

Introduction

In 1773 we had an event that shaped American history. To understand that event in 1773, we have to go back a few more years. In 1767 the English government passed the Townshend Revenue Act, which taxed tea being sold in the American colonies. In 1773 the British Parliament passed the Tea Act. The Tea Act exempted the nearly bankrupt East India Company from being taxed on the tea that it sold to the American colonies. Therefore, the East India Company could import the tea and sell it without paying a 25% tax. All of the local traders in the American colony had to pay this high import tax. It made it difficult for local businesses to compete with the East India Company. The colonists felt that they were being taxed without representation in the British Parliament. Therefore, about 7,000 colonists met at the Boston Harbor when some of the East India Company ships arrived carrying tea. About 30 of the colonists boarded three of the East India Company ships and dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor. Each chest of tea contained 300 pounds of tea, so they dumped about 103,000 pounds of tea, which was worth a lot of money. The event became known as the Boston Tea Party. Britain retaliated and the American Revolution began. The American Colonies rebelled against the taxes without representation being imposed on them from England, and fought their way to freedom. As a result, the United States of America became a country. It all began over taxes.

Our account today has a common beginning. Chedorlaomer was the king of Elam, and he controlled the five kingdoms to the south. Chedorlaomer collected taxes from these kings from the fertile Valley of Siddim. Besides taxes, these kingdoms to the south were on a very important trade route to Egypt and Africa. After paying these taxes for twelve years, the five kings of the south rebelled against these taxes, and decided to stop paying these taxes. Instead of dumping tea in a harbor, they just stopped paying the taxes. Chedorlaomer gave them one year to amend their ways, and in the fourteenth year, he took decisive action. He put together an alliance of four nations to go down and bring these rebellious countries back into submission. Just like Britain, he was going to deal with the rebellion of these kingdoms or colonies of his. There was a great battle that took place in the Valley of Siddim. Chedorlaomer soundly defeated the five kings in the south. That's where our story departs from the Boston Tea Party. The American colonists won their battle with England, but Chedorlaomer defeated these five kings and regained control of these southern kingdoms. They looted Sodom and Gommorah, and began carrying off the spoils of war, which included Lot and his family. When Abram heard about it, he put together his own alliance and went after the four kings. He overtook them and defeated them. He brought back the people. Then, we have two meetings that take place. Abram meets with Melchizedek, and he also meets with the King of Sodom. In both meetings, Abram honored and gave glory to God.

There are three sections to our text today. The first section is the war between the four kings to the north and the five kings in the south. The second section is the war between Abram and the four kings. The third section contains the two meetings that Abram has after defeating the four kings to the north and rescuing his nephew, Lot.

Abram Rescues Lot

1. Battle at the Valley of Siddim
2. Battle at Dan
3. Giving Glory to God

1. **Battle at the Valley of Siddim** (Gen 14:1-12)

(Gen 14:1-12) “And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, {2} that they 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 (that is, Zoar). {3} All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). {4} Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. {5} In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, {6} and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. {7} Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar. {8} And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim, {9} against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. {10} Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country. {11} Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed. {12} They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.”

The first thing we are given is the alliance of the four kings. Amraphel is the king of Shinar, or Babelon. Because of the order that the kings are mentioned, it would appear that Amraphel is the king over the biggest and strongest kingdom. Arioch, king of Ellasar is mentioned second. Ellasar was a minor kingdom to the northwest of Babylon. Chedorlaomer is the third king, and he is the king of Elam or Persia. The final king in this alliance is Tidal, who is the king over Goiim. The KJV says that he was the king over nations, and that is because Goiim means nations. Goiim was a little west of Haran, where Abram had come from. Haran was actually situated between Ellasar and Goiim, so Abram was probably very familiar with both of those kingdoms.

The second bit of information that we are given is the alliance of the five kings that the four kings to the north made war with. The first mentioned is Bera, who was the king of Sodom. The Hebrew word Sodom means to scorch or burn, which is how it will eventually be destroyed. The English word sodomy means homosexuality, and it gets its meaning from the homosexual lifestyles of the inhabitants of Sodom.

The second king in the southern alliance is Birsha, king of Gomorrah. Birsha's name means “with wickedness.” Gomorrah means a “ruined heap”, which is what it became after God judged it. The third king is Shinab, king of Admah. Shinab means a “father has turned,” and Admah means earthy. So far the composite of names of the kings of the south mean: earthy, wicked, and homosexuality. The fourth king is Shemeber, king of Zeboiim. Shemeber means illustrious and Zeboiim means gazelles. The final king in this southern alliance is Bela, king of Zoar. His name means “a gulp, destruction, or something devoured,” and Zoar means “little.”

