

# Genesis 14 Commentary

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Summary Chart of The Book of Genesis								
Focus	Foundation Events (Four Events) (Events Predominant)				Foundation People (Four People) (People Predominant)			
Divisions	Creation (Ge 1-2)	Fall (Ge 3-5)	Flood (Ge 6-9)	Nations (Ge 10-12)	Abraham's Faith (Ge 12-24)	Isaac's Family (Ge 25-26)	Jacob's Conflicts (Ge 27-36)	Joseph's Calamity (Ge 37-50)
Topics	Beginning of the Human Race (Race As A Whole)				Beginning of the Hebrew Race (Family of Abraham)			
	Faithfulness of Mankind (Noah)				Faithfulness of One Man's Family (Abraham)			
	Historical				Biographical			
Place	Eastward From Eden to Ur				Westward From Canaan to Egypt			

Time	~2000+ Years (20% of Genesis) (~4004-2090BC)	About 300 Years 193 Yr in Canaan, 93 Yr in Egypt (80% of Genesis) (2090-1804BC)
	Primeval History of Humanity	Patriarchal History of Israel
Author	Moses	

## BEGINNINGS

- Ge 1:1-25 - The Universe (Everything)
- Ge 1:26-2:25 - The Human Race
- Ge 3:1-7 - Sin Enters the World
- Ge 3:8-24- God Promises Redemption from Bondage to Sin
- Ge 4:1-15 - Family Life
- Ge 4:16ff - Civilization
- Ge 10:1-11:32 - The Nations of the World
- Ge 12:1ff - The Story of Israel and the Jews



**Abraham believed God** (Gal 3:6<sup>+</sup>, Ge 15:5,6<sup>+</sup>)

**John Phillips Outline - [Borrow Exploring Genesis](#)**

**The Progenitor: Abraham** Ge 12:1–25:18

**John Phillips Outline - [Borrow Exploring Genesis](#)**

**The Progenitor: Abraham** Ge 12:1–25:18

The Power of Faith (Ge 14:1–24)

1. The Desperate Battle (Ge 14:1–11)
  1. The Coalitions (Ge 14:1–2)
  2. The Conflict (Ge 14:3–9)
  3. The Collapse (Ge 14:10–11)
2. The Deluded Brother (Ge 14:12)
3. The Dynamic Believer (Ge 14:13–24)
  1. The Weakness of the Flesh (Ge 14:13)
  2. The Wisdom of the World (Ge 14:14–16)
    1. Abram Acted Swiftly (Ge 14:14)
    2. Abram Acted Sensibly (Ge 14:15)
    3. Abram Acted Successfully (Ge 14:16)
  3. The Wiles of the Devil (Ge 14:17–24)
    1. The Significant Meeting with the King of Salem (Ge 14:17–20)
    2. The Sinister Meeting with the King of Sodom (Ge 14:21–24)
      1. The Subtle Temptation of Abram (Ge 14:21)
      2. The Simple Testimony of Abram (Ge 14:22–24)

**Genesis 14:1 And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,**

- **Shinar:** Ge 10:10 11:2 Isa 11:11 Da 1:2 Zec 5:11
- **Ellasar:** Isa 37:12
- **Elam:** Ge 10:22 Isa 21:2 22:6 Jer 25:25 49:34-39 Eze 32:24
- [Sodom and Gomorrah revisited- David Howard](#)
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

This is the first war mentioned in the Bible. Based on the chronology in this chapter, we can state that Chedorlaomer had conquered these 5 kings in the plains adjacent to the Dead.

**And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar**(region of Babylonia), **Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam** - These kings have not been definitively identified in archaeology, but clearly literally existed because God's Word says so!

**And Tidal king of Goiim** - "king of Goyim." The Hebrew term גוי (goyim) means "nations,"

**Ryrie Study Bible** - Though some have dismissed this chapter as being an historical impossibility, archaeological discoveries have demonstrated the existence of a flourishing civilization in Palestine between the twenty-first and nineteenth centuries B.C. and of the savage destruction of the cities at the end of that period. **Amraphel**. Not to be identified with Hammurabi, who lived later. **Shinar**. Babylonia. **Ellasar**. Its identity is uncertain; perhaps a town between Carchemish and Haran in N Mesopotamia. **Elam**. The area that was later Persia. **king of Goiim** (or king of nations). The location of Goiim is uncertain, but Tidal likely ruled over a nomadic people who had not yet formed a kingdom.

**Henry Morris** - Shinar probably refers to Sumeria, and Elam to early Persia. Ellasar was the leading tribe in southern Babylonia and "nations" (Hebrew Goiim) was probably a tribe of northeastern Babylonia. Chedorlaomer seems to have been the chief leader of this confederacy (Genesis 14:4).

Many critics of the Bible refuse to accept Sodom and Gomorrah as real places that were really destroyed, but that puts them at odds with Jesus Who clearly accepted it as a real event declaring...

"And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32 "Remember Lot's wife.(Luke 17:26-32+)

**Genesis 14:2 that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).**

- Sodom: Ge 10:19 13:10 19:24 Isa 1:9,10
- Admah: De 29:23 Ho 11:8
- Zeboiim: 1Sa 13:18 Ne 11:34
- Zoar: Ge 19:20-30 De 34:3 Isa 15:5 Jer 48:34
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **FOUR KINGS COME AGAINST FIVE KINGS**

**that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar)** - The reason for the war becomes clear in Ge 14:4, where we learn that these 5 kings had been paying tribute to Chedorlaomer for 12 years and finally conspired to rebel against him thus inciting his wrath.

**NET NOTE** - Went to war. The conflict here reflects international warfare in the Early and Middle Bronze periods. The countries

operated with overlords and vassals. Kings ruled over city states, or sometimes a number of city states (i.e., nations). Due to their treaties, when one went to war, those confederate with him joined him in battle. It appears here that it is Kedorlaomer's war, because the western city states have rebelled against him (meaning they did not send products as tribute to keep him from invading them).

#### Related Resources:

- [What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Have the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah been found along with evidence they were destroyed by a meteor? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 14:3 All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).**

- salt sea: Ge 19:24 Nu 34:12 De 3:17 Jos 3:16 Ps 107:34
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 14:10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country.

## THE BATTLE OF SIDDIM

**All these** (5 rebel kings) **came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea)**- Who are **all these**? **These** refers to the last 5 kings mentioned in Ge 14:2. The "Valley of Siddim" historically is thought to have yielded much asphalt as one surmise from the allusion to the tar pits (cf. Ge 14:10).

**Came as allies** (chabar) means they joined forces, the Hebrew verb meaning to join together, unite or be allied and thus stresses associations, especially of friendships, marriages, or treaties. The Septuagint translates **chabar** with *sumphoneo* which literally means to "sound together" but comes to mean when speaking of persons that they are of one mind or in agreement. **Chedorlaomer king of Elam** was able to enlist the aid of three other kings to join him in the battle.

