

Genesis 14:1-24

COURAGE ACCORDING TO GOD

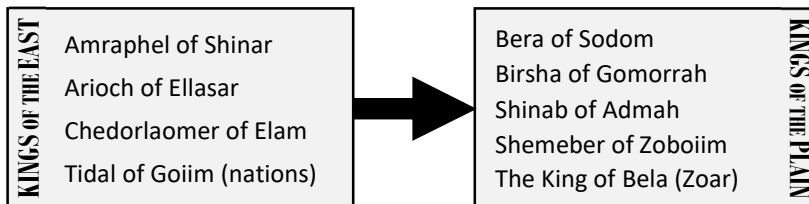
In the history of Mesopotamia and its neighbors, we find that the geopolitical conditions match the situation in Gen 14 in only one period, the Patriarchal Age according to biblical chronology. In the late 3rd millennium BC, Mesopotamia was dominated for a time by a single power, the 3rd Dynasty of Ur. This dynasty was overthrown by Elam in about 2000 BC. Then, for some 250 years, no single power ruled in greater Mesopotamia, from Ur to Carchemish. Instead, the area swarmed with major and minor city-states, combining and recombining in ever-changing alliances... From about the 18th century BC on, however, the situation drastically changed. The triumphs of Hammurabi of Babylon and Shamsi-Adad I of Assyria ended the era of rival alliances, with the numerous Mesopotamian city-states vanishing forever. From then on, the land was dominated by just two powers, Assyria and Babylon. Thus, there is one—and only one—period that fits the conditions reflected in Gen 14—the early 2nd millennium BC. —Kenneth A. Kitchen

- A Introduction to Abram’s Life (11:27-32)
 - B Abram’s Obedience to God’s Word (12:1-9)**
 - C Abram’s Lie: Sarai & Pharaoh (12:10-20)
 - D Abram’s Rescue of Lot (13:1-14:17)
 - E Melchizedek’s Blessing of Abram (14:18-24)
 - F Cutting of the Abrahamic Covenant (15)
 - G Abram’s Failure: Hagar & Ishmael (16)**
 - F Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (17)
 - E God’s Visit to Abraham (18)
 - D God’s Rescue of Lot (19)
 - C Abraham’s Lie: Sarah & Abimelech (20)
- B Abraham’s Obedience to God’s Word (21:1-22:24)**
- A Epilogue to Abraham’s Life (23:1-25:11)

In Genesis 14, Abram finds himself thrust into a war of kings because of the capture of his nephew, Lot. With faith and courage, Abram rescues Lot and receives the blessing of God through Melchizedek.

1. DON’T _____ FROM THE BATTLE! (14:1-16)

- The Historical Battle of Kings (14:1-10)



The Kings of the Plain rebelled against the Kings of the East. Thus, the Kings of the East marched out for war. They defeated all opposition on their way to the Jordan Valley. They then defeated the Kings of the Plains in the Valley of Siddim (i.e., the Dead Sea).

Gen. 14 stands alone among all the accounts in the Pentateuch, if not indeed in the Bible as a whole. The setting is international, the approach impersonal, and the narration notable for its unusual style and vocabulary.

—Ephraim A. Speiser

Gen. 14 reveals that at the time of the Patriarchs (2100–1850 BC), when the battle of the kings occurred, the southern basin of the lake was completely dry—that is, the Dead Sea water level must have been lower than 1,300 feet below sea level.

—Yoel Elitzur

Names similar to the kings in this account have been found in other Mesopotamian texts from this period.

—Bryan Wendle

The Dead Sea is called the Salt Sea because its average 32% saline content is ten times more than the 3% average of the oceans.

—Bruce K. Waltke

The Romans called the Dead Sea “Lake Asphaltites” because of the abundance of asphalt in this area.

- The Detrimental Results for Lot (14:11-12)
- The Critical Rescue by Abram (14:13-16)
 - Abram was a man of _____ in a pagan land.
 - Abram was a man of _____ bound to his brother.
 - Abram was a man of _____ but prepared for battle.
 - Abram was a man of _____ ready to act.

2. DON'T _____ ON THE WORLD! (14:17, 21-24).

- The King of Sodom dictates his terms to Abram (14:17, 21).
Give me the _____; you take the goods (14:21; Matt. 16:26).
- Abram desires nothing from the King of Sodom (14:22-24).
I have lifted my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take...anything that is yours... (14:22-23a).

3. _____ IN THE LORD'S BLESSINGS! (14:18-20)

- The identity of Melchizedek (14:18; cf. Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:1-3)
- The offering of Melchizedek (14:18; cf. Ex. 29:38-46)
- The blessing of Melchizedek (14:19-20; cf. Ps. 46:4; 47:2; 91:1)
- The submission to Melchizedek (14:20b; cf. Heb. 7:4-28)

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." (Hebrews 7:1-2)

Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.

—John Wayne

Cowardice asks, "Is it safe?"

Consensus asks, "Is it popular?"

Courage asks, "Is it right?"

—Rod Rogers

Abram the Hebrew. Either an ethnic term for a descendant of Eber (10:21; 11:16) or a social term for one who is a foreigner, "one from beyond" (Heb., *ibri*).

God Most High. Hebrew, *El Elyon*. "the Highest, Sovereign God."

Possessor. Hebrew, *qana*, "to erect; create; acquire; own."

Here is a king-priest of the Most High God who is able to mediate God's blessing to Abraham, God's mediator of blessing to the nations (12:3). Accordingly, Melchizedek is greater than any earthly king. Yet he emerges suddenly without comment on his birth or ancestry. Just as quickly he disappears without mention of his fate or death.

—Bruce K. Waltke

Melchizedek was the first priest of God; and first built a temple there, and called the city Jerusalem; which was formerly called Salem.

—Josephus (37-100)

The Midrash identifies Melchizedek with Shem. —Rashi (1040-1105)

The similarity between him [Melchizedek] and his priesthood and Christ and His priesthood is so remarkable that it does appear as though the appearance of Melchizedek to Abraham was one of the Christophanies of the OT.

—G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945)