

(Genesis) Genesis 14

by Joe Focht

God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled through his faith and trust in God, despite the wickedness of the world around him.

Duration: 48:35

Scripture: Genesis 13:14-17, Genesis 15:5, Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 31:6, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:31

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Gods Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of being in a spiritual battle as Christians. He emphasizes the importance of standing up for what is right and fighting for our beliefs. The preacher also reflects on the Old Testament story of Abram and how God delivered him from the cruelty of Egypt. He highlights God's faithfulness and promises to Abram, including the inheritance of land for him and his descendants. The sermon concludes with the preacher acknowledging the challenges and darkness of the world today, but expressing trust in God's guidance and faithfulness for the future.

Transcript

Last week we ended, I believe, in verse 10 with Lot lifting up his eyes, beholding all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, Eden, like the land of Egypt, as one comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and they separated him and Abraham themselves, the one from the other. And Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." So again, we have this picture of Lot making choices without praying, choosing, and no doubt to the natural eye, a wise choice to look at the valley there before God judged it, before the Dead Sea was there, when it was a valley lush and beautiful. Even today, those of you who have been to Israel have seen the Jordan Valley. They produce more per acre in the Jordan Valley than anywhere else in the world.

It's lush, it's beautiful, you can grow there year-round, 1,500 foot below sea level. It just is a hothouse all year, and it's hard to imagine what it must have been like when the Dead Sea was not there, but the five cities would continue down there. It was lush, it was beautiful, no doubt there was irrigation.

Lot made that choice, and then he moved toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom. We will hear as we move on to the next chapter that he sold his tent and bought a house in Sodom. And then we finally find him sitting in the gate of Sodom, being part of the decision-making, the government there.

And we slowly watch his life disintegrate because of the decisions he made. Abraham, on the other hand, now being magnanimous, as you know, he said to Lot, you choose what you want, you make your choice. The lands before us, take what you want, because God had promised the whole land to Abram.

And Abram generously said, you choose what you want, and I will go the other way. Lot takes the most beautiful place. Abram, we're told, is camp between Bethel and Ai.

And if you remember when Jacob was there at Bethel, he could only find a rock to lay his head on. So Abram is camped there in a rocky, desolate place, relinquishing the best choice to his nephew, Lot, who has taken at least what, according to the natural, looks like the best choice. But before God's eyes, this place was wicked exceedingly, we find out.

Verse 14 says this, and we've been working our way to this verse since God appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees. The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, literally it's after God separated Lot from him, God's hand is involved in this, lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. So this is the point that God has been working Abraham towards.

Remember initially, he appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, we're told in Acts chapter 7, verse 2. And he told Abram, given this initial charge, get thee out of thy country from amongst thy kindred unto a place that I will show thee, to a land that I will tell thee of. So Abram had left his country, hadn't left his kindred, took them with, went to Iran, went to the wrong place, took a detour, God finally brings him into Canaan, there is a famine, he heads to Egypt, God has to bring him back now from Egypt, from his mistrust, great jeopardy to his family, has him back in the land, and now God finally separates Lot from him, and now those three, those prerequisites are there. Now finally Abram has left his country and his kindred, Lot is separated, and Abram now is alone with the Lord, and that's where God wanted him to be, so he could cause him to lift up his eyes and show him, that's what he said he would do, I'll show thee this land, now God will show it to him.

And it's very interesting to take note what takes place here, because it says after God had separated Lot from him, the Lord says to Abram, Lot lifted up his own eyes, Abram didn't lift up his eyes until the Lord says to him. Three times, by the way, it's very interesting, we'll find Abram lifting up his eyes. He lifts up his eyes here, he lifts up his eyes and finds the Lord coming with two angels when he is camped there, and the Lord tells him about Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction that will come, and we find Abram lift up his eyes and find the ram caught in a thicket when he is with Isaac on the mountain.

Here he lifts up his eyes at God's instruction, and the Lord says lift up thine eyes now, and again the Hebrew is please. It's very interesting, and I think most of our English translations, it almost seems irreverent to imagine God saying to a human being, please. And I think there's a sense to it, you know, again, God says to us all, now, if you have children, you've done that, you tell them not to jump around, don't do that, you'll bang your head, don't do that, you know, they always have the Christmas story on every year, don't get the BB gun, you'll shoot your eye out, you know, I mean, and then the kids don't listen, they do it, next thing you know they're crying, they got a lump on their head, and then you say to them now, you know, wear that lump for a while, you know, but I don't get the sense, you know, God is

saying to Abram now, but it's now in the sense of please, Abram, you know, I called you, you went to Ur of the Chaldees, you took a five-year at least detour, you took your family with you, the only thing you did was leave your country, I finally got you into the land, and there was a famine, and you left the land, you went to Egypt, your wife ended up in Pharaoh's harem, I had to rescue her, rescue you, get you out of the land, I got you in the land again from your backsliding, I got you to this place, I finally got locked, separated from you, Abram, please, lift up your eyes from where you are, and look northward, southward, eastern, and westward, and all the land that thou seest, will I give it to thee and thy seed forever now.

