

Genesis 14:1-16 – Abram’s Trial - A Lot of Trouble

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Calvin, JFB, PASN, Henry, Delitzsch, Geneva, Trapp, 122, 85,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: We told a young man Suriname that he should break off a relationship with a Hindu girl because it was wrong and he was going to be harmed in the future. His response: “Well, I know it is wrong, but I guess I will have to learn from my mistakes.” And what horrible lessons he had to learn. His life was in constant turmoil 混乱 with endless arguments, separations, and finally divorce. It was important that throughout these troubles that the church did not abandon this young man...but reach out to him throughout his rebellion so that he would be brought back to a right relationship with God.

Maybe this was how Abram must have felt looking at his foolish nephew...an immature Christian. But how would Abram respond when he saw his nephew falling in the hole he had dug for himself? Would Abram reach out to Lot and help him after he fell into the hole? Let’s study!

Our headings are: **Lot Caught**, and **Lot Sought**.

Our goals are: That you will **learn not to hold things against other foolish brothers, but be even willing to help them, knowing that you were forgiven much and your are always cared for through Christ your Lord.**

Lot Caught

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 they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their mountain of 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 attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar. 8 And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the **Valley of Siddim** 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

1. Five kings rebelled against 4 kings after 12 years of paying tribute to them. Because of the rebellion of these 5 kings, the 4 kings of the East saw it as an opportunity, according to historians, punish the 5 rebellious king and at the same time grab hold of the Jordan Valley so they would have access to Egypt. One of those 5 kings in the Jordan Valley was the king of Sodom where Lot lived.) Keep in mind that these were not large countries but rather they were more like city states.

2. Was it right for these 5 kings to rebel against the 4 kings from the East? These 5 nations made an agreement to pay tribute to the 4 nations. They saved their lives by agreeing to pay tribute. John Calvin said that while we must not despise liberty, when subjection 臣服 is established by God providence 天意...to simply try to shake it off improperly is rebellion. (We'll talk about the appropriateness of war at another time.) The 5 kings were required to submit.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. 11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

3. The 5 kings of the Jordan Valley lost the battle with the 4 kings of the East. And since Lot lived under the auspices 保护 of the King of Sodom...and since he was rich with much goods...he was taken as captive by 4 kings of the East. So Lot lost the things for which he lusted 贪求. He was condemned to have cleanness of teeth...no food to get stuck between his teeth...meaning he would become poor. He became blinded by the rich black soil of the Jordan valley and he forgot the God that had given him everything he owned. And it must have been an interesting picture to him of men falling and dying in the black asphalt pits.

4. Lessons: a. Look at what happens when you mix closely with wicked men. Could a man take fire into him bosom and not expect to be burned? Trapp: 陷阱 Strong affections 喜爱 bring strong afflictions 灾难. This was really cutthroat 不公正的 kindness...lure 诱惑 of wealth is a knife in the back.

b. See the miseries of war...and how you should try to avoid needless wars. It is always blood and gore...and much mourning.

c. Learn also that the world will fight among itself. The only cure for the world is Christ.

Lot is Sought by Abram

13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

1. In God's plan and out of compassion for Lot...

a. God used a fugitive 亡命者 to bring word of Lot's trouble to Abram. This is a good example of how God used even wicked men for his glory and for his people's good.

b. God caused Abram to be near at that time to be able to rescue Lot. Animal herders often traveled great distances to find good pasture. And notice how Abram is described as "the Hebrew" showing his continuation of that godly line of Noah. (Shem was still living at that time.)

c. God caused Abram's allies to be around him at the same time...allies who pledged to help each other if the other needed help. Abram was not a recluse 隐士, simply keeping to himself. He knew people of the world and did business with them. But even these allies must have been moved by the Spirit of God. After all, would a weak group of Canaanites go out in battle against 4 powerful kings, encouraged by their recent victory and spoils? Probably not!

d. Abram and Abram's army were ready...an army of 318...skilled and well trained. So Abram was not a pacifist 和平主义者. He didn't look for war, but he didn't back down when he needed to fight or was instructed to fight. And his soldiers were already trained. (The best nations of the world often invest in the military before wars, like England under Elizabeth or the US under Reagan.) And these soldiers who were born in Abram's house were no doubt taught the truth of God as well, so they were not mere mercenaries, but they believed in the cause of Jehovah.