**Henry Morris** - "Siddim" meant "cultivated fields," and the vale of Siddim at this time was extremely fertile, supporting the five cities of the plain. The reference to "the salt sea" was probably a later editorial insertion by Moses. At the time of Abram, what is now the Dead Sea was still a freshwater remnant of the great flood, and the whole region was "well watered everywhere" (Genesis 13:10). The exact location of Sodom and her four sister cities is uncertain, although most authorities believe their remains are now submerged beneath the waters of the shallow southern arm of the Dead Sea. There is also the possibility that the actual cities were located on higher elevations overlooking five ephemeral streams emptying into the lake, with the inhabitants working the fields below during the daytime, then living in the cooler heights above at night.

**Genesis 14:4 Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled.**

- **they served:** Ge 9:25,26
- **they rebelled:** Eze 17:15
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## REBELLION AFTER 12 YEARS OF SUBJECTION

**Twelve years they** (the five kings in Ge 14:2) **had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled** - This fact explains the invasion of the 4 kings described in Ge 14:1-2.

**NET NOTE** - The story serves as a foreshadowing of the plight of the kingdom of Israel later. Eastern powers came and forced the western kingdoms into submission. Each year, then, they would send tribute east—to keep them away. Here, in the thirteenth year, they refused to send the tribute (just as later Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria). And so in the fourteenth year the eastern powers came to put them down again. This account from Abram's life taught future generations that God can give victory over such threats

—that people did not have to live in servitude to tyrants from the east.

**Genesis 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,**

- Rephaims: Ge 15:20 De 3:11,20,22 2Sa 5:18,22 23:13 1Ch 11:15 14:9 Isa 17:5
- Ashteroth: The same as Ashteroth, a city of Bashan, where Og afterwards reigned. De 1:4 Jos 12:4 13:12,31
- Zuzims: De 2:20-23 1Ch 4:40 Ps 78:51 105:23,27 106:22
- Emims: De 2:10,11
- Shaveh Kiriathaim: or, the plains of Kiriathaim, Kiriathaim was beyond Jordan, 10 miles west-ward from Medeba, and afterwards belonged to Sihon, king of Heshbon. Jos 13:19 Jer 48:1,23
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated ([nakah](#)) the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim - Defeated ([nakah](#))** means to attack and in this context the strike was successful which accounts for the translation as "defeated." The Septuagint translates **defeated ([nakah](#))** with katakopto which means to break or cut in pieces and thus to cut down, slay or destroy, a picturesque description of the defeat of the 5 rebellious kings.

[Warren Wiersbe](#) has an interesting insight into why 5 kings were defeated on their home turf by 4 invading kings - Ezekiel 16:49–50 suggests that the lifestyle of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did not prepare them for conflict. (Cf. Ezek. 16:49–50 with 1 John 2:15–17.)

**Henry Morris** - Some of these Canaanite tribes actually seem to have been demon-possessed, in the same manner as the demon-energized population before the Flood (see notes on Genesis 6:1-4). The Rephaim ("strong ones") and the Zamzummim ("powerful ones," probably the same as the Zuzim) along with the Emim, all seem to have been of the sons of Anak, or the Anakim, and all seem to have been giants (Deuteronomy 2:10,20; Joshua 15:13). In Numbers 13:33, these Anakim are actually said to have been "giants" (Hebrew nephilim, the same word as used in Genesis 6:4). Furthermore, the term rephaim is also used to refer to some of the spirits of the wicked dead in Hades (Job 26:5; Proverbs 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isaiah 14:9; 26:14). All of this suggests another irruption of demonic spirits after the Flood, possibly at the rebellion at Babel, with giant progeny again being produced through demon-possessed parents. Their descendants inhabited Canaan.

**Genesis 14:6 and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.**

- Horites: Ge 36:8,20-30 De 2:12,22 1Ch 1:38-42
- Elparan: or, the plain of Paran, Ge 16:7 21:21 Nu 12:16 13:3 Hab 3:3
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness-** "The line of attack ran down the eastern side of the Jordan Valley into the desert, and then turned and came up the valley to the cities of the plain." ([NET NOTE](#))

**Henry Morris** - The Horites are known to archaeologists as the Hurrians, a leading tribe of the ancient Middle East.

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**QUESTION - [Who were the Horites in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Horites were an ancient people group who had some dealings with Abraham's family and the [Edomites](#). The little we know of the Horites comes completely from Scripture.

The Horites are first mentioned in Genesis 14:6. They were defeated by the alliance of kings that also defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and took Lot and his family captive. The Horites are mentioned as living in Mt. Seir at that time.

The Horites are next mentioned in Genesis 36 where Esau's descendants are listed. Esau settled in the hill country of Seir, which was also the territory of the descendants of Seir the Horite. It would make sense that, if Seir was the leader of the clan, he would name the mountain area where he and his clan settled as Mt. Seir. The descendants of Seir are given in some detail in verses 20–30, and they are noted as Horite chieftains. Deuteronomy 2:12 tells us that Esau's descendants displaced and destroyed the Horites. Deuteronomy 2:22 tells us that the Lord destroyed the Horites so that Esau's descendants could inhabit their territory, also

called Edom.

Beyond this, there is no more information about the Horites. They are last mentioned in Deuteronomy 2, except for 1 Chronicles 1, which simply reiterates the information found in the Pentateuch.

While Genesis does provide some detailed information about the descendants of Seir the Horite, we know very little about the larger group of Horites or even if there was a larger group. The etymology of the term *Horite* may have to do with those who dwell in a “cave” or “hole.” It is possible that the Horites were cave-dwellers or that Seir himself was a cave-dweller so that the name “Seir the Horite” simply means “Seir the cave dweller.” If this is true, then Seir may have been the first of the line, and, as his family/clan grew, the description eventually took the force of a proper noun—much the same way that last names developed in English usage during the Middle Ages.

The fact that the Horites are mentioned in Scripture with no introduction or explanation would indicate that the original hearers/readers of Genesis were familiar with them and the location of Mt. Seir. There are many things in Scripture that we wonder about because we are separated by so many years. For the original audience, the accounts of the Horites would have been rather recent history and required no further explanation. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Genesis 14:7 Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar.**

- **En-mishpat or Kadesh**, was about 8 leagues south of Hebron. Ge 16:14 20:1 Nu 20:1 De 1:19,46
- **Amalekites**: Ge 36:12,16 Ex 17:8-16 Nu 14:43,45 24:20 1Sa 15:1-35 27:1-12 1Sa 30:1-31
- **Hazezon-tamar**: Called by the Chaldee, "En-gaddi," a town on the western shore of the Dead Sea. Jos 15:62 2Ch 20:2
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar.**

**Henry Morris** - The Amalekites were descended from Amalek, a grandson of Esau, and later inhabited a region west of the Dead Sea. This note was evidently inserted by Moses in his editing of Genesis. The Amorites were probably the dominant tribe in Canaan at this time.

**Genesis 14:8 And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim,**

- same: Ge 14:2 13:10 19:20,22
- in: Ge 14:3,10
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

**And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim** - They are coming out against an army that had been battle tested and experienced repeated victories.