We know that the boundaries will go all the way from the river of Egypt, no doubt, not the wadi that some try to identify, but the one part of the Nile there by the delta, all the way to the Euphrates, and when Abram lifts up his eyes and looks, there's no doubt in my mind, he sees much more than geography, because he doesn't have a seed at this point in time, he has no heir, there is no child, God, I believe, is asking Abraham to look by faith, and I think he sees much more.

Now again, last Sunday morning, it just fell out a great place for an exhortation as we headed into the new year, you know, as Abram looks in these directions, I mean, he looks northward, that's where he looks first, and no doubt he sees, and if you've been in Israel, and you look up the Jordan Valley from the area of Bethel, it just is beautiful, and on a clear day you can see sometimes the southern part of the Sea of Galilee, on a very clear day you can see Mount Hermon, there's snow on it all year round, it is beautiful and lush and green, but no doubt as Abram looked north, he also saw his entrance into the land, because they would leave the area of Mesopotamia and make a big semicircle, and come in and enter that area of the world by what would ultimately be called the Via Mare, they would come the way of the kings, and come from the north to the south, entering the land, they would not cut straight across from the east, so as he looked north, he saw the pathway of his own long journey, no doubt he thought about the death of his father, Terah, he saw his own delay there in Haran, and I think for you and I, we can look in that direction, it may not be northward, but we can see the long journey, we can look and see how long the Lord has been leading us, and again, when I think back, I can even think to things that happened in my life long before I was saved, and after I became a Christian, I realized, Lord that was your hand, Lord you let this happen, Lord you did that, remember him sparing my life, running out between parked cars and hitting something that knocked me down as a car sped by, there was nothing there, no doubt it was an angel, I'll get to heaven and say, yeah, I was the one, you know, sorry to knock you back so hard, didn't mind, don't worry about it, but you look back and you think, Lord you were at work in my life long before I ever looked, and it's been such a long journey for all of us, and we can see God's faithfulness, and what Abraham saw all the way was God's faithfulness, God's keeping, God's grace, the whole trail was marked by the goodness and the faithfulness of God.

He looks southward, and as he looks southward, the Arba, which he would come to love, the area of Hebron and south, and the desert has no doubt its own beauty, and it's beautiful over there, I've been in the desert and the Arba, and to see the stars and so forth, but as Abraham looked that way, he saw something that bothered him more than that, and that was his recent backsliding, he saw the footprints of his mistrust coming to that place, and I can look south, or in some direction, I'm sure you can if you've been saved any time, and see your own, the times that you've gone AWOL, the times that you've walked away from the Lord, I think of my own backsliding early as a Christian, got saved in 72, by the end of 73 being backslidden and in trouble again, and how God graciously within a year or so broke me down and drew me back, and how wonderful and how faithful he is.

Of course now, I'm much more mature, I only backslide for maybe ten minutes at a time, you know, I still go AWOL, but they're just real short, little gaps, little blurps, and I'm right back again, you know, but I mean, you look that way, and what do you see? To me, you see God's faithfulness again, his goodness, his keeping, that, you know, the remarkable thing is he knew we were going to do some of the stubborn and rebellious things we've done in his presence, and he saved us anyway, and when we did them, we were shocked because we thought we were spiritually mature, and he was waiting there for us all the time. As Abram looked eastward, as he looked eastward, it's interesting, he's camped between Bethel and Ai, and it says Ai is on the east, Ai means heap of ruin, it's the Hebrew phrase, heap of ruin, and as he looks through that lens, what's in front of him is the valley of Sodom, he sees the beauty and the luxury there, those five cities and the prosperity, and yet he sees it past that framework of Ai, that's what lies between him and Sodom in his sight, and no doubt God ministered to his heart as he looked at that, it was beautiful, but what is a heap of ruin? It would come under the judgment of God. Lot didn't know that, but if he would have prayed, God knew, and it would have spared him much.

