**Melchizedek Blesses Abram**

Genesis 14:1-24 (Key Verse 19-20)

*"* *And he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High who delivered your enemies into your hand.' Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."*

In today’s passage we are going to witness how Abram responded with great courage to rescue his nephew Lot, when war broke out in Canaan. Up to now we have known Abram to be a calm old man, a peacemaker who lived by faith and not one to engage or lead a military campaign. However, in today’s passage we see him defeating great kingdoms in Canaan, this defeat placed Abram in a great position to be a world leader. This defeat earned Abram great respect from other kings. We are further going to learn how Abram responded to the temptation to be a world leader after his victory over the kings of Canaan. From the key verse we are told that after Abram’s victory, Melchizedek came and blessed Abram. We are therefore also going to learn what this blessing meant, and how it shaped Abram’s direction when he was faced with a temptation to be a world leader. I pray that God may have mercy on us all, to humble our hearts to receive one word of God and be changed by it.

The passage today begins at time when there was political unrest in the land of Canaan. In **verse 1-2** it says: “*At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goyim,****2****these kings went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).* Kedorlaomer king of Elam allied with 3 other kings who were actually his subjects and went to war with the 5 kings of who lived in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, including the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. When Kedorlaomer went to war with the 5 kings, they surrendered to him and they became his subjects for twelve years.

But in the 13th year the 5 kings in the vicinity of the Dead Sea rebelled against Kedorlaomer king of Elam. And in the 14th year in response to this rebel, Kedorlaomer responded with a great military campaign and went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. They turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazezon Tamar. When the 5 kings in the vicinity of the dead sea learnt of this, they marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim against Kedorlaomer and his three allied kings. What was the result of the war between the 4 kings and the 5 kings? In **verse 10-11** it says: “***10****Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills.****11****The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away.”* Kedorlaomer and his allies subdued the 5 kings who rebelled against him, when the 5 kings and their men tried to flee, some of the men fell into pits for the Valley of Siddim was full of pits. And the rest of the men fled to the hills. When the 5 kings and their men fled, Kedorlaomer and his allies seized the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went away.

When Kedorlaomer seized the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, he also carried off Abram’s nephew Lot and his possession for when they separated with Abram he went to live in Sodom. And word came out which reached Abram that his nephew Lot was captured. How did Abram respond when he learnt about his nephew Lot who was captured? Did he just leave him and say he got what he deserved for choosing to live among people who sinned and rebelled against God in Sodom? Was Abram afraid for his life and remained in hiding to protect himself from being captured too? Let us look at **verse 13-14**: “***13****A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2014&version=NIV#fen-NIV-350b)*] of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram.****14****When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.”*

Abram had no reason to rescue Lot, who when he had a chance, he grabbed the opportunity to leave a life of faith and ran off to live in Sodom knowing very well how the people there were wicked and sinning against God. Lot ran away from a life of faith to live worldly life, a materialistic life. But Abram never abandoned him, he had a great shepherd heart for Lot. His shepherd heart was like God's heart of love for rebellious and sinful people. No matter how many times we rebel against God, God keeps on loving; Abram also kept on loving Lot. As Shepherds of God’s flock, we too need not give up on our sheep who are rebellious, like Abram we must keep loving them and praying for them.

Even though the prodigal Son sinned greatly against heaven and against his father, and squandered his wealth in wild living. When he returned to his father it says in **Luke 11:20b**: “*But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”*

Out of the same love of God, Abram risked his whole being, he risked his safety and protection. The news about Lot’s capture triggered something in Abram that was never seen before, a great courage. Up to so far we have known Abram to be a peaceful and gentle old man who stayed out of trouble, and today we see him filled with courage. All for Lot who was captured by Kedorlaomer and his allies. Abram mobilized 318 of his servants which he had trained to make a strong defensive force, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

What was the result of this pursuit? Let us look at **verse 15-16**: “***15****During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.****16****He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.”* Abram together with his allies and his servants’ soldiers caught up with Kedorlaomer and his allies at Dan, and like wise general Abram deviced a strategy whereby he divided his men to attack them and routed them and pursuing them as far as Hobath, north of Damascus in the night. Through this strategy Abram could recover all the goods and brought back his nephew Lot and his possessions, together with other women and other people. Abram who was known to be an old man, who allowed his Nephew to take his wealth and best lands, has now become the most powerful man in Canaan, he has become the most famous man in Canaan, he defeated Kedorlaomer who has kept the kings in the region on their feet for 14 years. At this point Abram can have all he wants; in fact, he could possess the land of Canaan and rule all the people as king.

When Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and recovery of Lot, the women and other people of the land, two kings came to meet him. First it was the king of Sodom and then Melchizedek king of Salem. The visit of the kings represented two choices that Abram had after his victory. Abram had a meeting first with Melchizedek king of Salem. In **Hebrew 7:1-10** we learn that the name Melchizedek means King of righteousness, while Salem meant peace. So Melchizedek was a king of righteousness and peace. We are also told that he was the priest of God most high. So based on this we can already see what Melchizedek represented, he represented the calling of God. What did he do and say to Abram when he came? First he came with bread and wine, he brought this because he cared about Abram who was physically and emotionally exhausted from the battle, so to strengthen him physically he brought him bread and wine to eat.

