

A Word from Kathy

At first glance, this chapter seems like an endless list of names of men we know little about from areas of the world with which we are only vaguely familiar at best. I challenge you to hang in there and ask God to speak to your heart. The problems that face the characters here are the same types of problems we face daily.

Observation

1. Read Gen. 14 twice. The turmoil of Gen. 14:1-10 would have been of little importance to us today had Lot not been taken captive. What was the war about? Gen. 14:4
2. Being under a ruler at this time meant the people would have to pay tribute to the king who controlled their area. How many years had these people been under Chedorlaomer, King of Elam? Gen. 14:4
(some translations say Kedorlaomer, King of Elam)
3. What had the people under this king decided to do? Gen. 14:4
4. Even the elements seemed to be working against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and the kings that had joined them. What happened to them? Gen.14:8-10
5. What did Chedorlaomer and his allies do when the rebels fled? What mistake did they make, at this point, that would end up costing them the victory? Gen. 14: 12
6. In what way could knowledge of the Proverbs help us avoid a situation like this in our own life? Gen14:11-12

Prov. 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom

Prov. 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor

Prov. 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Prov. 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor

Prov. 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

7. In Genesis 14:11-14, Lot is taken captive. Then one who had escaped managed to make it to Abram and tell him what had happened to his nephew. What did Abram do when he heard this news?
8. Look at a map and locate Sodom, where Lot lived, and Hebron, where Abram lived. To what length does the scripture say Abram went to rescue Lot? Gen. 14:14-16
9. When Abram returns, dignitaries come out to meet him. One who is very important is Melchizedek, King of Salem. (Salem will later be known as Jerusalem)
For those of you who like to dig deeper, look up the meaning of this king's name. What did Melchizedek bring with him to bless Abram? Isn't it interesting when you put together the meaning of his name with what he brought?
10. There is a scarlet thread that runs throughout the Bible. Not that he is Jesus, but this priest and king, Melchizedek, is a foreshadowing of the Savior, a symbol of Christ, a picture of the coming Messiah. The author of Hebrews gives us even more insight into this king, Melchizedek. He is a priest and king before the priesthood was established in Israel. He has no recorded genealogy or date of birth. But, as we see, he was greater than Abram because Abram gave him a tithe. Some have suggested that it was a preincarnate or temporary appearance of the eternal Son of God. What do you see in the verses from Heb. 7 below that would prove he was an ordinary man, not the Son of God?

*Hebrews 7:1-4 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, **2** and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace."**3** Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. **4** Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!*

The word "like" in Heb. 7:3 is *aphomoioo*, which translated is "made like" or "resembles".

11. In Gen. 14:18, Melchizedek is referred to as priest of God Most High. That is the name El Elyon, showing he has supremacy over all. This priest and king comes out to thank Abram, and he blesses him and gives God the glory. Abram then gives a tithe back to God. What is Abram acknowledging by this act of tithing?

12. Abram will not be caught off guard by the flattery of the king of Sodom and his gift. What does Abram say to the king of Sodom when he offers to give him all the goods that had been brought back? Who does Abram trust for his blessings?

Interpretation

13. Land disputes, power struggles, and the ego of men have obviously been around a long, long time. Do we hear about any of this in the news today? Do we see it in our families? As a child of God, what are our actions to show? Do you recall how Abram handled a similar dispute in Gen. 13? Who did you have your last power struggle with? Were egos involved? Have you seen a better way to handle these disputes?
14. In Gen. 14: 11-14, Lot is taken captive. A man escapes and finds Abram and tells him all that had happened to Lot. Abram responds by gathering his fighting men and going after the armies who had taken his nephew. Would this be your response to a nephew you had brought up in your home, fed at your table, and shared your wealth with, only to have been treated as selfishly as Lot had Abram? What might your response have been? It is no wonder his name is listed in Hebrews 11 among the roll call of the faithful.
15. Abram went with his men from Hebron past Damascus in order to rescue his nephew. How far are you willing to go for a lost family member? It is easy to help those who have given of themselves for us, but is that really what is required of us? What did Jesus say we were to do?
*Luke 6:27-36 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. **29** If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. **30** Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. **31** Do to others as you would have them do to you. **32** "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. **33** And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

16. Did anyone else benefit from Abram's deliverance? Gen. 14:16
17. Make a list comparing the actions and the focus of these two kings.
Melchizedek king of Salem - the king of Sodom
18. What type of a king was the king of Sodom? What was his true character? Abram did not want to have any part of a blessing from this king. Who was the only source of blessing that Abram was interested in?

Application

19. As you studied Genesis 14, did you notice we have the same troubles going on today?
The trials we face with other people, financial difficulty, work related problems, family crisis and disagreements with our neighbors all test our patience, try our endurance, and fray our emotions. But, as difficult as these battles are, there are always more sinister and secret battles going on behind the scenes, beneath the surface. It is imperative that Christians stay alert and fully armed for Satan's fiery darts. He often uses these outward, physical battles as a diversion tactic so that when the real battle comes, we are unaware and unprepared. In such battles, there is always a "lot" at stake. Are you armed for all the battles that may come your way today? Ephesians 6:10-18
20. Are there any areas of your life where you have pitched your tent close to sin? The King James Version says "*Lot...pitched his tent toward Sodom*". He was as close as he could get without actually becoming a citizen of the city.
21. Lot's captivity should have served as a warning but, as we will soon see, Lot had learned little if anything from this trial. Are you experiencing God's loving discipline?

Prov. 3:11-12

My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

22. As you read the story of Lot's captivity, did you think of it as a loving lesson?
When you go through a similar trial, do you see it as your loving heavenly Father directing you back to Him? Revealing Himself to you?

23. What have you learned from this chapter that will change how you walk, talk, and deal with others?