But as he looked eastward beyond that, the Ur of the Chaldees lie in the distance, and no doubt Abram looked at his origins, and I think for many of us, it may not be eastward, but you and I can look that way, I can look back to the days before I was a Christian growing up, my dad being Roman Catholic, my mom being Lutheran, kind of bouncing back and forth between both systems, never hearing the gospel, never being saved. I heard the information that Jesus was the Son of God, I was a little kid, and I sang He Will Make Us Fishers of Men, and I kind of knew the first verse to every Christmas carol, and you know, I had the information, He was the Son of God, and He was the Savior, but I didn't know Him, I only knew about Him. It was only religion, it was never relationship.

And it was phony to me. I could see through it, because to most of the people there, it was only religion and not relationship. And I think I can remember back before I was saved, maybe just a very few real believers that I met along the way that had an impact on my life before I was a Christian.

They weren't there. I remember I met a wonderful Presbyterian pastor who was a Golden Glove champ who taught me to box, and I thought, this is something, this guy told me he loved Jesus, he knew Jesus, and he knocks me down. I can hack this, you know, you can love Jesus and be a man, that's a good thing.

And of course I didn't know the Lord, but the guy made an impression on my life. He was genuine. But of course I went from there to drugs and to the street, and I look back to Ur, the Chaldees, to my idolatry, and I'll tell you this, I see the faithfulness of God.

If it wasn't for His hand, and it wasn't for His calling, and it wasn't for His touch, I'm sure I'd be dead. Because with crack cocaine and AIDS and what's out there now, it's lethal. It's fatal now.

Not like it was in the late 60s. As I look eastward, all I can see is God's faithfulness and His grace. That's all I can see.

As Abram looked westward, he saw new horizons. That was literally here in the text, it's seaward, it's towards the Mediterranean, it's the direction he hadn't traveled in. It was a place of new horizons.

But on the west of Abram, it tells us, was Bethel, which means house of God. And no doubt in Abram's day, it wasn't called Bethel, but Moses, as he writes, places that there for you and I. As Abram looked westward, there was Bethel, there was the house of God. And as you and I look westward to new horizons, that's what we see, the house of God.

Streets of gold, walls of jewels, an inheritance undefiled, fading not away. It's reserved for you and I. We see horizons that we could hardly have ever imagined before we were Christians. And the point is, God is saying to Abram, and I think to everyone here, please lift up your eyes from where you are and tell me in any direction you look in, if you can see anything but the faithfulness and the grace of God that has kept you and preserved you and turned you into His son or His daughter and has surrounded you and has cradled you.

And when you've fallen down, you've discovered underneath are the everlasting arms. You've discovered that He's your rear guard, He's your shield, and He's your buckler. Can you see anything from where you are today? I can't, but the faithfulness of God.

I see a world that's fading away, it's disintegrating. I see a generation around me that's lost and violent and hopeless and in darkness. I see a world that I don't want to raise my kids in.

I'm not sure what kind of future that they'll have in this world. And I want to do my best because I know this world has no future without my kids and yours. But I don't see anything worth staking claims.

Sodom has no appeal to me. And as I look around, I just say, Lord, You lead tomorrow. You put the next step in front of me, Lord.

You have been faithful all along. You're the Good Shepherd, my favorite name in the Old Testament, Jehovah Ra, the Lord is my shepherd. Lord, You lead me next week.

You lead me next month. I will bungle it if I take the steering wheel. Lord, just let me be like one of those kids in the front seat with a plastic steering wheel sitting next to his dad who has the real steering wheel.

Lord, just let me think I'm steering. Just, you know, eight little horn in the middle and I'll sit there happy as a lark. Lord, please, Lord, You have the steering wheel.

Because of Your goodness and Your faithfulness, I would be foolish to take any of it to myself. Lift up your eyes now, Abraham. Please not look at where you are.

We're so self-centered. That's what we want to do. Look from where you are.

I have brought you to a vantage point. And if your eyes will be open, you'll see that every trail you have walked is laced with my grace and love. Look from where you are.

For all the land that I'll see is to thee will I give it to thy seed forever. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. Abraham's over 75 with no kids.

It's pretty remarkable. So that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise and walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee.

Then, interesting response, Abraham removed his tent and he came and he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron. And he built there an altar unto the Lord. I love this.

Abraham goes to Mamre, which is in Hebron. He pitches his tent. He builds an altar.