Furthermore, in in the key **verse 19-20** it says: “***19****and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.* ***20****And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.”* To further strengthen Abram, Melchizedek, priest of the most high came with the word of God and God’s blessings to Abram. The word of God and blessing came in two parts, first Melchizedek said to Abram: “*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.*” What does this mean? This blessing reminded Abram that God is the creator of the heavens and earth, and everything in it. It reminded him that everything that he has and accomplished came from God. These words challenged Abram to depend on God for everything; to follow God’s leading and guidance and not his own will and wisdom, it challenged him to not depend on his own strength by the power of God the creator of the heavens and the earth.

Secondly, Melchizedek said to Abram: “*And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.”* What does this mean? These words reminded Abram that the victory he just encountered was granted by God, it is by the grace of God that he could defeat Kedorlaomer and his allies. This word challenged Abram to give thanks to God, to praise God and find joy in God who gracefully granted him this victory, through this words he was challenged to not think he won the battle because of his own strength, but by the grace of God most high. The 5 kings in the region of the Dead Sea suffered greatly as subjects of the Kedorlaomer, they probably had very well trained men, but still they could not defeat Kedorlaomer. But Abram the servant of God, with just 300+ men could defeat Kedorlaomer, not by his strength but by the power of God.

How did Abram respond to the king Melchizedek who gave him these words of God and blessings of God? It says: “*Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*” As we know, Abram was a very wealthy man and when Melchizedek the priest of the most high came to him and gave him the words of God and blessings he gave a tenth of everything. Abram offered tenth of everything to God first as an acknowledgement that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, all things are because of God. Abram gave a tenth to God as an acknowledgement that everything he has is from God. Abram gave a tenth of everything as thanksgiving to God, he offered a tenth as an act of worship to God. Abram did not see this offering as loss, but he was happy to offer for he everything comes from God. Abram’s offering also represented the commitment of his heart and life to Most High, creator of the heavens and the earth.

Unlike Abram, many people today have a great challenge to offer to the Lord, they struggle because the cost of living has suddenly become so high, they have so many responsibilities, many families to take care of. From Abram we can see that offering to God is not something that we should budget for, but rather it should be a part of our life representing our commitment and dependence on God most high as the creator of the heavens and the earth and everything we have. Offering to God should be our act of worship to God. When we live life without worship and acknowledgement of God as the creator the heaven and earth, we become lost, we become tormented by the worries of this world, what will we eat, how will we survive, we become tempted for the sake of survival. I pray that God may have mercy on us to surrender everything to him, worship him, praise him and offer unto him as the creator of the heavens of the earth.

After Abram had met with the Melchizedek, king of Salem, the king of Sodom came to him said to Abram: “*“Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.”* The king of Sodom came to Abram and offered him the world, he offered him all kinds of material in the world, this offer would leave Abram as a very wealthy man in Canaan. How did Abram respond to the king of Sodom who came with a very attractive offer? Let us look at **verse 22-24**: “***22****But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth,****23****that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’****24****I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”* Abram rejected the offer from the king of Sodom for he had the word of God in his heart, he held on to his commitment he made the to God Most High, creator of heaven and earth.

Abram believed God's almighty power. He believed God's sovereignty over heaven and earth. He believed that God would keep his promises. He believed that God's blessing was the best. He said, *"I have sworn an oath to the Lord that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich."* Abram wanted to honour God, he wanted his life to give honour to God not the world and so he refused the wealth of Sodom and returned to his simple shepherd's life. Through Melchizedek who gave Abram the word of God and blessing, God could help Abram to overcome in a time of spiritual crisis. By God’s grace Abram received the word of God and could overcome the temptation to compromise with the world and acquire the tainted riches of Sodom.

**Conclusion:**

From today’s passage we have learnt about another side of Abram which we have not seen before, all along we have known Abram as an old man, a peacemaker, childless, man of faith. And today we saw him mobilize an army that defeated a great king, Kedorlaomer who had all the kingdoms in Canaan as his subjects for over 13 years. How could Abram, an old man who lived in tents defeat such a king? We have learnt that that he could do this, because of God most high, the creator the heavens and earth. Through Melchizedek, priest of the high, this word was revealed to Abram. In the same way, we have been given Jesus Christ priest of the most high, he is yearning for us to hear his word, that all we do is because of the most high God, creator of the heavens and earth. I pray that God may have mercy on us to surrender to him, worship him, praise him, give thanks to him for only through him we are given victory. Our victory in this world is not because of our strength, but because of God almighty, creator of the heavens and the earth, let us pray to God, study his word so that in his great wisdom he can reveal to us its meaning of our victories and how we should respond according to his will and purpose.