

(18) So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River-- (19) the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, (20) Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, (21) Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."

- The boundaries of the nation to be formed are spelled out in some detail. Israel did not reach to these borders.



GENESIS CHAPTERS 14 - 15

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Genesis Previously

Mankind Created

Nations Formed

Abraham Covenanted

This chapter 14 is a classic example of editorial notes being added to the original text in parenthesis. The editor, probably inspired Moses, knew the old names as well as the current ones and noted the changes. Just as Portland, Oregon was once known as Stump Town, so many communities and locations in the land promised to Abram had changed their names over the centuries.

MARAUDERS FROM MESOPOTAMIA

(14:1 NLB) About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim (2) fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

- Four powerful, burly nation-kings from out of the area attacked the city-kings of **Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar**. Remember that Lot and his clan were living in **Sodom**. The editor knew the old name (**Bela**) and added the new name (**Zoar**). His editing only clarified the original and did not change any facts.

(3) This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea). **(4)** For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

- **Kedorlaomer of Elam** was the nation-king who received the city-king's tax money for 12 years. Payments were usually required in silver and gold. The area was also known for copper mining. The **rebellion** was almost certainly made clear by refusing to pay the heavy taxes.
- **Bradford** believes that **Elam** was known later as Sushan (as in the Esther story) and today is Khuzistan, within Iran.

THE MARAUDERS RETURN ON YEAR 13

(5) One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emities at Shaveh-kiriathaim, (6) and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness.

- The big man **Kedorlaomer** returned and conquered a few little nations along the way. His military was not weak. The bounty from battles would help finance his foray.

(7) Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

(8) Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea. (9) They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar--four kings against five.

- The crucial battle of four nation-kings against five city-kings took place in the valley of the **Dead Sea** near Masada. **The valley of the Dead Sea** is now the under the southern part of Dead Sea and is the lowest spot on the planet. Not surprisingly, the city-kings lost and their men ran for their lives.

THE MARAUDERS EASILY WIN

(10) As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and

herself to a male animal to have intercourse with it. This is a perverse act.

(24) "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways."

Vs. 21. Here children were offered to Moloch in order to get a blessing from that idol. Our society kills pre-born children for the convenience of the parents.

Vs. 22. The best known homosexual movement presently is the LGBTQ movement and they are deeply embedded in government and education. They want more than their own rights.

Vs. 23. In eight states in the U.S. it is perfectly legal to marry an animal.

Vs. 24. When gross sin reached a tipping point, the Lord used Israel to drive the offenders out of the land.

THE PROMISE OF LAND IS MADE SPECIFIC

(17) After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses.

- **Bradford** describes what happened: “. . . the most important part of this covenant ceremony takes place: the makers of the covenant pass, as is custom, between the separated animal pieces. But, wait; what actually passes between the animal pieces is a smoking fire pot and flaming torch. Smoke and fire usually represents the presence of God in the Bible. God walked between the pieces signifying His agreement and word to keep the terms of the covenant. Notice: Abraham did NOT walk between the pieces. Why? Because this was a unilateral covenant; this was not a two-way deal. (**Crawford** agrees.) This was entirely on God. God made promises and had obligations..... Abraham did NOT! Everything promised from this covenant was up to God to make happen.”

must have talked to **Abram** to know about birds and the dreadful **darkness**.

(13) Then the LORD said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. (14) But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. (15) (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) (16) After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

- This was an unconditional covenant, not requiring any certain performance by **Abram** or his heirs.
- The land of Canaan would belong to Abram after five conditions were met:
 - His **descendants** would spend **400 years as slaves** in a strange land.
 - The **land** that enslaved them would be **punished**.
 - His **descendants** would come out of that land with great **wealth**.
 - **Abram** would **die in peace** at an old **age**.
 - When the sins of the locals - **Amorites** - had reached full measure, the land would be turned over to the children of Abram. Their two leading sins were burning their babies to Moloch and a host of sexual sins. Leviticus 18:21-24:

(21) "Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the LORD.

(22) "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.

(23) "A man must not defile himself by having sex with an animal. And a woman must not offer

Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. (11) The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. (12) They also captured Lot--Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom--and carried off everything he owned.

- The local kings were soundly defeated. Most of the defeated armies fled into the nearby hills. The cities were sacked. **Lot** seemed to be a special prize for the invaders. **Bradford** describes the defeat: "(The allied armies) took all the district's food supply, their possessions of value, and even some people to use as slaves..... this was normal battle protocol in those days. Among those taken as slaves were Lot and his family, who were living in Sodom when the attack came."

ABRAM STRIKES BACK

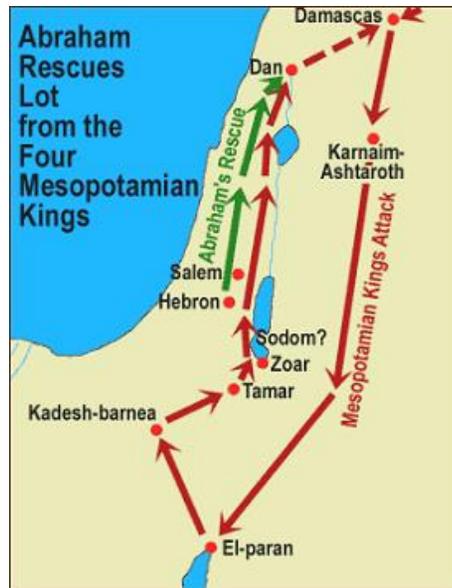
(13) But one of Lot's men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies. (14) When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan.