The order of these kings is given in a geographical order from north to south. As the northern alliance of kings came down, they strategically conquered Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim,

and then Zoar. The kings of these five alliances gathered at the valley of Siddim, which is south of all five of these kingdoms.

The word Siddim means to spread out, or flats. The valley of Siddim is also called the Salt Sea. It is also known as the Dead Sea. It is the lowest elevation of any land on the earth, 1,412 feet below sea level. Not only is it a low area, but verse ten says that it was full of tar pits. The Jordan River feeds the Dead Sea, but the water in the Dead Sea is 9.6 times saltier than the ocean, and it is too salty to support fish or animals.

We find the main reason for the war given in verse four. These five kings had been paying Chedorlaomer taxes for twelve years. Then, they decided that they had paid enough taxes, and they stopped paying the taxes that had been levied on them. We are not given what those taxes were, but we have an example in 2 Kings 3. Mesha, the king of Moab paid the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams every year. That is a significant amount of taxes. The fertile valley where the five kings of the south lived probably had lots of goats and sheep, so the taxes on them may have been very similar. And, similarly, when the king of Israel died, the king of Moab rebelled and stopped paying the taxes. Jehoram, the new king of Israel, gathered together an alliance of people to go deal with Moab.

(2 Ki 3:4-5) “Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and used to pay the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. {5} But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.”

Jesus taught us to render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and render unto God what is God’s. Here in America, most people try to cheat the government out of the taxes that are due, and most Christians do not render to God what is God’s portion either. We are to honor the king and we also need to honor THE KING. Chedorlaomer had some political pull, and he was able to bring these other kings into an alliance to help him fight these southern kings. Because of the trade route to Egypt and Africa, it was probably in their best interests to cooperate with Chedorlaomer. Our text does not say anything here, but it was very common to form marriage alliances with neighboring kingdoms. There very well could have been some of these alliances already in place.

In today’s world, we have a large alliance called NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was formed in 1949. Originally, it had twelve member countries. Currently, there are twenty-nine countries in NATO. Three of the five nuclear-armed countries are in it. Basically, it states that if any member of NATO is attacked, the remaining members will defend the other countries, and go to war on behalf of the country that was attacked.

As the northern alliance worked their way down to fight the kings of the south, they attacked and defeated everyone in their path. They defeated Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham. Then, they defeated the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim and the Horites in Mount Seir. They conquered all the country of the Amalekites and Amorites. For the kingdoms of the north, it was a wise strategy. These kingdoms went down like a row of dominoes and there was no one to attack them from the rear as they made their way to the valley of Siddim. The southern kings were waiting and arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim. However, the battle did not go well for the kings of the south, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell into tar pits. The northern alliance not only defeated the kings, but they carried off the goods from these cities. Included in these goods were Lot and his possessions.

One last little thought about this section before we move on to the next one is where Lot is living. It says that he was living in the city of Sodom. In Genesis 13, when Abram and Lot parted ways, Lot moved his tents as far as Sodom. He was living in tents, which would be outside the city. By Genesis 14, he was living in the city of Sodom. We are taught in 1 Corinthians 6:18 to flee from immorality. We are told in Romans 13:14 to make no provision for the flesh. We are to avoid compromising situations. Lot did what so many people do today. They get as close to sin as possible and think that they will be strong. Then, they get emotionally and physically involved and they cross the line. God does not want us to go near the line. He tells us to run away and avoid these compromising situations. Lot was outside the city, and gradually moves into the city. His sensitivity has been dulled, and he is living a compromised life.

(Gen 13:12-13) “Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. {13} Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.”

2. **Battle at Dan** (Gen 14:13-16)

(Gen 14:13-16) “Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram. {14} When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. {15} He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. {16} He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.”

After the northern alliance has defeated the southern kings, they headed back north. At the same time, one of the fugitives came and told Abram about the battle, and that Lot had been taken captive. When Lot’s father, Haran, died, Terah took Lot into his house to look after him. When Terah died, the Lord told Abram to leave, and he took Lot with him. Uncle Abram has been looking after Lot for many years. Lot had come down with him, and even though they had separated, I am sure that Abram felt a responsibility to look after his nephew.

