

## Genesis Chapter 14 - Commentary By Mike Wells

### Chapter 14 Overview:

Chapter 14 can be divided into 5 basic sections (1) the battle of the kings with Abram along with Lot being taken prisoner in verses 1-12. (2) Abram rescues (3) Lot in verses 13-16. (4) Melchizedek blesses Abram in verses 17-20. (5) And, Abram restores the spoil in verses 21-24.

### Genesis 14 : 1-12

*1 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; 2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. 3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. 7 And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar. 8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; 9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. 10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. 11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. 12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

- Lot had now moved into Sodom
- The cities located on the south shore of the Dead Sea including: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar, had been taken over by a group of kings to the east headed by Chedorlaomer.
- Most theologians believe that these cities were obligated to pay taxes to Chedorlaomer.
- After twelve years of being controlled by these kings and kingdoms, the Canaanite cities at the southern end of the Dead Sea rebelled.
- So it was the rebellious states of Sodom and its allies versus now a coalition of kings that supported Chedorlaomer
- The phrase “*vale of Siddim*” means ‘the valley of the Dead Sea.’
- The kings of the five cities on the south shore of the Dead Sea went out to battle with the overlords against whom they had rebelled.

- And they got their clocks cleaned.
- It is noted that the “*vale of Siddim was full of slimepits.*”
- The five city states of the area (Sodom and Allies) hoped to draw their enemies into battle and since they would ignorant of the slimepits, they hoped they would become stuck.
- The reference to slimepits is of tar, asphalt, and crude oil pits on the surface of the ground.
- The tactic did not work.
- The invading forces of Chedorlaomer completely defeated the forces of Sodom and its allies.
- They whooped them.
- “And *they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*”
- Lot’s aspirations had backfired.
- What had seemed to be gold surely now did not glitter.

**Genesis 14 : 13 - *And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.***

- One of the fighters escaped and told Abram what had happened.
- The first use of the word **Hebrew** (yrbe) in the Bible is made.
- The word essentially means ‘one who is from beyond.’
- The implication is that Abram was a stranger and a foreigner in the midst of the Canaanites.
- Abram along with others of faith “confessed that they were strangers on the earth.”
- Indeed, this world is not our home - We’re just a passing through.
- Though God had promised the land to Abraham, he still was a stranger or foreigner in it.
- The Canaanites there viewed him as such
- The reference to several Canaanites being “*confederate with Abram*” literally means they were ‘**men**’ with Abram.
- He was surrounded by Canaanite peoples and some perhaps joined with him.

**Genesis 14 : 14 - *And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. Abram therefore gathered his household servants which by now numbered 318 and pursued the marauding kings to Dan.***

- Abram showed great courage.
- In all likelihood, Abram was outnumbered.

- It is apparent that God had continued to bless Abram.
- He now had 318 servants suitable to go to war.
- This means he was very prosperous to have 318 servants.
- Their pursuit took them to Dan which is the northernmost extremity of Canaan.

**Genesis 14 : 15 - *And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.***

- Realizing he likely did not have the overwhelming strength to confront his enemy head on, Abram divided his forces and attacked by night.
- He apparently came at them from several sides and in the darkness
- This deceived them into thinking a far greater force was attacking them.
- Abram “*smote them and pursued them unto Hobah, which of on the left hand of Damascus.*” Smote means he struck them hard – He whooped them
- They fled.

**Genesis 14 : 16 - *And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.***

- He recovered the goods from cities of the south that were looted.
- More importantly recaptured Lot along with others who had been taken captive.

**Genesis 14 : 17 - *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale.***

- Abram brought back all that he had recovered.
- The king of Sodom upon hearing of what happened met him at the “*valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale.*”

**Genesis 14 : 18 - *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.***

- Meanwhile, another king appeared on the scene, “Melchizedek king of Salem.”
- Salem is generally thought to be what later was called Jerusalem.
- In Hebrew, it means ‘**peace.**’
- The name Melchizedek is made up of several simpler words and literally means ‘ **my king is righteous,**’ or as Hebrews 7:2 comments, “*King of righteousness.*”
- He is described as “*the priest of the most high God.*”

- So here was one that appeared described as (1) as king of peace, (2) king of righteousness, and (3) priest of the most high God.
- **Hebrews 7:3** notes that he was “*without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*”
- Clearly, Melchizedek was not a mere mortal.
- The spiritual characteristics of his title strongly hint that he in fact was none other than a pre- incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (a **Christophany**).

**Genesis 14 : 19** - *And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.*

- Melchizedek blessed Abram and received tithes of him.
- He noted that Abram was of the “**most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.**”
- The word translated as **possessor (hnq qanah)** has the sense of ‘owner.’
- Indeed, God is the owner of heaven and earth.

**Genesis 14 : 20** - *And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

- The first reference to tithing is thus noted in the Bible.
- It is implied is that it was already thought appropriate by Abram to give a tenth of his increase to God.
- It should be also noted that this first mention of tithing is hundreds of years before the law of Moses included it.
- It was therefore long established before the law.

**Genesis 14 : 21** - *And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.*

- The king of Sodom, delighted to have his captured people returned, offered to Abram the goods he had recovered.

**Genesis 14 : 22** - *And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.*

- Notice also that Abram lifted up his hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.
- God is noted again as the owner of the heaven and earth.

- Abram intended to look to the Lord who owned the heaven and earth to supply his needs and not the pagan king of Sodom.

**Genesis 14 : 23-24 - 23 *That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.***

- Abram swore he would not receive even a thread or a shoe string from the king of Sodom.
- He didn't want any possibility of being accused of having been made rich by this earthly king.
- He wanted everyone to understand clearly that His blessings come from God almighty.
- He only asked that the men who had assisted him be given portion of the goods recovered.