**Genesis 14:9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.**

- Ge 14:1
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **FOUR FIGHT FIVE**

**against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.**

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## QUESTION - [Who was Chedorlaomer / Kedorlaomer?](#)

**ANSWER** - Chedorlaomer (also spelled *Kedorlaomer*) was a king who was a contemporary of [Abraham and Lot](#). Chedorlaomer is mentioned in Genesis 14:9 as the king of [Elam](#), which was an ancient civilization in the region that is now Iran. Elam was also called Susiana, a name associated with its capital, Susa, the location of the palace of King Ahasuerus, a later king of that same region (Esther 1:2).

In biblical accounts, Chedorlaomer was a fierce and formidable king. He had formed an alliance with a group of other kings (Genesis 14:1–3), and it appears he was their leader (verse 4). After some time, some of those kings rebelled against Chedorlaomer, but he was still able to go to war and defeat the Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, and [Horites](#); he also conquered the people who lived in the future land of the Amalekites and [Amorites](#) (verses 6–7). At that point, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and a few other regional kings went out to fight against Chedorlaomer's coalition (verse 9); they were apparently unable to withstand Chedorlaomer's armies, and, as they fled to the hills, some of them fell into the "bitumen pits" or tar pits in the [Valley of Siddim](#) (verse 10). Chedorlaomer was clearly an able general and a shrewd, clever enemy. As he raided Sodom and Gomorrah, he "carried off Abram's nephew [Lot](#) and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom" (verse 12).

One of Lot's company escaped and ran to tell Abram of Lot's plight. In response, Abram took 318 of his own men and gave chase. Abram and his men caught up with Chedorlaomer and the other kings at Dan (Genesis 14:14). "During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them. . . . He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people" (verses 15–16). How did Abram accomplish this, with only 318 men, against several kings and their armies led by Chedorlaomer, who was fierce and mighty in battle? The answer appears in verse 20. [Melchizedek](#), the king and priest of Salem, indicated that it was "God Most High" who had delivered Abram's enemies into his hand.

In the book of Hebrews, Melchizedek is revealed as a [type](#) of Jesus Christ. His name, Melchizedek, means "king of righteousness," and his title "king of Salem" means "king of peace." Of Melchizedek, the writer of Hebrews says, "Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever" (Hebrews 7:3). The arrival of Melchizedek just after the defeat of Chedorlaomer was a sign to Abram that God was his salvation and his protection, and the same is true for the followers of Jesus Christ today. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 14:10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country.**

- **tar pit** or slime pits, Places where asphalt or bitumen sprung out of the ground Ge 11:3
- **fell**: Jos 8:24 Ps 83:10 Isa 24:18 Jer 48:44
- **to the hill country**: Ge 19:17,30
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### Related Passage:

Genesis 11:3+ They said to one another, "**Come, let us make** bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and **they used tar for mortar**.

## THE VALLEY FULL OF TAR PITS

**Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits** - This is a parenthetical description of the valley. **Tar** (chemar) is same word used in Ge 11:3+ where they used "tar for mortar" to make bricks stick together, but here it would make people stick!

**And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them but those who survived** (Heb = "the rest") **fled to the hill country** - ESV = "as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled bto the hill country." It seems the kings did not even know the lay of their own land and thus they got stuck in the **tar pits**! Some of the kings and/or their armies escaped. And later we read that the king of Sodom survived, even though this passage suggests he fell into a pit. Presumably the enemy did not find him stuck in the pit.

**Henry Morris** - These "slime pits" were so extensive that the Dead Sea was called the Asphalt Sea by early writers. They probably represented accumulations of organic debris from the Flood, collecting in the unique basins of the great Rift Valley which traverses the region.



**Genesis 14:11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.**

- Ge 14:16,21 12:5 De 28:31,35,51
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **FOUR VICTORS TAKE THEIR SPOILS**

**Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed** - They refers to the 4 kings in Ge 14:1. Clearly they also took captives including Lot because in Ge 14:21 the king of Sodom requests that Abram give the people to him.

**Genesis 14:12 They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.**

- Lot: Ge 11:27 12:5
- who: Ge 13:12,13 Nu 16:26 Job 9:23 Jer 2:17-19 1Ti 6:9-11 Rev 3:19 18:4
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **LOT ENSNARED BY SODOM IS CAPTURED BY THE KINGS**

**They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.** First Lot "looked" at Sodom, then he "lived near" (NIV) Sodom (Ge 13:12 NIV), and finally he lived in Sodom (Ge 14:12). And ultimately Sodom began to live in him so to speak. Tragically by "what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds" (2Pe 2:8). The sovereign God is always behind the scenes, controlling the events.

**THOUGHT** - Three small prepositions linked with the verbs "looked" and "lived" changed Lot's life - looked **AT**, lived **NEAR**, lived **IN**. What's the takeaway? Be very careful what you **LOOK AT**! What you **LOOK AT** may begin a downward spiral in your spiritual life that is difficult to reverse!!! Memorize, practice and pray Psalm 101:3! Recall Paul's words in 1Co 10:6,11+ warning us to remember OT examples like Lot, so that we might walk wisely in this evil, satan controlled world system! And as we look at Lot's backsliding, isn't this the way the world deceptively and slowly and subtly seduces us and eventually ensnares us in its depraved web? Father, by Your Spirit, enable us to have vertical vision, so that we keep setting our mind on the things above and not on the things that are on this passing world (Col 3:2+, 1Jn 2:17+). In Jesus' Name. Amen.

And keep in mind that in this case this war was not so much about 5 rebel kings (God could have kept them from rebelling), but about one rebellious righteous man who was now experiencing the Lord's hand of discipline.

Hebrews 12:5-6 says "you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES (AND THAT INCLUDES LOT!)."

*If you identify with the world,  
then expect to suffer what the world suffers.*

[Warren Wiersbe](#) has an interesting analysis on Lot's lot - Whatever purposes the kings may have had in this war, God had something special in mind for Lot: he became a prisoner of war. Lot had looked at Sodom and moved toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10–13), and now he was living in Sodom (14:12; see Ps. 1:1). You might not guess it from his conduct, but Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:6–8). Where did he fail? While in Egypt with Abraham, Lot had gotten a taste of the world and enjoyed it. Scripture doesn't record that Lot ever built an altar and sought the Lord, as did his uncle Abraham. Abraham was the friend of God (James 2:23), but Lot was the **friend** of the world (Jas 4:4). In time, Lot **conformed** to the world (Ro 12:2), and when Sodom lost the war, Lot was **condemned** with the world (1Co 11:32). If you identify with the world, then expect to suffer what the world suffers. Lot's capture was God's way of disciplining him and reminding him that he had no business living in Sodom. No doubt Abraham was praying faithfully for his nephew that he might separate himself from the world and start living like a true "stranger and pilgrim." God disciplines His children because He loves them and wants the best for them (Pr 3:11–12; Heb. 12:1–11). If we don't listen to His rebukes, then He



has to get our attention some other way; and that way is usually very painful.

**Genesis 14:13 Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram.**

- one: 1Sa 4:12 Job 1:15
- the: Ge 39:14 40:15 41:12 43:32 Ex 2:6,11 Jon 1:9 2Co 11:22 Php 2:5
- dwelt: Ge 13:18
- Mamre: Ge 14:24 13:18
- Amorite: Ge 10:16 Nu 21:21
- and these: Ge 14:24
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries



Source: [Abraham: Following God's Promise](#)

### FUGITIVE ESCAPES TO ABRAM THE HEBREW

**Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew**([ibri/ivri](#); Lxx = perates = migrant)- This man would bring Abram news that would stir him to action in Ge 14:14 to come to the aid of his kin.

**Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram** - Abram must have surely known about the war but at this time chose not to get involved.

One might question Abram's alliance with pagans but [Wiersbe](#) has some helpful thoughts - While believers must not compromise with the unsaved in matters of spiritual walk and ministry (2 Cor. 6:14—7:1), they may cooperate when it comes to caring for humanity and “promoting the general welfare.” When you see that people are in trouble, you don’t ask them for a testimony before helping them (Luke 10:25–37; Gal. 6:10). Sacrificial service is one way of showing the love of Christ to others (Matt. 5:16). If Christians don’t carry their share of the common burdens of life, how can they be the salt of the earth and the light of the world? For example, Joseph served in Egypt, and God used him to preserve his family and the Jewish nation. Nehemiah served a heathen king, yet God used the authority and resources of that king to enable Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. Esther was a Jewess married to a Gentile ruler, and God used her to protect the Jewish people from almost certain annihilation. Daniel in Babylon never compromised his convictions, but he did assist several rulers and was greatly used by God. We may cooperate with different people at different times to achieve different purposes, but we should always be conscious of our obligation to glorify God.

**Hebrew** ([05680](#)) ([ibri/ivri](#)) is a term used of Israel most often in a context that includes non-Israelites either as speakers (e.g., Ge 39:14; Exod 2:11; 1 Sam 13:19) or auditors (e.g., Gen 40:15; Exod 10:3; Jonah 1:9). The origin may be from ʿēber, “beyond,” originally applied to Abraham as coming from beyond the Euphrates (Josh 24:2ff.). Or it may be a patronymic from Eber (Gen 10:21, 24), signifying the descendants of Eber.

**NET NOTE** - The meaning of the word **‘Hebrew’** has proved elusive. It may be related to the verb “to cross over,” perhaps meaning “immigrant.” Or it might be derived from the name of Abram’s ancestor Eber (see Ge 11:14–16+).

**Barnhouse** thinks that “The word Hebrew comes from a root that means *passed over*. The Septuagint translates it *the passenger*.” In Ge 14:13 the Greek word is perates which means migrant or wanderer.

**Gilbrant** - Used mostly in the Pentateuch and 1 Samuel, 'ivrî is a proper noun meaning "Hebrew." Potiphar's wife accused Joseph, "a Hebrew man," of forcing himself on her (Gen. 39:14; see v. 17 where she identifies him as a "Hebrew slave"). Moses tried to protect a Hebrew man from an Egyptian only to find two Hebrew men fighting each other (Exo. 2:11, 13). Exodus 21:2-11 gives rules regarding the proper treatment of Hebrew slaves (cf. Deut. 15:12; Jer. 34:8-20).

Hebrews are often referred to as Hebrews by foreigners: the Egyptians in Gen. 37-50 and Exo. 1-15 and the Philistines in 1 Sam. 4, 13, 14. Thus, "Hebrew" is used to distinguish the nationality of a person or persons, male or female (cf. Exo. 1:15, a Hebrew midwife). Jonah 1:9 is the only text in which a person describes himself as a Hebrew.

**The etymology of the word is difficult to trace.** It may be derived from an Akkadian term *habiru*. This word likely referred to a group of fugitives. If this connection is valid, then some transformation of the meaning must have occurred in the Hebrew adoption of this term. With the exception of the specific reference to Hebrew slaves in Exo. 21, this term is not a social distinction as it was in Akkadian. Throughout its use in the OT, it is a designation for the whole ethnic population of the Israelites. Nevertheless, since "Hebrew" is a designation often ascribed to the Israelites in refuge (especially in Genesis and Exodus), a derogatory nuance may remain from its Akkadian origin.

In postexilic and pre-Hellenistic times, "**Hebrew**" was not commonly used as a general designation for Israelites. In the NT, only three passages use the term "Hebrew." In Acts 6:1, "Hebrew" is used to designate the Jewish Christian congregation. Paul called himself a Hebrew to show that he was a Hebrew-speaking Jew rather than a Greek-speaking Jew (2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Ibri - 32v - Hebrew(9), Hebrew man(2), Hebrew man...woman(1), Hebrew woman(1), Hebrew women(3), Hebrews(17), Hebrews'(1).** Gen. 14:13; Gen. 39:14; Gen. 39:17; Gen. 40:15; Gen. 41:12; Gen. 43:32; Exod. 1:15; Exod. 1:16; Exod. 1:19; Exod. 2:6; Exod. 2:7; Exod. 2:11; Exod. 2:13; Exod. 3:18; Exod. 5:3; Exod. 7:16; Exod. 9:1; Exod. 9:13; Exod. 10:3; Exod. 21:2; Deut. 15:12; 1 Sam. 4:6; 1 Sam. 4:9; 1 Sam. 13:3; 1 Sam. 13:7; 1 Sam. 13:19; 1 Sam. 14:11; 1 Sam. 14:21; 1 Sam. 29:3; Jer. 34:9; Jer. 34:14; Jon. 1:9

**Genesis 14:14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.**

- his brother: Ge 11:27-31 13:8 Pr 17:17 24:11,12 Ga 6:1,2 1Jn 2:18
- armed: or, led forth, Ps 45:3-5 68:12 Isa 41:2,3
- born: Ge 12:5,16 15:3 17:12,27 18:19 23:6 Ec 2:7
- Dan: De 34:1 Judges 18:29 20:1
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **ABRAM'S ARMY OF 318 TRAINED MEN**

**When Abram heard that his relative (nephew) had been taken captive** - Note how the sovereignty of God made sure that one surviving fugitive would make it safely to Abram's tent and pass on the news about Lot. This war was really a lot about Lot and God's hand of discipline on him! Once Abram learns of Lot's lot, he moves out. Lot was the son of Haran, Abram's brother (Gen 11:27).

*Backsliders bring not only misery on themselves  
but trouble on others.*

**he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan** - To assemble 318 men all from his household gives us some indication of the great wealth of Abram. We are not told how many men were in the forces of the 4 kings who defeated the kings of Sodom, et al, but there were surely more than 318. There is little doubt that Abram's victory over the 4 kings reflects the sovereign hand of God protecting Abram and ultimately the Messianic line. Note that this was no small task for Abram for they would have to travel approximately 120 miles to Dan (assuming it is the same Dan described later in the Bible). We are not told how they made this trip (? on foot, camels, mules, etc) or how long it took, but as the text shows it was in God's perfect timing as they routed the enemy in Ge 14:15.

*Abraham was separated, but not isolated;  
he was independent, but not indifferent*  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**NET NOTE** on **Dan** - The use of the name **Dan** reflects a later perspective. The Danites did not migrate to this northern territory until centuries later (see Judg 18:29). Furthermore Dan was not even born until much later. By inserting this name a scribe has clarified the location of the region.