So, when Abram hears that Lot has been taken captive, he forms an alliance of his own to go pursue these kings. It appears that Abram had good relations with Mamre, the Amorite. Abram was living by the oaks of Mamre, so they must have had some kind of agreement. Abram to Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner and his own 318 trained men, and they pursued these northern kings as far as Dan.

There has been a real change in Abram. When he went down to Egypt, he was scared for his life and told Pharaoh that Sarai was his sister. Now, he is risking his life to go rescue Lot. Abram has much more boldness and courage than he had before. We do not know how many men that Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner had, but most scholars are certain that Abram’s group was far outnumbered.

In addition to great courage, Abram shows great military savvy in his strategy. He divided up the forces and attacked them at night. He caught them by surprise while they were off guard. In addition to catching them off guard, Abram had another advantage. He had walked the land, and

he knew the area very well. At night, with poor visibility, Abram and his men had a tremendous advantage over the northern kings who did not know the area well. Not only did Abram and his alliance defeat the northern kings, they chased them out. They also brought back Lot, all his possessions, the women, and the people.

We are all in a spiritual battle. God tells us to be on the alert. The devil prowls like a lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). The thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Therefore, Peter tells us to be sober and on the alert. The kings were not sober and alert, and they were defeated. We need to be sober and alert. We are also told to put on the full armor of God (Eph 6:10-17). We are to be both alert and prepared for battle.

As parents, we also have a responsibility to prepare the hearts of our children. In Psalm 78, the Lord rebukes the fathers because they have not prepared the hearts of their children. We need to teach our children the word of God. We need to share our testimonies with them so that they will put their confidence in God. We need to teach them to keep God's commandments and to be faithful. Because the fathers had not prepared the hearts of their children, they turned their back in the day of battle. We are to be sons of Abram who pursue victoriously, rather than the sons of Chedorlaomer, who turned back in the day of battle.

(Ps 78:5-9) "For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, {6} That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, {7} That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments, {8} And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God. {9} The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, Yet they turned back in the day of battle."

3. **Giving Glory to God** (Gen 14:17-24)

(Gen 14:17-24) "Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). {18} And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. {19} He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; {20} And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. {21} The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." {22} Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, {23} that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.' {24} I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share.'"

After Abram defeated the kings and is returning home he met up with the king of Sodom at the valley of Shaveh, or the King's Valley. Earlier, the king of Sodom had fled and fallen into a tar pit. Either he was rescued, or a new king was put in place over Sodom, and Abram is meeting with the new king. Most scholars believe that this is the new king over Sodom that Abram is meeting with.

They are meeting in the valley of Shaveh or the King's Valley. This is just south of Jerusalem. There are two meetings that take place. The first meeting is with Melchizedek and the second meeting is with the King of Sodom. In both of these meetings Abram honors and glorifies God. It identifies Melchizedek as the king of Salem. Salem is considered to be Jerusalem. In Psalm 76:2, we see that God's "*tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion.*" So, both of these meetings take place just south of Jerusalem.

We learn more about Melchizedek in Hebrews 7, so I would like to read that account.

(Heb 7:1-10) "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, {2} to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. {3} Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. {4} Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. {5} And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. {6} But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. {7} But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. {8} In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. {9} And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, {10} for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."

Many scholars believe that Melchizedek was the actual king of Jerusalem, and that he was also a priest. I believe that Melchizedek is Jesus. Melchizedek means king of righteousness. He was the king of Salem. Salem is not just Jerusalem; the name means peace. Melchizedek is the king of peace. Melchizedek had neither father nor mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God. An earthly king would have a genealogy. An earthly king would have a beginning of days and an end of life. An earthly king would have a mother and a father, and Melchizedek had neither. An earthly priest had a temporary priesthood. Jesus is our king of righteousness. Jesus is our king of peace. Jesus has no beginning and end, for He was in the beginning. All things that came into being came into being through Him. Apart from Him, nothing that came into being came into being. Jesus is our perpetual priest. His one-time perfect sacrifice was all that was needed. I believe that Jesus came to Abram in the form of Melchizedek, and met with him on his return from the battle with the kings.

Melchizedek is both king and priest. He brought out a covenant meal of bread and wine, and they shared that meal. Then, Melchizedek blessed Abram and blessed God who delivered his enemies into his hand. Psalms 33 says that a king is not saved by a mighty army and a warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory. In Proverbs 21, we find out that victory belongs to the Lord. We get prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord. Abram was prepared for the battle, but God gave delivered his enemies into his hand.

(Ps 33:16-17) "The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. {17} A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength."

