

Abraham: The Noble Warrior

Gen. 14:1-24

Chase Fluhart

Sunday, May 21, 2023

I. Introduction: An Unbalanced Humanity

After several ‘beginnings’ that brought about calamity, with Abraham and his family the Lord began to unfold His masterplan of redemption for all mankind. But this new beginning does not unfold in a _____. Abraham’s story is unfolding in the midst of a world yet to be redeemed—a world that teeters on the verge of crumbling into violence and disarray. With this unbalanced humanity cast as the background of Gen. 14, Abraham demonstrates what it looks like to be set _____ the world, while not pretending that his life is _____ the world.

II. Text: Genesis 14:1-24

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, 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). . . . 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. . . . Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. . . . 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’ . . .

III. Context & Overview of the War

Gen. 14 begins by delineating two opposing sides—the Canaanite cohort against a Babylonian alliance. Both sides are striving to build up their own petty _____. As the conflict plays out, the Canaanite kings are routed, Sodom and the other cities are sacked, and Lot is taken captive by the Babylonians (v. 12). With Lot taken, Abraham is pulled into the conflict. Abraham shows himself to be the noble warrior: brave and decisive in battle. He is the _____ who does not simply attend to the man struck down by bandits, but he goes out and fights the thugs, defeats them, and frees his neighbor from their clutches. The Lord blesses his mission so that Abraham and his small troop successfully route an enemy far stronger and more numerous than his own company. And Abraham goes home with the spoils.

IV. The Spoils of War

Now that Abraham is in possession of all the goods and people taken from the kings’ campaigns, a question surfaces: What is Abraham going to do with the spoils of _____? This is the real _____ of our chapter. The military conflict only served as a backdrop for this main event.

Throughout the Old Testament, the spoils of war function as a critical _____. The battle is one thing. It required of Abraham and of his men bravery and faith. But with the Lord, victory comes easy. How one *handles* that victory, however, is revealing (Josh. 7; 1 Sam 15). Victory is a mighty temptation, and it tests Abraham’s allegiance to the Lord. This test is played out through the drama of two kings: Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness and of Peace, and Bera, the King of Sodom.

V. Lessons from Abraham

Like Abraham, we, too, live in a world yet to be _____. God's plan of redemption *is* unfolding, but the backdrop is one of warring rebels, each pursuing their own selfish ambition, filling the world with violence and corruption at every level. We are the heirs of the Abrahamic promises—even of the *expanded* Abrahamic promises. We are promised not simply the land of Israel, but *this entire earth*. It is all ours. We can survey the length, the breadth, the width, the expanse of it, and it is all ours, for it belongs to Christ, who is the _____ of the Church. But how many greed-driven wars are waged on its terrain. How many petty tyrants are in vain trying to build up their own little utopias, their own towers of Babel—all the while crushing the weak and innocent under the wheels of their machinations. Our world is not much different from Abraham's and Scripture would have us follow his lead as we, too, seek to walk by faith.

Lesson #1: Shun Worldly Wars

First, we learn that we cannot fight like the _____ fights. Abraham did not enter the war because he was trying to expand his own kingdom against all those rival kingdoms inhabiting the land. Even though he was promised the land, he knew that this was not the way he would come to inherit it. Those who live by the sword, will die by the sword. And those who fight for their own petty causes, will die at the hands of others fighting for *their* own petty causes. Instead of fighting like the rest of the world, Abraham entrusted his case to the Lord, and waited upon Him. He set his hope in God and in His promises, and refused to enter into mankind's worldly wars (cf. Ps. 37:1-4).

Lesson #2: Shun Pacifism & Cowardice

But, second, we are not _____. We are not cowards. We do not fight like the world fights, but we do and must fight when God calls us to. Abraham remained neutral so long as the clash involved those outside of his care. But when Lot was taken captive, there was no delay. He jumped into action. He mustered his small troop and against all the odds went to save his nephew.

In our day, Christians have been far too removed from the battle. The kings of Babylon and the kings of Canaan have fought for the cultural throne, in order to legislate and rule and judge and educate as they please, and Christians have been content to let them do so. But our churches and our families are caught up in the conflict, and taken captive—and what have we done? Many have simply sat out. Some have been content to just lay down and roll over. But that's not what Abraham did. That's not what Christ did. Abraham entered the fray when Lot was in trouble, and our God entered the world when His Bride was in need.

Lesson #3: Shun Devilish Deals

Third, we must remember that even in victory we will meet with _____. The devil does not stop just because he lost a battle. He changes gears. He puts on another face. He no longer roars like a lion, but appears to us as an angel of light. Our enemies are sly as serpents. If they cannot beat us, they will seek to _____ us. They will flatter you, make you feel good, give you gifts, praise your work—but all for self-serving ends. They do these things so that they can sink their hooks into you, and make you into a puppet instead of their full-blooded rival. Abraham saw this. His vision was clear, and he was on guard against the deceits of Sodom and of Satan.

VI. Conclusion