First time we have the word Mamre in the Bible. The word means strength or vigor. Abraham goes to the plain of Mamre to find his strength.

It's in Hebron. First time we have the word. It means to put two together.

It means a company or it means communion or fellowship. Well, I think the beautiful symbolism here is Abram discovered in Mamre, which means strength, that his strength is in Hebron, in his fellowship with God. Abram discovered that in Mamre, that his strength and his vigor was in his very communion with God.

And it was in that place that he began to worship then. Lot chose Sodom, the best of this world. Abram chose God.

And Abram was wealthy. He could have built a stone mansion. It tells us back, I think, in verse 3 of chapter 13, that he was literally overloaded with gold and silver and cattle.

But he pitched a tent. And again, as we follow him, the tent and the altar define the man. The tent defines his relationship to this world and the altar defines his relationship to the next world.

Now, it says, it came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, which is Chaldee, Babylon, and Ariok, king of Elazar, and Chedoram, king of Elam, Persia, and Tidal, king of nations. Interesting. That's the word goyim must be just a conglomerate of tribes that these four is the idea made war.

Now, this is the first time we have the word war in the Bible. And whenever you have more than one king, you have war. Whenever you have kings, plural, you have war.

You know that your own life before you came to Jesus, you were the king of your life. Then you came to Jesus, who is the real king. And now you have war.

Because you did such a good job of being king of your own life. And now, of course, he wants to be king of your life. And we have that struggle between the flesh and the spirit.

But wherever there are kings, plural, in this world, in the Bible, there are wars. Now, the Bible doesn't describe any confrontation unless it's related to the purposes of God. In other words, we don't hear about Attila the Hun.

And we, you know, we, there are many wars, we don't hear about Napoleon in the Bible, or, you know, we hear about a battle or a scene or a war if it's related to the things of God. So we have these four kings who are headed by Chedoram, who is the king of Elam, which is Persia. He's a Shemite, and he's related to Abraham.

All four of those men are. The interesting thing is that he is the Napoleon of the day. He is the Alexander of the great of the day.

He is a mighty leader and evidently has subdued this whole part of the world. We're going to find out for 12 years, Sodom and Gomorrah and those cities paid tribute to him. He had evidently conquered all the way from Persia, well over a thousand miles.

And we're not sure if that was a radius, but he had an incredible kingdom, this man Chedoram. And he is coming now into the area of Sodom and Gomorrah because in the 13th year they rebelled and decided not

to pay tribute to him anymore. Now, Lot had no idea of this.

Of course, he had moved in now and bought a home in Sodom. He's a homeowner. These four kings that we just read about, they made war with Bera, king of Sodom.

Now, Bera means son of evil that will come to play. Bera, king of Sodom, and with Bersha, king of Gomorrah, with Shainab, king of Adna. Now, if I say these wrong, you'll never know.

With Shemeber, king of Zeboam, and the king of Bila, which is Zoar. These were joined together in the vale of Sodom, which is, as Moses is writing much later, the Salt Sea. He tells us they were gathered together in this valley, he says, which is today the Dead Sea.

In that day, it was a fertile plain with cities. Twelve years they had served Chedolamor. And in the 13th year, they had rebelled.

They had been paying tribute. And in the 14th year came Chedolamor and the kings that were with him. And this is an interesting sequence now.

And they smote the Rephaim in Ashtaroth, Karnaim, and the Zuzims, which the Amorites, in case you're interested, called the Zamzumans. They smote the Zuzims in Ham and the Emims in Sheva, Kiriath, Em. Now, here's the interesting thing.

The Rephaim mean, the word Rephaim means the strong ones. The word Zamzuman means the powerful ones. And Emims means the terrible ones.

Now, I'm going to turn to Deuteronomy quickly in chapter two and read several things to you just so you'll see what we're talking about here. Deuteronomy 2.10 says this, The Emims dwelt there in time past, a people great and many and tall as the Anakim, which also were accounted as giants as the Anakim. The Moabites called them Emims.

20 says, let's see, that also, I'll back up a verse. When Thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them, for I will not give thee the land of the children of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. That also was accounted a land of giants.

Giants dwelt there in old time, and the Ammonites called them Zamzumans. They must have seen one and said, Zamzuman. Look at that guy.

And the people great and many and tall as the Anakim. And the Lord destroyed them before them. So, we are coming to an interesting sequence now where God will use Chedulemor and these other three kings to rout three races of giants, the Rephiam, the Zamzuman, and the Emims, which would be a problem to Abraham.