(Pr 21:31) “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to the LORD.”

Then, Abram honored God by giving a tenth of all to him. There are many preachers today that say that you should not use Genesis 14 to talk about tithing. However, the commentary on this in Hebrews 7 makes it very clear that Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek. I want to say just a few words about the tithe. First, our tithes show God’s ownership of us. Abram is in a covenant relationship with God, and He acknowledges that he belongs to God. Second, tithes are an acknowledgement that everything that we have has come from God and belongs to God. Abram acknowledged that God gave him the victory, and that these spoils of war are from God. When you and I tithe, we are acknowledging that we belong to God and that we are just returning ten percent of what He has provided for us.

In Genesis 28, Jacob has an encounter with God at Bethel. He made a vow saying that if will be with him and keep me safe on this journey, and give me food to eat, He will be my God and I will give Him a tenth of all. Jacob’s tithe to the Lord reflected that he belonged to God and that God was the one who provided him with everything.

(Genesis 28:20-22) “Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, {21} and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. {22} This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.’”

Tithing is much more than that. It is giving God our first fruit. Tithing is putting food in God’s house so that His workers, whether they are priests, Levites, or pastors, are well taken care of (Mal 3:10). We saw in our Men’s study a couple of weeks ago that tithing is also one of the ways that we learn to fear God (Deut 14:23). Tithing began long before the law, and we still present our tithes to Jesus, who I believe appeared to Abram as Melchizedek.

The second meeting that Abram has at the Valley of Shaveh or the King’s Valley, is with the king of Sodom. The king tells Abram to give him the people but to take the goods for himself. Notice how Abram honors God in the way that he responds in verses 22-23. “*I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’*” Abram acknowledges that it is God, and God alone, that has made him wealthy. He does not want the credit for his wealthy to go to anyone but God. Abram honored God with his tithes. Abram honored God with his words and his testimony. Notice that Abram had sworn this to God. Abram honored God by keeping his vow to the Lord.

Abram finishes by allowing the men who went with him to take their share of the food and spoils. That was the right thing to do. Whether they kept any for themselves or not was up to them, but they had gone out and fought the battle, and they were entitled to the spoils of the war.

Conclusion

There are so many applications and lessons to be learned in our text. We are reminded again of Lot’s choice and how he gradually became desensitized to the immorality around him. We live in a culture that is becoming more like Sodom. We have to be very careful that we are not

conformed to this world, but are transformed by the renewing of our mind. We have to be careful that we are not of this world, even though we are living in the world. We have to make sure that we are the salt of the earth, and that our salt remains salty, not tasteless. We have to make sure that we are lights set on a hill, and that our righteousness shines before men so that they glorify God.

Another lesson from this is to give Caesar what belongs to Caesar. There were consequences for the five kings of the south when they rebelled against the king. We need to render to Caesar what belongs to him, and we need to render unto God the things that belong to Him.

We can learn that the companion of fools suffers harm. Because Lot was with the Sodomites, he and his family suffered the same fate as the rest of the Sodomites. It was only by God's grace and a courageous uncle that he and his family was delivered. We can learn a lot of lessons from the example of Lot.

We also see the importance of forming alliances. The four kings to the north formed an alliance. The five kings to the south formed an alliance. Abram formed an alliance with those around him. The kingdom of God is not meant to be individuals. The kingdom of God is individuals who have been joined together into a body, the body of Christ. The kingdom of God is an alliance with brothers and sisters around the world that are under the rule and reign of Christ.

We can also learn from our passage today that we need to honor God with our lives. We need to honor God with our words and testimonies. We need to honor God by keeping our vows. We need to honor God with our tithes and offerings. He is worthy of all honor, and it is from Him that we have received everything.

This morning, what has God been speaking to you about? Take just a minute and then write down at the bottom of your notes one or two things that God has spoken to you about. If there is something that you would like prayer about, come on up. While others are writing down what God has spoken to them about, I will be glad to pray for you.

Introduction

1. **Battle at the Valley of Siddim** (Gen 14:1-12, 2 Ki 3:4-5, Matt 22:21, 1 Cor 6:18, Rom 13:14, Gen 13:12-13)
2. **Battle at Dan** (Gen 14:13-16, 1 Pet 5:8, Eph 6:10-17, Ps 78:5-9)
3. **Giving Glory to God** (Gen 14:17-24, Ps 76:2, Heb 7:1-10, Ps 33:16-17, Pr 21:31, Gen 28:20-22, Deut 14:23, Mal 3:10)