

The Lord Allowed Abram to Rescue Lot

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why choosing to walk by faith will help them and others to avoid the consequences of sin. In this topic, we will see that God is a God of mercy and allowed Abram to rescue Lot so he would have another opportunity to choose to walk by faith.

Genesis 14:13-16 says, “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. 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. 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. 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.” Lot and the people of Sodom had been taken as captives by the kings of the east.

However, we see that one person escaped and told Abram that Lot had been captured by the armies of the east. We see that Abram is called “Abram, the Hebrew”. This is the first time anyone is called a “Hebrew” in the Old Testament. However, we will see that in the future, the descendants of Abram called themselves Hebrews and also the people of other nations called them Hebrews. The next recorded time this name is used is when the wife of Potiphar said, in Genesis 39:14, “...she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, ‘See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.’” At that time, Abram was living by a large grove of terebinth trees owned by Mamre. This was in the area of the city of Hebron. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner were brothers, and they were friends and allies of Abram, so they also joined him to help rescue Lot.

Abram had three hundred and eighteen trained servants who had been born in his own house. Mamre, the men related to him, and his brothers also joined with Abram to help him rescue Lot. Abram had trained his servants because they had to help Abram protect his possessions and flocks from groups like the army of men that had come from the east. Abram and those with him had to travel more than one hundred and fifty miles before they caught up with the armies of the east. Abram was a wise fighter, so he divided those with him into smaller groups. Then, they attacked during the middle of the night. Gideon used a similar tactic to destroy the Midianites several hundred years later in the book of Judges. Then, they chased those who remained as far as the city of Hobah, which was north of Damascus. They were able to rescue all of the hostages who had been captured by the armies of the east. Abram and his army were able to rescue both the people and their goods when they defeated these armies from the east. Then, Abram and his army brought back all of the people and goods that had been taken from Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 14:17-20 says, “And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is*, the King’s Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor

of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tithe of all.” The king of Sodom was quick to go out and meet Abram when he came back after he had rescued Lot and the rest of the people from the city of Sodom. This is the only place where the Valley of Shaveh (King’s Valley) is mentioned. However, many think this valley is the Kidron Valley, just east of the present city of Jerusalem. This valley is a small valley that goes between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

The Lord gave Abram a very special blessing. Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Jerusalem), is also mentioned in these verses. Since this valley was only a few hundred feet from the city of Salem, we see that Melchizedek brought out bread and wine for Abram and the king of Sodom. In addition to being the King of Salem, these verses tell us that Melchizedek was also the priest of God Most High. Psalm 110:1 and 4 say, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’... The Lord has sworn and will not relent, ‘You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” Psalm 110:4 is quoted twice in Hebrews 7:17 and 21. Before these two quotes, Hebrews 7:14-16 says, “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And *it is* yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.” As a result, we see that Melchizedek is an Old Testament picture of Christ, and some even think it was an Old Testament appearance of Christ.

We see that Melchizedek also gave a blessing to Abram. Melchizedek said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” Here, we see that in the blessing, Melchizedek pointed out the fact that this blessing of Abram was in the name of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth. The fact that Melchizedek pointed out the fact that the true and living God is the possessor of heaven and earth, and the One from whom this blessing for Abram came, made it clear that Melchizedek was not talking about any of the false gods of the Canaanites.

Melchizedek also gave a blessing to the God Most High because of the fact that He had delivered the enemies into the hand of Abram. The armies of the kings of the east were large armies. However, the size of the armies did not matter to God. Even though Abram only had three hundred and eighteen trained servants plus Mamre, Eshcol, Aner, and probably a few servants with them - God had given Abram a complete victory over the kings of the east and all of their armies. Many years later, Jonathan, the son of Saul, said in 1 Samuel 14:6, “...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.” The Lord does not need a great army to conquer a great army. As Jonathan said, the God Most High can use many or few. He is not limited the way we are as people. Then, Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of all. This tithe was to show that Abram worshiped the true and living God, of whom Melchizedek was a priest and who was much greater than Abram was.

Genesis 14:21-24 then says, “Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, ‘Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.’ But Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’— except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went

with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.” The king of Sodom then made an offer to Abram. He said, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.” Here, we see that the king of Sodom was offering all of the possessions of the city of Sodom to Abram as a gift if he would give the people of Sodom back to the king.

This sounds like a generous offer, but it was really an attempt by Satan to deceive Abram. We will see in a few chapters just how evil the king and people of Sodom were. Abram had made a promise to God before he ever went after the kings of the east and their armies that he would take nothing from the king of Sodom when they returned. He had promised God that he would not even take a string or the strap of a sandal from the king of Sodom because he knew the king of Sodom would say that he had made Abram rich. Abram realized that everything he had was given to him by the Lord. He wanted to bring glory to God by this decision. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” That is why he said the only thing they would take was the food his servants had eaten as they traveled back to this place after they had defeated the kings of the east. The food they had eaten in those few days was gone and Abram wanted nothing more.

At the same time, Abram also recognized that Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre had to make their own decision about whether they would take anything from the king of Sodom. As a result, Abram told the king of Sodom that it was between the king and those men whether they wanted to take a portion of the things they had captured when they defeated the kings of the east. We see that the king of Sodom had to talk to those men separately, as it was their decision to make. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22, we read, “Abstain from every form of evil.” Abram may have known that those men needed some of the things they had captured because of the fact that they had to leave their own work for a period of time to go along with Abram. As a result, Abram wanted to leave the decision to them.

Abram was learning to walk with God by faith. He was learning to look to God for the blessing of the God Most High. Hebrews 11:9-10 says, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Abram was developing an eternal view and not just a focus on the things of this world. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to walk by faith. This will only happen as we provide an example of faith by our own lives. As a result, Abram gives us two important examples by his life about what it means to put God first and not be deceived by the traps that Satan uses to trick us. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to walk by faith.