The gates of the city of **Dan** from Abram's time have been discovered by archaeologists - [Wikipedia](#) adds "The excavators of Tel Dan uncovered a city gate made of mud bricks on top of [megalithic basalt](#) blocs, or [orthostats](#),<sup>[21]</sup> estimated to have been built during the Middle Bronze Age around 1750 BC.<sup>[22]</sup> Its popular name is **Abraham's Gate**, due to the biblical story that Abraham travelled to Dan to rescue his nephew [Lot](#) (Genesis 14:14). The gate was restored in the late 2000s, and has become a popular tourist attraction.<sup>[23]</sup>

**Genesis 14:15 He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.**

- And he: Ps 112:5
- smote: Isa 41:2,3
- Damascus: De 15:2 1Ki 15:18 Ac 9:2
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### ABRAM'S STRATEGY: DIVIDE & CONQUER & SURPRISE

**He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated ([nakah](#)) them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus** - Did Abram speak with God before he set out against a formidable force? The text does not say, but I think he did given what amounts to almost a supernatural or miraculous outcome! In any event, if you are experiencing spiritual warfare, be sure to consult Jehovah! **Defeated** is the same verb [nakah](#) used of the 4 kings who defeated their foes in Ge 14:5, 7, and now it is used to describe their defeat. The Septuagint uses the verb [patasso](#) meaning to inflict a heavy or fatal blow. Abram' pursued the enemy forces about 100 miles (Hobah, north of Damascus) and liberated captives and the booty.

**NET NOTE** on **north** - Heb "left." Directions in ancient Israel were given in relation to the east rather than the north.

**Defeated** (struck)([05221](#)) [nākāh](#) meaning to beat, to strike, to wound, to hit, to smite, to strike dead. Thus the meaning of the verb ranges from hitting to killing. The suffering servant in Isaiah's prophecy ultimately became the recipient of God's punishment for Israel's sin. "Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, **struck down** (smitten) by God, and afflicted" (Isa 53:4)

**Baker** - There are many instances of striking physically (Ex. 21:15, 19; Job 16:10; Ps. 3:7[8]; Song 5:7). This word is also used in a different sense, as when the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were stricken blind by the two angels (Gen. 19:11); when a priest stuck a fork into the kettle (1 Sam. 2:14); when people clapped their hands (2 Ki. 11:12); or when people verbally abused Jeremiah (Jer. 18:18). God struck the Egyptians with plagues (Ex. 3:20); and struck people down in judgment (Isa. 5:25).([Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.](#))

**Nakah in Genesis** - Gen. 4:15; Gen. 8:21; Gen. 14:5; Gen. 14:7; Gen. 14:15; Gen. 14:17; Gen. 19:11; Gen. 32:8; Gen. 32:11; Gen. 34:30; Gen. 36:35; Gen. 37:21

**Genesis 14:16 He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.**

- Ge 14:11,12 12:2 1Sa 30:8,18,19 Isa 41:2
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### ABRAMS RETRIEVES SPOILS AND "SPOILED" NEPHEW

**He brought back all the goods** - NET = "He retrieved all the stolen property." It is worth emphasizing the adjective **all**, for God

enabled Abram to win and to not lose any of the goods the enemy had taken.

**And also brought back his relative** (nephew) **Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people** - One might have thought that this negative event, clearly a divine "warning signal" (and discipline) would have gained Lot's attention and he would have moved out of Sodom. The fact that he stayed clearly demonstrates how much of Sodom had "moved into him." In fact in Genesis 19:1 he is at the city gate suggesting he has been voted onto the "city council!" The next move of God on Sodom would not be so kind, for He would soon destroy the despicable place (Ge 19:24-25).

**THOUGHT** - There is a principle here. We can play with sin so long that we become ensnared by it and insensitive to what it is costing us to remain in its grip! I think this is why David prayed "Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins and do not let them rule over me!" (Ps 19:13). David would not have even needed to pray that prayer if sin would never be able to "rule over" a believer. Lot was a believer and yet, like a moth to a flame, he returned to the cesspool of Sodom! **Beware** when you naively toy with any sin, because sin does not play games, but continually seeks to reign in our mortal body (Ro 6:12+, cf Ge 4:7+)!

**Guzik** sees Abram's rescue of his kinsman Lot as a picture of our Kinsman Redeemer's rescue from strong enemies - We may see a story in the account of Abram's rescue of Lot. We were those off in sin and shame, rescued by one who left his safety and happiness. Our kinsman redeemer went to great trouble and distance, and with His courage and daring defeated the mighty enemy that had put us in bondage, and He took all the enemy's spoil.

**Genesis 14:17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).**

- **to:** Judges 11:34 1Sa 18:6 Pr 14:20 19:4
- **after:** Heb 7:1
- **king's:** 2Sa 18:18
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 18:18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to preserve my name." So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

## **THE VICTOR RETURNS HOME**

**Then after** - Marks progression in the narrative.

**His return from the defeat of [Chedorlaomer](#) and the kings who were with him** - This repeats the victory of one godly man over 4 pagan kings. This reminds me of Paul's encouraging words in Romans 8:31 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" And Romans 8:37 "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."

**The king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley)**- The defeated pagan king witnessed the total victory of Abram and 318 men. One would think that this victory against all odds would have prompted this pagan king to ask him "How is such a thing possible?" Clearly this king's eyes were on the temporal and he had no interest in the eternal.

**THOUGHT** - Note that this temptation to Abram came after a great spiritual victory. We must imitate Abram and must be on high alert after we have experienced a spiritual victory or had a particularly precious time with the LORD. It is at those times that the enemy will often come slithering in to seduce us. When we are basking in spiritual victory, we are apt to be very vulnerable to Satan's spiritual attacks.

**NET NOTE** - The King's Valley is possibly a reference to what came to be known later as the Kidron Valley.

**Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.**

- **king:** Ps 76:2 Heb 7:1,2
- **bread:** Mt 26:26-29 Ga 6:10
- **the priest:** Ps 110:4 Heb 5:6,10 6:20 7:1,3,10-22
- **the most:** Ru 3:10 2Sa 2:5 Ps 7:17 50:14 57:2 Mic 6:6 Ac 7:48 16:17
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalms 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

[Uitley](#) has an interesting note on this psalm - "The Psalm 110 passage caused the Dead Sea Scrolls community to expect two Messiahs. (1) a royal one from the tribe of Judah (2) a priestly one from the tribe of Levi

Hebrews 7:3+ (**MELCHIZEDEK**) Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

### MAN OF MYSTERY: MELCHIZEDEK KING AND PRIEST

And **Melchizedek** king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God(**el**) Most High (**elyon**; Lxx - [hupsistos](#)) - Where did he come from and how had he become a worshiper of Yahweh, as well as a priest and king. We will surely come to know in heaven! **Melchizedek** means "king of righteousness." He was king of Salem or Jerusalem. If we compare Ps 76:2 we read God's "tabernacle is in Salem (NLT = "Jerusalem"); His dwelling place also is in Zion." In Joshua's day Jerusalem was called by the Canaanite name "Jebus." **Bread and wine** are not a foreshadowing of the Lord's Supper!