- A fugitive reported this abduction to **Abram** called "**the Hebrew.**" Some have thought that **Hebrew** means *wanderer*. And that would fit **Abram's** life. This is the first use of the word in Scripture.
- **Abram** wanted **Lot** back and so determined to be a gnat going after an elephant. He took 318 men of his own household and went after the big guys.
- The better-known **Dan** was not defined until hundreds of years later, but there was another **Dan**:
... then to Gilead in the land of Tahtim-hodshi and to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon. 2 Samuel 24:6

(15) There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. (16) Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

- **Abram** devised a plan to rescue **Lot**, his family and possessions. He took men who had been trained in his household and routed the invaders. The **night** attack confused the marauding army and caused them to **flee**. They had probably been trained to operate in teams and this wouldn't work in the dark. Those who had been abducted were recaptured as well as their goods. **Abram** had not imagined that he would be a blessing to others in such a way!
- **Bradford** explains Abram's household: "Slavery among the Hebrews was not that far from modern day adoption So, even though direct children of Abraham certainly had authority and rights of inheritance above these slaves and the children born to these slaves, slaves were not maltreated; they were usually valuable and beloved members of the clan, and generally given respect and love."

(17) After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).



illustrated His promise with the **stars**. **Abram** believed the **Lord** and this was counted as **righteousness** by the **Lord**. This is the first use of the verb "believed" in Scripture. **Faith** is counted as an act of **righteousness**. Compare Romans 4:2 - 5.

(7) Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession." (8) But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?"

- Abram believed, but he was still uncertain. Knowing about the future is very difficult under all circumstances.

THE COVENANT IS VERIFIED

(9) The LORD told him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." (10) So Abram presented all these to Him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half.

- God entered into a legal covenant with **Abram**. **Bradford**: "This was not a presentation of a gift, or the seeking of acceptance, or a plea for atonement to God, by Abraham. Rather, this is God's gift to man. This is God raising His right hand and swearing upon Himself to be true to His oath. This is a 100% God action; Abraham was simply the recipient of the promise. God promises a national identity to a people who didn't even yet exist.....a people who at first would be called Hebrew, and then eventually Israel."

(11) Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away. (12) As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him.

- **Vultures** wanted to destroy the symbols of the covenant, but Abram became active, chasing them away. The writer

always better than more evil. (*The Rational Bible: Genesis* (p. 205). Kindle Edition.)

THE LORD REPEATS HIS PROMISE

Genesis 15 NLT (1) Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

- This is the fifth appearance of the **Lord** to **Abram**. **Fear** was a constant problem with **Abram**. God had demonstrated that he himself was both a shield for **Abram** and a reward for his aggressive faith. God is protector and provider for all of us. The protection issue is not so demanding, but the provider issue concerns many of us.

(2) But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all Your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since You've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. (3) You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

- Abraham recognized that the **Lord** was **blessing** him with **wealth**, but no **son** had come. **Abram** devised an inheritance plan of his own: Give his estate to a **servant** when he dies.

(4) Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." (5) Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!" (6) And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

- **The Lord** repeated His promise that an actual **son** of **Abram** – not one adopted – would be his **heir**. **The Lord**

- The writer understates the defeat of this frightful army by a few weekend soldiers. The **king of Sodom** was deeply grateful.
- Some have detected a conflict with verse 10 where the king of Sodom died, but the text does not say that. It says that some of the army of the king army fell into the tar pits. Translation vary a bit, but none that we consulted said that the king of Sodom died.

ABRAM IS HONORED

(18) And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. (19) Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. (20) And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

- The **king of Salem** (it became Jerusalem) brought out bread and wine to **Abram**. He **blessed** him for the victory he had won. In addition to being **king**, he was a **priest** of **God Most High**. He was not Hebrew, but he worshiped the God of **Heaven**. The book of Hebrews says that Melchizedek **"was without mother and father:"** It means that he was without known genealogy. Even Jesus had mother and father.
- Although this is the first written record of tithing, it must have been a practice before this time for Abram to volunteer it.



- **Melchizedek** reveals that **God Most High** was behind the **defeat** of the vast army from Mesopotamia. A song says it: "Little Is Much When God Is In It."
- The New Testament book of Hebrews speaks of Melchizedek:

(Hebrews 7:1) This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. (2) Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means "king of justice," and king of Salem means "king of peace." (3) There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors--no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

(4) Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. (5) Now the law of Moses required that the priests, who are descendants of Levi, must collect a tithe from the rest of the people of Israel, who are also descendants of Abraham.

(6) But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God.

(7) And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed. (8) The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on.

(9) In addition, we might even say that these Levites--the ones who collect the tithe--paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. (10) For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.

- Abraham paid a one-time tithe to Melchizedek.

Now, back to Genesis.

ABRAM REFUSES PAY

(21) The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered." (22) Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, (23) that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' (24) I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies--Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

- The king of **Sodom** told **Abram** to keep the **goods** and just return the people, but **Abram** refused the gift. He did not want to be indebted to the **king of Sodom** in any way. **Dennis Prager** observes: "In waging war against evil, we cannot always choose whom we would most like as our allies. Sometimes we are morally bound to fight alongside bad people in order to defeat worse people. There are those who reject this assertion, arguing that 'the lesser of two evils is still evil.' But no one denies that the lesser evil is evil. The biblical and moral argument is that between a greater and a lesser evil, good is achieved by first defeating the greater evil for the obvious reason that less evil is