So, in all the other insanity, the sovereignty of God is at work and putting that off. Now, there will be encounters with giants later, and we'll read about that. Agavishan, there are 60 cities of the giants that will be up in Moab.

And again, if you have Jameson, Fawcett, and Brown, when you get to Deuteronomy 2, they give the archaeological records from the British Museum in London of archaeologists that discovered houses up there with 18-foot interior ceilings, 6-foot hinges on the doors. Basalt houses were where the giants were.

Now, they come, Chedulemor and his buddies, and they smote the Rephiam.

You stab them in the knee, they bend down, you stab them in the eye. They smote the Rephiam in Ashtoreth, Akarnaim, the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Sheva-Kiriathim. And the Horites, now they're just regular old folks, in Mount Seir, in El-Paran, which is by the wilderness, and they returned and came to En-Mishvat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites and also the Amorites, some of the dominant tribes in the central plains, the highlands of Canaan, but they don't mess with Abram here, that dwelt in Hazian-Tamor.

And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Adma, and the king of Zeboam, and the king of Bila, the same as Zohar, and they joined battle with these other kings in the Vale of Siddam, with Chedolamor, the king of Elam, and with Tidal, king of nations, with Amraphel, king of Shinar, and with Ariad, king of Eleazar, four kings with five. So the five kings from the city of the plain joined battle with the four kings, headed by Chedolamor from Persia. And the Vale of Siddam was filled with slime pits, literally tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and they that remained fled into the mountains.

So they joined the battle, I don't know if deliberately the kings from the valley led them there, hoping their chariots might get caught in the slime pits, I don't know. But anyhow, they were defeated there. Now, it's interesting to take note of the fact that this valley was covered with tar pits.

Even today in the southern end of the Dead Sea, sometimes tar and asphalt will float to the top. The water is so dense that it actually is more buoyant than the water. Josephus, when he speaks of the Dead Sea, calls it the Asphalt Sea.

And it may explain when God rained down fire from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole substructure of the area was that of tar and petroleum and pitch. So no doubt the black smoke, it says, went up from that area as a furnace, and it must have been tremendous what happened. All that is left of the entire area now is the Dead Sea, which is rich in potash and nitrates and everything that's left after you burn something.

So it tells us clearly here, it was filled with tar pits, the valley. And they took all the goods, Chedolamor and his buds, of Sodom and Gomorrah, all their vittles, you watch the Beverly Hillbillies, you know what that is. And they went their way.

They took all their goods and all their food. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, notice now, who dwelt in Sodom, no longer has his tent pitched towards Sodom, he sold his tent and bought a duplex in Sodom. They took him and his goods and all the stuff that he thought was worth choosing.

You know, the Bible says, lay up treasure in heaven where thieves can't break in and steal. Lot had laid up treasure on earth and Abraham now is seeing the entire area judged, as it says in Psalms, that the righteous will behold the judgment of the wicked. And certainly that's happening.

Took Lot, they took his goods, they departed. Now, there came one that had escaped from the battle and told Abram, the Hebrew, it's the first time we have the word Hebrew in the Bible. Some feel it's from the name Eber, which is the tribe is from, one of Shem's sons.

Haburai is a phrase we find in the Senea forms and so forth, which we believe Hebrew is derived from. And it simply meant those who crossed over, those who were nomadic. Abraham's living in tent, he's

keeping flocks, he would be termed as the Haburai.

We read it in Egyptian writings too, they despised shepherds and called them the Haburai. So Abram here is called the Hebrew. Evidently, the Amorites and those there have taken note of this man, no walls, no cities, no stone houses.

He is a man who lives in tents like the Bedouins today and he keeps flocks. So he is called the Hebrew. One comes to him, for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre there, the Amorite brother.

Mamre was the Amorite brother of Eshkol, the brother of Anar, and these were confederate with Abram. So some of the Amorites that lived near him took note of God's blessing on his life and become ally with Abram. Now that's not surprising because we'll see Rahab turn to the Lord and we'll see Aruth, a Moabitess turn to the Lord, become part of the lineage of Jesus Christ himself.

So evidently those Amorites that dwelt close to Abram, Abram was civil with them. He was a righteous man. They must have seen God's blessing on his life.

There was no TVs then, there was no MTV, there was nothing to do. They would sit down and talk with Abram and say, what do we see? What's different about you? What's different about your life? No doubt they had come to believe. They now are aligning themselves as Abram's neighbors and friends and allies.