And there is no doubt that this was done at the direction of the Lord. Even though Abram was king of Canaan by God's decree, it would not have been reasonable for him to attack foreign kings who were punishing the 5 rebellious kings. (There were other times much worse things were done to him but he did not retaliate 反击 this way.)

2. Abram's kindness moved him to action. He did not say: "Lot cheated me...or disrespected me...so I won't care about his welfare. Upon hearing that his unconsecrated 不神圣的 nephew was taken as a slave, Abram got ready to rescue him. He did not offer evil for evil.

3. Abram did not have a large army and the enemy was large, but Abram knew that God was with him.
1Samuel 14:6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

There were only 12 disciples close to Jesus, but they turned soon turned the world upside down for Christ's service.

4. But why would Abram want to rescue a fool...a man who wanted more money and possibly more entertainment in the city of Sodom? Abram understood his need to love even the foolish and reach out and help his foolish brother.

Proverbs 17: 17 A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

Abram would no doubt have hoped, that if he rescued Lot, that he would make Lot come to his senses and be restored to proper covenant living. This is why you are called to help those who are weak who make foolish decisions. You don't have to be "buddies" 同伴 with foolish people, but you have to show them the love of Christ.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, 干扰 you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

So if a Christian woman becomes pregnant out of marriage, you don't abandon her and insult her. No, you might let her see the consequences of her actions and then restore her. Of if a child of God stops attending worship, you have to let him see his sins and work to bring him back. Yes, you might be angry with someone who chooses to break the Sabbath day, but instead of simply being angry, you have to love them and teach them back into worship on the Sabbath. You see, you have to learn to fight for the weak...not just the physically weak but the spiritually weak as

well. And learn that this fighting for the weak was not based on what you could get as a reward, but what you could give as a covenant child to another covenant child. One more illustration of God's ability to preserve:

2Chronicles 18:31 So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him.

15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

6. Abram also had skill in war...

a. Abram divided his forces to better trap the enemy. This is common military strategy.

b. Abram attacked by night... when there is less expectation of attack and the enemy is in disarray, or probably when they are drunk, as when David attacked and killed the drunken Amalekites, or when Ahab attacked the drunken Syrians.

c. Abram and his army were brave and committed to the battle. They pursued the 4 kings all the way to north of Damascus. This was similar to when Cromwell sent ships and diplomats to France to cause them to stop persecuting Christians. Remarkably our leaders in the West think they would not get oil to run our cars so they are afraid to speak up against Moslem tyranny and persecution of Christians in Middle-Eastern countries.

7. Finally, Abram, his soldiers and his friends, rescued the 4 kings and brought hem back to their land. Even the goods that 5 kings and Lot had were not lost but were restored as well.

Conclusion:

Lot made much trouble for himself by being close to wicked people, but Abram showed great covenant love to him, resisting the temptation to say: "He made trouble for himself, let him pay for his mistakes." Abram recounted the sacrifice of Christ for his sins and so he was willing to help his foolish nephew. He was thinking of God's glory. And he was prepared to help...help with his army...help with his friends...with boldness...with strategy...and which persistency. He rescued his nephew and even the 5 kings and their men.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Learn to love even foolish Christian brothers and sisters and help them return to the path of righteous living and restore them, no matter how far they may have fallen into sin – and start in your family. Learn to pray for those who have fallen in sin, no matter how far they may have fallen, that they might see their sins and repent. Reach out your hand them. Don't let bitterness win!

Why forgive, why forget, why restore, why pray for them? 1. You forgive, forget, restore, and pray for them because you were forgiven all your foolish faults through Christ your

Lord. 2. You forgive, forget restore, and pray for them because this will lead them to glorify Christ. And isn't this the reason for which you were created and re-created?

Finally, maybe you have played around with your salvation. Maybe you have heard God's Word but have never been serious. It is time you stop playing games with God. You don't know how much time you have. May God cause you to come to your senses today knowing the great danger you are in...eternal danger...and ask him to take away your sins because of Christ and make you his child forever. Remember Lu 1:74 ...that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear.