

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 14: December 13-20

Genesis 14

The life of Abraham was an unpredictable journey where he faced many trials and difficult decisions that challenged his faith. The events recorded in Genesis chapter 14 are no exception. James Smith notes:

This chapter is unique in four ways: (1) Abram appeared in a new role, as the head of a sizable desert clan and as an astute military chieftain. (2) Abram was given the title “the Hebrew” (14:13). (3) The chapter contains an unusual number of proper names both of persons and places. (4) Five times the chapter contains explanatory notes about the geographical proper names.¹

However, more ink has been spilled trying to explain the mysterious priest/king of Salem than all the other features of this chapter combined. We know from Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7 that Melchizedek was a picture of the Messiah. As such, this chapter provides us with important and practical lessons about our faith in Christ.

Read Genesis 14:1-16

1. Who were the Mesopotamian kings named in verse 1?
2. Who were the Canaanite kings named in verse 2?
3. Where did the Canaanite kings gather together? (14:3)
4. Why were the Mesopotamian kings going to war against the Canaanite kings? (14:4)
5. How successful were the kings of Mesopotamia during the first part of this war? (14:5-7)
6. How many kings gathered in the Valley of Siddim? (14:8-9)

¹ James Smith, *The Pentateuch* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 125.

² Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 226.

Bruce Waltke observes:

The word *king* appears in this chapter twenty-eight times. A host of royal players make up this scene: five kings of Canaan, four kings of Mesopotamia, Abraham, Melchizedek the priest-king, and implicitly the Lord. Israel’s God, Yahweh, however, stands above all as King of kings.... By repeating *king*, precisely naming the kings and their countries from all over the Fertile Crescent and beyond, and by spreading the battles of this war all over Transjordan and south Palestine, the narrator magnifies the greatness of his hero, Abraham. On earth, God’s faithful warrior, though lacking the title *king*, is in fact a greater king.²

7. What did the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah do in verse 10?

John Walton writes,

The procurement of bitumen by digging created the tar pits referred to in the text. These would have been more the size of wells than of large stone quarries. The language of the text allows for the possibility that the kings went down into these pits intentionally for the purpose of hiding.³

8. What did the four Mesopotamian kings do in verse 11?
9. What happened to Lot in verse 12?
10. How did Abram find out that his nephew had been captured? (14:13)
11. What did Abram do in verse 14?

Even though they had gone their separate ways, Abram still loved his nephew and was willing take a great risk in order to rescue Lot.

12. How far did Abram pursue the Mesopotamian kings? (14:15)
13. What did Abram do when he finally caught up with the Mesopotamian kings? (14:15-16)

³ John H. Walton, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Vol 1: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 80.

Read Genesis 14:17-24

14. Who came to meet Abram in the Valley of Shaveh? (14:17)

15. How does verse 16 describe Melchizedek?

We often wish that the text of Scripture would fill in the details and give us more information about certain people. Such is the case with Melchizedek. Many speculative theories have been made about the identity of this mysterious monarch. Some have suggested that he was AKA Shem, Eber, Job, or even an alien from outer space. One of the most popular theories is that Melchizedek was a “Christophany,” an appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament. However, we know from the New Testament that Melchizedek was a picture of Jesus but not Jesus Himself.

The author of Hebrews implies that the genealogical information about Melchizedek was intentionally left out of the Genesis account because God wanted to use Melchizedek as a foreshadowing of the eternal priesthood and kingship of the Messiah. Hebrews 7:3 says that Melchizedek was “...made like the Son of God.” We know from this text that Melchizedek was “made like” Jesus in some ways but he was not actually Jesus. The Greek word for “made like,” *aphomoioo* (ἀφομοιόω), is a comparative. It is always and only used to compare two or more separate things. We would never say, “Jesus was *made like* the Son of God.” We say, “Jesus *is* the Son of God!” Jesus and the Son of God are not two separate individuals who, when compared to each other, are found to be similar. They are one and the same person.

16. What did Melchizedek say when he blessed Abram? (14:19-20)

17. What did Abram give to Melchizedek? (14:20)

18. How is Melchizedek a picture of Jesus? (see Hebrews 7)

19. Why did Abram refuse to take anything from the king of Sodom? (14:22-24)

20. What lessons can be learned from Abram’s rescue of Lot?

21. How can you honor Jesus as your King and your great High Priest?

Sermon Notes 12/13/20

Melchizedek

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 14?

1. Accept Jesus as our King of _____.

Genesis 14:1-4

Luke 2:13-14

2. Follow Jesus as our King of _____.

Genesis 14:8-12

Matthew 6:33

3. Trust Jesus as our King who _____.

Genesis 14:13-16

Colossians 1:13-14

4. Honor Jesus as our King and _____.

Genesis 14:18-20

Hebrews 4:14-16

Regions Mentioned in Genesis 14