So they are there with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants. Now notice this.

These were those that were born in his house, 318, and pursued them to Dan. So these are not servants that he acquired in Egypt or that he purchased. These are actually men that were born and raised in Abram's house.

Now you have to understand in that day, it was much different. And when we come to the law in Exodus 21, we see an interesting picture there. If you are brought into servanthood in another man's house, the law would say you have to serve for seven years and at that point your debt is considered paid off and you can leave.

But it says if you find favor in your master's eyes and you love to be there and you want to serve him, that the master then will take you to the door of his house and he'll put an awl to your ear and put your ear against the door and he'll punch a hole through your ear and put a ring in it that signifies that you're committed to stay the rest of your life with your master because he's righteous and you know it's better to be a servant in your master's house than to be anywhere else. And of course Christ says that in Psalm 40. Sacrifice nothing thou hast not desired, a body thou hast prepared for me Lord, open thou my ear.

Christ is taking the place of becoming the servant in his father's house to do whatever his father's will is. Well a servant in the house, we're going to find out Abraham's servant, his main servant is named Eleazar, which means comforter or one who helps. And Abram, until Isaac is born, has no seed and he actually says to God, God I'll make Eleazar my heir.

I mean there was not a cruelty the way we would think of slavery. Those that were born in his house and grew up there were considered part of that family or that clan. And if you did not have a son, whatever your closest servant was that grew up in your home with you, he became your son and he was given the inheritance.

Abram has 318 men born and raised in his own house that love him, that are close with him and he takes them now to go into battle to pursue Chedulemor. Now it's a miraculous battle because Chedulemor has an incredible army. These are only 318 armed servants and a few neighbors, much like Gideon with 300 men will put the Midianites to flight.

Abram, no doubt, makes this attack at night. They have no idea how many men are with him, whether there are thousands. And God, the Old Testament says, disconfitted them, which means they got freaked out and started to run.

And Abram is granted a great victory against all odds. So he goes now to make war. Now Abram's, you know, the men in Sodom, they couldn't fight anybody.

I mean, they were men anyway. And one of them comes to Abram and says, I hate to be the bare bed news. You know, big trouble down in Sodom.

And Abram now with 318 men, Abram is not a timid soul. Abram is a man. And I believe he goes to war not just to get Lot.

Many of the commentators say that he's going to get Lot. I think he goes by divine right. God had given him that land, had told him to walk through it, to look at it.

It belongs to you and to your seed forever. Chetulemor had infringed upon the inheritance of Abraham. And I think it was not just to get Lot back.

It was by divine right that Abram went, of course, with God's leading and made war and against all odds was successful. It says here, he divided himself against them. Verse 15, he and his servants by night smote them and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

Now, usually when the Bible gives directions, you're always facing east. So Hobah is on the left hand of Damascus facing east. That is a city we're not sure of today, but is north of Damascus.

So he pursued them all the way north of Damascus. That is a long journey. And he brought back all the goods and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods and the women also and the people.

Now, by the way, here is the Sodomites and those of Gomorrah being saved and preserved by Abram. God will judge them ultimately. But look at the grace of God here being extended to them.

You know, there is a wonderful testimony of God's faithfulness and God's strength. They could have turned. And when we get to the next chapter, we'll see God say to Abram, your descendants are going to get down to Egypt for 400 years because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

God says, I'm going to give them 400 years, 400 years of grace, 400 years. By the time 400 years is up, they will be so perverted and so gone that none of them will save. They will not be a benefit to the human race.

Then I will use Israel to chasten them, to judge them and give Israel the land. Here at this point in the scene, you have to realize what a wonderful testimony is given to Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram, now with 318 men, delivers them.

And the king of Sodom, evidently who had run into the hills instead of dying with his men, went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedoram and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Sheba, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most High God, El Elyon.

And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God which has delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes. Abram gave him a tenth of all.

And the king of Sodom said to Abram, now this is the king of Sodom again, Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself. Interesting, if you have a more modern translation or maybe a note, you'll see it's give me the souls and take the goods, the king of Sodom says. So he has this interesting encounter now.

He encounters the king of Sodom and the king of Salem. Again, Melchizedek is a guy that we're all intrigued with. As Christians, of course, we read about him in the book of Hebrews.

The Jews today don't read the book of Hebrews. There are rabbis today, many ancient rabbis believe that Melchizedek was Shem, Noah's son. If our chronologies are correct, Shem outlives Abram, but I think by about 35 years.