**God Most High** - See study of [El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All](#)

**NET NOTE** on **Melchizedek** and **Salem** - Salem is traditionally identified as the Jebusite stronghold of old Jerusalem. Accordingly, there has been much speculation about its king. Though some have identified him with the preincarnate Christ or with Noah's son Shem, it is far more likely that Melchizedek was a Canaanite royal priest whom God used to renew the promise of the blessing to Abram, perhaps because Abram considered Melchizedek his spiritual superior. But Melchizedek remains an enigma. In a book filled with genealogical records he appears on the scene without a genealogy and then disappears from the narrative. In Psalm 110 the LORD declares that the Davidic king is a royal priest after the pattern of **Melchizedek**. It is his royal priestly status that makes **Melchizedek** a type of Christ: He was identified with Jerusalem, superior to the ancestor of Israel, and both a king and a priest. Unlike the normal Canaanites, this man served "God Most High" (אֱלֹהֵי עֵלְיוֹן, 'el 'elyon)—one sovereign God, who was the creator of all the universe. Abram had in him a spiritual brother.

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**God** (0410)(el) 'lh is the assumed root of 'ēl, 'ēlōah and 'ēlōhîm, which mean "god" or "God." W E Vine - This term was the most common general designation of deity in the ancient Near East. While it frequently occurred alone, 'ēl was also combined with other words to constitute a compound term for deity, or to identify the nature and functions of the "god" in some manner. Thus the expression "God, the God of Israel" (Gen. 33:20) identified the specific activities of Israel's God. (See also article on "El" in the [Dictionary of Deities and Demons - page 298](#) - borrow)

In the ancient world, knowledge of a person's name was believed to give one power over that person. A knowledge of the character and attributes of pagan "gods" was thought to enable the worshipers to manipulate or influence the deities in a more effective way than they could have if the deity's name remained unknown. To that extent, the vagueness of the term 'ēl frustrated persons who hoped to obtain some sort of power over the deity, since the name gave little or no indication of the god's character. This was particularly true for El, the chief Canaanite god. The ancient Semites stood in mortal dread of the superior powers exercised by the gods and attempted to propitiate them accordingly. They commonly associated deity with the manifestation and use of enormous power. Perhaps this is reflected in the curious Hebrew phrase, "the power ['ēl] of my hand" (Gen. 31:29, kjv; rsv, "It is in my power"; cf. Deut. 28:32). Some Hebrew phrases in the Psalms associated 'ēl with impressive natural features, such as the cedar trees of Lebanon (Psa. 80:10) or mountains (Psa. 36:6). In these instances, 'ēl conveys a clear impression of grandeur or majesty.

Names with 'ēl as one of their components were common in the Near East in the second millennium b.c. The names Methusael (Gen. 4:18) and Ishmael (Gen. 16:11) come from a very early period. In the Mosaic period,



'ēl was synonymous with the Lord who delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and made them victorious in battle (Num. 24:8). This tradition of the Hebrew 'ēl as a "God" who revealed Himself in power and entered into a covenant relationship with His people was prominent in both poetry (Psa. 7:11; Psa. 85:8) and prophecy (Isa. 43:12; Isa. 46:9). The name of 'ēl was commonly used by the Israelites to denote supernatural provision or power. This was both normal and legitimate, since the covenant between "God" and Israel assured an obedient and holy people that the creative forces of the universe would sustain and protect at all times. Equally, if they became disobedient and apostate, these same forces would punish them severely. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Jack B Scott** in [TWOT - PAGE 41](#) has the following discussion of **EI** - God, god, mighty one, strength. In the common use of the word to denote either the generic name "god" or "the God" of Israel, the ASV and RSV are usually alike. However, in some specialized uses of the term they differ from KJV and from one another, e.g. ASV and RSV treat Judges 9:46 as a proper noun "El-Berith" while KJV translates "god"; Psalm 29:1, RSV translates "heavenly beings" while ASV has "sons of the mighty"; Psalm 50:1, ASV and RSV have "mighty one," KJV "mighty God;" Psalm 80:10 [H 11], ASV renders "cedars of God," RSV has "mighty cedars" and KJV simply "goodly cedars": Psalm 82:1, ASV says "congregation of God" but RSV translates "Divine counsel"; Psalm 89:6 [H 7]) ASV and KJV "sons of the mighty" but RSV "Heavenly beings"; Isaiah 57:5, KJV has "idols" but ASV, RSV read as another Hebrew word, "oaks"; and finally, Ezekiel 32:21, KJV and ASV "strong among the mighty" while RSV renders it simply "mighty chiefs."

The primary meanings of this root as used in Scripture are "god" (pagan or false gods), "God" (the true God of Israel) and less frequently, "the mighty" (referring to men or angels). By far the predominant usage is for the true God and it is to this usage that we will give major attention.

The name "El" is a very ancient Semitic term. It is also the most widely distributed name among Semitic-speaking peoples for the deity, occurring in some form in every Semitic language except Ethiopic. Pope, in his study of "El" in the Ugaritic, notes that it is the most frequently occurring name for the deity in proper names throughout the ancient Semitic world (Marvin Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 1).

We must agree with Pope that etymologically the bottom of the barrel has been scraped with little success (Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 19). Most frequently mentioned suggestions for an original meaning are "power" or "fear" but these are widely challenged and much disputed. [It may be noted that even if the origin of the word in Canaanite or proto-Semitic is from a root meaning power, this by no means indicates the connotation in Hebrew religious usage. Our word "deity" comes from a root known in Sanskrit to mean "sky" but we do not worship a sky-god. r.l.h.]

The question of the relationship between the biblical use of 'ēl and the Semitic concepts of El has received much attention particularly since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, which have apparently established the fact that the term El was used in reference to a personal god and not merely as a generic term in the ancient Semitic world.

Space will not allow us to develop the various points of view on this matter. The article by Frank M. Cross, published in 1975, in the first volume of the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, gives much attention to this. Certainly we do not have to accept the view that assumes an ancient polytheism in Israel which was gradually refined so that various gods such as El, Shaddai, and Elyon were finally merged into Hebrew monotheism under the heading of Elohim or Yahweh. The bibliography following this article suggests further reading for those who would like to pursue this matter.

A. B. Davidson has observed the pronounced tendency in Scripture to accompany 'ēl with epithets. Indeed, as we study the word as used in Scripture, we must conclude that it is almost always qualified by words or descriptions which further define the word. This leads A. B. Davidson to conclude that these qualifications both elevate the concept of El in Scripture and distinguish the term as used biblically from others who might be so named (A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 61).

A study of the various accompanying descriptions of El where the name occurs in Scripture leads to the rather solid conclusion that, from the beginning of the use of this term in Scripture, it was intended to distinguish the true El (God) from all false uses of that name found in other semitic cultures.

We note first the use of El in terms denoting God's greatness or superiority over all other gods: ha'ēl haggādōl "the great El" (Jeremiah 32:18; Psalm 77:13 [H 14]; Psalm 95:3); hā'ēl 'ōsēh pele' "El doing wonders" (Psalm 77:14 [H 15]); 'ēl 'ēlīm "El of els" ("God of gods," Daniel 11:36); 'el 'elohe hārūḥôt lekol-bāšār "El, the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Numbers 16:22; Numbers 27:16).

Next, consider epithets relating to El's position: 'ēl hashshāmāyīm "El of heaven" (Psalm 136:26); 'ēl mimā'al "El that is above" (Job 31:28); 'ēl 'elyôn "El most high" (Genesis 14:18-19, 20, 22; Psalm 78:35).

Again, as a precaution against overfamiliarity with God because of the use of a common Semitic term, God is described as 'ēl mistatēr "El who hides himself" (i.e. known only by self-revelation, Isaiah 45:15). Yet God does see us at all times as Hagar affirmed, 'ēl rō'î "El who sees me" (Genesis 16:13).

Most specially El is accompanied in Scripture by those epithets which describe him as the Savior God of Israel. As such he is called hā'ēl hanne'ēmān "Faithful El" (Deut. 7:9); hā'ēl haq-qādōsh "Holy El" (Isaiah 5:16); 'ēl 'ēmet "El of truth" (Psalm 31:5 [H 6]; Deut. 32:4); 'ēl shadday "Almighty El" (Genesis 17:1; Genesis 28:3; Genesis 35:11; Genesis 48:3; Exodus 6:3; Ezekiel 10:5); 'ēl gibbôr "El the heroic" (Isaiah 9:6 [H 5]; Isaiah 10:21); 'ēl dē'ôt "El of knowledge" (1 Samuel 2:3); 'ēl hakkābōd "El of glory" (Psalm 29:3); 'ēl 'ōlām "El of eternity" (Genesis 21:33); 'ēl-ṣaddīq "Righteous El" (Isaiah 45:21); and 'ēl qannā' "Jealous El" (Exodus 20:5; Deut. 4:24; Deut. 5:9; Deut. 6:15; Joshua 24:19; Nahum 1:2).

In contradistinction from all false "els" (gods), he is declared to be 'ēl ḥay the "Living El" (Joshua 3:10; 1 Samuel 17:26, 36; 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Psalm 42:2 [H 3]; Psalm 84:2 [H 3]; Isaiah 37:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Jeremiah 23:36; Daniel 6:20, 26 [H 21, 27]; Hosea 1:10 [H 2:1]). In accord with strict biblical monotheism he is therefore 'ēl 'ehād, the one El (Malachi 2:10). And in the passage most quoted elsewhere in the Old Testament El is described in terms of those attributes by which God desired to be known by his people (Exodus 34:5-7; cf. Deut. 4:31; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17, 31; Psalm 103:8, Joel 2:13, etc.).

The very personal relationship between the El of Scripture and his believers is seen in the following epithets: hā'ēl bêt-'ēl "the El of Bethel" (Genesis 31:13; Genesis 35:7); 'ēl sal'î "El my rock" (Psalm 42:9 [H 10]); 'ēl yeshû'āti "El my Savior" (Isaiah 12:2); 'ēl ḥayyāy "El of my life" (Psalm 42:8 [H 9]); 'ēl gômēr 'ālāy "El the performer on me" (Psalm 57:3); "the El of . . ." (Genesis 49:25, etc.); 'ēlî "My El" (Psalm 89:26 [H 27]; Psalm 102:24 [H 25]; Psalm 118:28); hā'ēl mā'ūzzî "El my fortress" (2 Samuel 22:33); hā'ēl ham'azerenî ḥayil "El the girder of me with strength" (Psalm 18:32 [H 33]), hā'ēl hannōtēn neqāmōt lî "the El giving me vengeance" (Psalm 18:47 [H 48]; 2 Samuel 22:48).

Thus, in an evangelistic sense, he is described in such epithets as 'ēl mehōllekā "El who begat you" (Deut. 32:18); 'ēl mōshî'ām "El their Savior" (Psalm 106:21); 'ēl mōshî'ō mimmiṣraim "El his (their) bringer from Egypt" (Numbers 24:8; Numbers 23:22); 'ēl yeshūrūn "El of Jeshurun" (Deut. 33:26); and 'ēl 'ēlōhē yisrā'el "El the God of Israel" (Genesis 33:20).

Frequently therefore we find the term "El" combined with or associated with the personal name for Israel's God, Yahweh (Joshua 22:22; Psalm 85:8 [H 9]; Psalm 118:27; Isaiah 42:5, etc.) which testifies that he is indeed 'ēl nōsē' El who forgives (Psalm 99:8) and consequently hā'ēl yeshû'ātēnū "El of our salvation" (Psalm 68:19-20 [H 20-21]).

Whether or not the name El can be identified etymologically with the concept of fear, it is clearly often associated with this idea in biblical epithets. He is called hā'ēl haggādōl wehannōrā' "El, great and terrible" (Neh. 1:5; Neh. 4:14; Neh. 9:32; Deut. 7:21; Deut. 10:17; Daniel 9:4) or simply, 'ēl na'ārāṣ "Terrible El" (Psalm 89:7 [H 8]). He is also described as 'ēl gemūlōt "El of recompenses" (Jeremiah 51:56) or more severely 'ēl nōqēm "El the revenger" (Psalm 99:8; Nahum 1:2), and sometimes simply 'ēl neqām "El of vengeance" (Psalm 94:1). Being indignant is a continuous characteristic of El in Scripture (Psalm 7:11 [H 12]).

Only in Job do we find extensive use of El without epithets. There the term is treated by Job and his friends as the common term for the true God and its use there, unlike other parts of Scripture, far outnumbers the occurrence of Elohim (q.v.). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament - [TWOT - PAGE 41](#) Online)

