.

† **Psalms 27:4** <sup>4</sup> *One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.*

† **Amos 8:11** *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.*

Even now, isn't there a famine for God's word? And the worst part is, it's amongst Christians. Pastors teach and plead and even beg you to get into the word of God. They come up with every idea to get you into the word, going as far as almost coming to your house everyday and reading it to you themselves.

It's not the pastor's fault that you don't read the bible, and we could blame it on the war that is within us which is part of the problem. But the truth is we are allowing Satan to win this battle over Christians and he's loving every minute of it.

The early church had no problem with this, it says that they searched the scriptures daily.

† **Acts 17:11** *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

I don't think any one told them to, they just had a hunger for the truth and they found it in God's word.

† **John 5:39** *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

Maybe you have lost that hunger for God's word. It could be that you are filling yourself with the things of the world. Like all our mom's used to say, "No desert until after dinner", or "No snacks, it will spoil your dinner." Are you spoiling your appetite for God's word by feeding on the junk food of the world?

✠ **Gen 14:5-9** *<sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. <sup>7</sup> Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. <sup>8</sup> 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 <sup>9</sup> against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar--four kings against five.*

So for a year, king Chedorlaomer went out fighting, then came back and had another war on his hands (he must have been a really unpopular guy). And even though Chedorlaomer had fewer people or at least less help from other countries, he still won.

✠ **Gen 14:10** *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.*

In the KJV it calls the “asphalt pits”, “slime pits”, which seem to be a fitting name for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah to fall into. (but we will look at them in a few months)

Before we go on, one interesting thing about the Zuzim in Ham:

**Zuzim** = "*roving creatures*"

Does this sound familiar? Remember Cain:

† **Gen 4:12-13 (NLT)** <sup>12</sup> *No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place.* <sup>13</sup> *Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment is too great for me to bear!"*

Just something to think about.

✚ **Gen 14:11-12** <sup>11</sup> *Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.* <sup>12</sup> *They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

Now something is wrong here. I thought Lot lived next to Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember back in chapter 13?

† **Gen 13:12** *Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.*

But now it says that he is living in the city. Do you see how getting too close to sin can draw you into it? Lot thought he could just move next to the city, then all of a sudden he's right in it.

We remember that Peter did the same thing with Jesus, saying that he would never deny him, then later we see him in the midst of their camp being one of them. We do the same thing; it's like playing with fire, in the end, you do get burned, one way or the other.

✚ **Gen 14:13-16** <sup>13</sup> *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.* <sup>14</sup> *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.* <sup>15</sup> *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.* <sup>16</sup> *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.*

First off, we see the first mention of the name or title “**Hebrew**” in the bible. It is believed that the word Hebrew came from the name Eber, a descendant of Shem who Abram was a descendant of.

† **Gen 10:21** *And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder.*

The word “**Hebrew**” means: “*one from beyond*” Remember that Abram was not from this land originally, but was sent there by God.

And as we see that Abram knew others who were against king Chedorlaomer, he didn’t ask them to go with them, but instead took 318 of his own servants who were not bought but actually born in his house.

Why would he do this? Possibly because he knew they would stand by him to the end even if it meant death, and these men also knew Lot, Abram’s nephew. If you had to have someone stand up for you, would you rather have someone in another neighborhood that you really don’t know, or someone from your family that was as close as your own flesh and blood?

Finally we see that Abram brought back everything that was taken, including Lot. And when you read this you may be thinking, “*I thought Lot was Abram’s nephew, why is he called his brother here?*” The original Hebrew word for “brother” is “*ach awkh*” which means “brother” or “kindred” which would mean a close relative as Lot was to Abram, being Abram’s brother’s son, or his nephew.

When it says that Abram took everything back you would think that he kept it all and increased what he had, but as we will see next week, Abram did not keep anything that didn’t belong to him.

A final word about Lot, this is the last time he is mentioned until chapter 19, but I noticed here that it doesn’t say anything about Abram getting upset with Lot because he was in the midst of Sodom.

We are so quick to judge others because of their sin, we forget that we all fall too. James tells us how to confront people in their sins.

† **James 5:16, 19-20** <sup>16</sup> *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

<sup>19</sup> *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

Also in Romans, Paul speaks of judging others also.

† **Romans 14:13** *Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

We need to be there for one another, no longer judging. That’s God’s job to judge. We are to encourage others and not point out what they did wrong, they already know it, just as Lot knew. Let’s be like Abram, loving one another instead of condemning one another.