We know it's not Shem, though, because the book of Hebrews tells us this man Melchizedek has no lineage. We don't know anything about his parents and his lineage after him. So we know that it isn't Shem because we have records of Shem's lineage.

There are those who say that Melchizedek is Christ himself. Well, and that is a possible position. I don't believe that because it says he is made like unto the son of God.

It doesn't say he's the son of God. He is made like unto the son of God, we read in Hebrews 7, and that he has a priesthood, Melchizedek. And 900 years later, he pops up again in Psalm 10.

Then he pops up again in Hebrews 5, 6 and 7. That his priesthood is a foreshadowing of the very priesthood of Christ himself because it is without beginning and end. Now, and different from the Levitical priesthood. It seems that he's the prince of Salem, Jerusalem.

No doubt he was the king, the priest king of Jerusalem. And he's called the king of righteousness and the king of peace in the New Testament when we read about him. When Joshua takes the land much later, hundreds and hundreds of years later, and he comes to take Jerusalem and Jerusalem's name for the first time in Joshua chapter 10.

It says in verse 1 that Adonai Zedek is there, who is a priest king in that day. Here is there's Melchizedek, priest king. In that day there's Adonai Zedek, same ending, priest king.

Melchizedek is king, Zedek righteousness. Adonai is lord, Zedek righteousness. This is the king of righteousness, this priest king is called.

In Joshua's day, the man who was there is no doubt corrupt by then, but his name is the lord of righteousness. So there is undoubtedly in Melchizedek a type of Jesus. We see Jesus foreshadowed, as it were, in Melchizedek, but he's not Christ himself.

And particularly he comes forth giving Abram bread and wine, of course, a type of the communion. Now, here's the interesting thing. We see this battle, and again, we're all in a battle, aren't we? If you know what I'm talking about at all, would you please give me an indication? Okay, very good.

We're all in a battle. And again, I think we have to realize as Christians, we all have things that are worth fighting for, standing up for. You know, I appreciate, you know, as I study through the Old Testament, I see the types.

I appreciate my inheritance, again, because I remember Egypt. I remember the brick kilns in my life. I remember being under the cruel whip of the taskmaster.

I remember when Satan had control of my life. I remember when I had to be high to sense any kind of happiness. And I know what it's like to wake up now and not to need any of that and to be alive and to look at my wife and my children and look at you guys and know that I'm alive and appreciate each day and look for God's leading, to be set free.

I appreciate my inheritance. And I'm willing to fight giants for it. I'm willing to stand up for it.

I worry about the generation after us that we hand the inheritance to, that in some ways don't have that contrast, you know, to appreciate their freedom, as it were. But I know there are things that are worth fighting for. And the New Testament tells us we're in a struggle.

Again, Ephesians 6 tells us that we have the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Again, Paul's saying that any man who wants to go to battle does not, if he wants to be a good soldier, he doesn't entangle himself with the things of this world. Again, at the end of Paul's own life, he could say he had fought the good fight, kept the faith.

So there is a good fight to fight. There are things that are worth fighting for. Your children, the world's going to be aggressive, not passive.

The world is going to try to influence their morals and their standards. They are worth fighting for and going to battle for. That little baby you dedicated tonight is worth fighting for.

That life is worth fighting for. Your marriage and your home and brothers and sisters in Christ that you love, worth standing up for and telling the truth. And unbelievers that God has surrounded you.

We are in a struggle and this is what we will find in our struggle. Two kings and they are set in contrast. If Melchizedek is a type of Christ, then we know for sure that Bera is the anti-type.

His name means son of evil. Melchizedek means king of righteousness. One king is from above.

Melchizedek comes from Jerusalem. The other king is from below. He is the king of Sodom.

He comes from down in the valley. One king comes and offers bread and wine. And by the way, it seems to the whole army.

It doesn't seem like it was just to Abraham. And what he does is he strengthens Abraham for the battle. He refreshes him.

The other king comes and says, Look, give me the souls. You take the goods. It's the other king from below that comes and says, Aren't you tired? Yeah, I'm tired.

Aren't you tired of arguing with your relatives? Yeah, I'm tired of arguing with my relatives. And you're going to go to work tomorrow morning. Your boss is going to be a pain in the neck.

He's always a pain in the neck. And you're going to try to read your Bible at lunch time. And they're going to hassle you.

They always hassle me when I read my Bible. And you've been arguing with them for five years. I've been arguing with them for five years.

And they just make fun of you. They just make fun of me. And they're not even worth it.

They're not even worth it. You should just let them go to hell. I'm just going to let them go to hell.

And there's that king saying, Give me the souls. You've been trying and trying and trying and trying. Why should you try any longer? Why shouldn't you go to the bar? Why shouldn't you cheat Uncle Sam on your taxes so you can buy a nicer home? Why shouldn't you lie on your application? Why shouldn't you just look at the wicked? They prosper.

Everything's going all right for them. And you know that king comes and says, You take the stuff. Give me the souls.

You take the stuff. And again, to me, you have to realize, maybe you're in a difficult situation, but you're a plant. You've been put there.

Again, you're by the CIA, the Christian Intelligence Agency. You've been put there. And some of the people you work with and you're surrounded with, the last word that they'll hear about eternal life will be from you.

You stand between them and eternity in hell. And I know sometimes we look around and say, I don't want to work here. You know, you're there.

You know, the New Testament believers are compared to seed that was scattered across the Roman Empire. And God has you in the place that you're in. And what are we struggling for in our lives? For stuff or for souls? What matters? Souls or stuff? And I got stuff.

Stuff is not bad. God wants us to have stuff. It's time consuming, depending on how much stuff you have.

And you have to have a place for your stuff. Police to guard your stuff. And a burglar alarm so your stuff is safe.

You have to paint your stuff. There's a lot of upkeep with stuff. As long as our lives are not given to it.

I mean, we have stuff for a reason. So we can bless others. So we can live healthy and strong lives.

So we can serve Jesus Christ. Because we should be saying to Satan, no, you keep the stuff. Give us the souls.

We want the souls. And that's why we're here. Because that's the heart of Christ.

He left glory. Left this place, it tells the Philippians 2. Left behind all the riches of heaven to come and lay down His life that you and I might be saved. And God so loved the world that He gave His Son.

That same Christ lives in our hearts now. And He doesn't want stuff. He wants souls.

And He wants to live through us to a lost world. Now, the problem with that is we discover, you know, Satan comes and says, you shouldn't preach the gospel. Weren't you cursing in traffic the other day? Just kind of.

Wasn't it you that was mad? Didn't you yell at your wife? And you're not really a sold-out Christian. I'm trying to be sold out. And he comes and condemns us.

And he goes, you shouldn't preach the gospel. Why should you tell anybody? Why should you try to share Christ with anybody? You're an hypocrite. Well, the wonderful thing is, see, when Bara, king of Sodom, comes, Melchizedek steps right into the picture.

He didn't come when Abraham was at battle with Chedulemor because there was no fear for Abraham's well-being there. It was when he confronted the king of Sodom, the son of evil, the king from below. Immediately, Melchizedek steps into the picture and he offers bread and wine because when we get condemned and when we get stagnant and we're not going to do anything anymore or when we're trying to come back from backsliding or rebellion, you know, it is wonderful that God is faithful to step into the picture and to remind us of His broken body and of His shed blood and of His grace and of His love and to refresh us in battle and to lead us onward and to call us to His service anew and to move us onward.

And we'd be foolish to serve any other king. The king of righteousness. The king of peace.

Abraham encounters these strange characters. Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord. I've sworn, made an oath, a covenant with God, the Most High God.

Abraham says, My God is a possessor of heaven and earth. You can't give me anything that doesn't belong to Him. That I will not take a thread or a shoelatch from you and that I will not take anything that is yours.

He's talking to the king of Sodom. Lest you should say that I've made Abraham rich. God promised to bless Abraham, bless all that he had, to bless the nations because of the curse, those that curse him, to bless them, to bless them.

He didn't need anything from the king of Sodom. Now he says to him, the man, of course, not the type, the man. He says, The only thing I want is what my young men have eaten.

And the portion of the men which are with me, Anar, Enesh, Gol, and Mamre, let them take whatever they want. They're not part of my family. Let them have what they want.

So Abraham, in this incredible confrontation, flush with battle, victorious, and sometimes, right, it's at that point when the enemy comes, you know. We'll find with David, it says it was the time of the years when the kings went forth to battle. And David, he remained back in Jerusalem instead of going to war.

And he walked out on his rooftop and he looked down and he saw Bathsheba there bathing and was taken down. And he had everything subdued when he was at that point, Abraham now successful in battle. And that's the moment when the king of Sodom steps in.

That's the moment when Melchizedek steps right in front of the king of Sodom. I like this scene. Let's stand and pray together.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11890.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/joe-focht/genesis-genesis-14/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net