El - 225 verses - El-berith\*(1), God(204), god(16), God's(2), gods(3), helpless\*(1), mighty(3), Mighty One(3), power(1), strong(1). Gen. 14:18; Gen. 16:13; Gen. 17:1; Gen. 21:33; Gen. 28:3; Gen. 31:13; Gen. 35:1; Gen. 35:3; Gen. 35:11; Gen. 43:14; Gen. 46:3; Gen. 48:3; Gen. 49:25; Exod. 6:3; Exod. 15:2; Exod. 15:11; Exod. 20:5; Exod. 34:6; Exod. 34:14; Num. 12:13; Num. 16:22; Num. 23:8; Num. 23:19; Num. 23:22; Num. 23:23; Num. 24:4; Num. 24:8; Num. 24:16; Num. 24:23; Deut. 3:24; Deut. 4:24; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 5:9; Deut. 6:15; Deut. 7:9; Deut. 7:21; Deut. 10:17; Deut. 32:4; Deut. 32:12; Deut. 32:18; Deut. 32:21; Deut. 33:26; Jos. 3:10; Jos. 22:22; Jos. 24:19; Jdg. 9:46; 1 Sam. 2:3; 2 Sam. 22:31; 2 Sam. 22:32; 2 Sam. 22:33; 2 Sam. 22:48; 2 Sam. 23:5; Neh. 1:5; Neh. 5:5; Neh. 9:31; Neh. 9:32; Job 5:8; Job 8:3; Job 8:5; Job 8:13; Job 8:20; Job 9:2; Job 12:6; Job 13:3; Job 13:7; Job 13:8; Job 15:4; Job 15:11; Job 15:13; Job 15:25; Job 16:11; Job 18:21; Job 19:22; Job 20:15; Job 20:29; Job 21:14; Job 21:22; Job 22:2; Job 22:13; Job 22:17; Job 23:16; Job 25:4; Job 27:2; Job 27:9; Job 27:11; Job 27:13; Job 31:14; Job 31:23; Job 31:28; Job 32:13; Job 33:4; Job 33:6; Job 33:14; Job 33:29; Job 34:5; Job 34:10; Job 34:12; Job 34:23; Job 34:31; Job 34:37; Job 35:2; Job 35:13; Job 36:5; Job 36:22; Job 36:26; Job 37:5; Job 37:10; Job 37:14; Job 38:41; Job 40:9; Job 40:19; Job 41:25; Ps. 5:4; Ps. 7:11; Ps. 10:11; Ps. 10:12; Ps. 16:1; Ps. 17:6; Ps. 18:2; Ps. 18:30; Ps. 18:32; Ps. 18:47; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 22:10; Ps. 29:1; Ps. 29:3; Ps. 31:5; Ps. 36:6; Ps. 42:2; Ps. 42:8; Ps. 42:9; Ps. 43:4; Ps. 44:20; Ps. 50:1; Ps. 52:1; Ps. 52:5; Ps. 55:19; Ps. 57:2; Ps. 58:1; Ps. 63:1; Ps. 68:19; Ps. 68:20; Ps. 68:24; Ps. 68:35; Ps. 73:11; Ps. 73:17; Ps. 74:8; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 77:13; Ps. 77:14; Ps. 78:7; Ps. 78:18; Ps. 78:19; Ps. 78:34; Ps. 78:35; Ps. 78:41; Ps. 80:10; Ps. 81:9; Ps. 83:1; Ps. 84:2; Ps. 85:8; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 89:6; Ps. 89:7; Ps. 89:26; Ps. 90:2; Ps. 94:1; Ps. 95:3; Ps. 99:8; Ps. 102:24; Ps. 104:21; Ps. 106:14; Ps. 106:21; Ps. 107:11; Ps. 118:27; Ps. 118:28; Ps. 136:26; Ps. 139:17; Ps. 139:23; Ps. 140:6; Ps. 146:5; Ps. 149:6; Ps. 150:1; Isa. 5:16; Isa. 8:10; Isa. 9:6; Isa. 10:21; Isa. 12:2; Isa. 14:13; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 40:18; Isa. 42:5; Isa. 43:10; Isa. 43:12; Isa. 44:10; Isa. 44:15; Isa. 44:17; Isa. 45:14; Isa. 45:15; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 45:22; Isa. 46:6; Isa. 46:9; Jer. 32:18; Jer. 51:56; Lam. 3:41; Ezek. 10:5; Ezek. 28:2; Ezek. 28:9; Ezek. 32:21; Dan. 9:4; Dan. 11:36; Hos. 1:10; Hos. 11:9; Hos. 11:12; Jon. 4:2; Mic. 2:1; Mic. 7:18; Nah. 1:2; Mal. 1:9; Mal. 2:10; Mal. 2:11



**Most High** (05945)(elyon) is a masculine noun meaning Most High, the Highest, upper, highest. 'Elyôn is derived from 'ālāh, "to go up," "to ascend." It is used as a name for God 31 times in the OT.

**G Lloyd Carr** (TWOT page 668) - Elyon I. **High, higher, highest, upper, uppermost.** ASV and RSV similar. Adjective from 'ālā "to go up." Cf 'āl. The word may be taken as one word with two meanings or as two separate nouns.

This adjective, derived from ālā, occurs some twenty-two or twenty-three times. It is used of Israel (Deut. 26:19; Deut. 28:1), the Davidic kings (Psalm 89:27 [H 28]), things (e.g. baskets, Genesis 40:17; rooms, Ezekiel 41:7; gates, 2 Chron. 23:20, etc.), and places (the upper pool, Gihon, Isaiah 7:3; 2 Kings 18:17; upper Bethhoron, Joshua 16:5, etc.), to describe location in space or eminence of position.

**'elyôn II. Most high.** One of the names of God, the KJV uses it as a descriptive title. The ASV and RSV capitalize it as a proper name, "Most High." The use of 'elyôn as a divine name has been a much debated topic in OT study. (See the specific material below under 'āl. In about one-third of the times it is so used, it appears either adjectivally or in apposition with one of the other divine names. In about two-thirds of the occurrences, 'elyôn stands alone as a proper name in its own right. One of the basic ideas in Semitic religion generally and the OT particularly is of the exaltedness and overwhelming majesty of God. 'elyôn, as a divine name signifying the supremacy of the deity, is known from both Ugaritic ('ly, UT 19: 1855 and Ais WUS), and Phoenician texts appearing there as epithets of the highest gods of the pantheons.

In the OT, 'elyôn appears only in poetry, and reflects the ideas of omnipotence (Psalm 18:13 [H 14]; Lament. 3:38), universality (Psalm 83:18 [H 19]), and/or constancy (Psalm 21:7 [H 8]). Thus the sin of the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14:14 is not that he wanted to become godlike or even a god, but that he aspired to be like the Highest God.

'elyôn is the place of protection and shelter for Israel (Psalm 9:2 [H 3]; Psalm 91:1, 9), and for her king (Psalm 21:7 [H 8]). In keeping with the Genesis 14 passages, 'elyôn seems to have a special concern for Zion (Psalm 46:4 [H 5]; Psalm 87:5) even though he is Lord of all heaven and earth. Psalm 73:11 satirically emphasizes the futility of trying to hide from the all-knowing 'elyôn. The pathos of Psalm 77:10 [H 11] is that it expresses the unthinkable—the omnipotent has become impotent.

**'elyôn occurs in several compounds.**

**1. 'ēl 'elyôn.** The earliest appearance of 'elyôn in the OT is in conjunction with the old Semitic appellative 'ēl (q.v.) in the Abraham/Melchizedek story (Genesis 14:18-22). Alt points out that the primary fact about the names compounded with 'ēl is that they seem to be associated with particular holy places (e.g. El Bethel, Genesis 31:13, although this is his only clear example, Albrecht Alt, *The God of the Fathers*, see Bibliog. p. 11). With El Elyon, however, this is not the case. Genesis 14:19, 22 identifies him as "possessor" (qoneh, q.v.) of all the earth. The RSV follows the LXX ektesen "who created." This perspective clearly precludes El from being considered a nature deity (e.g. Baal), and stresses his total supremacy. Psalm 78:35 (cf. Numbers 24:16) follows this with El Elyon as the most exalted one.

**2. YHWH 'elyôn.** This combination occurs in Psalm 47:2 [H 3] and Psalm 97:9 where the common version treats 'elyôn adjectivally, and in Psalm 7:17 [H 15] in parallel with Yahweh. His exalted position and his total righteousness leave the Psalmist in awe (nōra') of the Great King.

**3. 'ēlōhīm 'elyôn.** This combination occurs only twice. In Psalm 57:2 [H 3], it is in parallel with 'ēl gōmēr which Dahood treats as a proper name, "Avenger God." (Mitchell Dahood *Theological Studies*, 14:595-97.) Psalm 78:56 (Masoretic Text) links the two words, but Dahood (Psalms II, AB, in loc.) divides the cola between the two, making 'elyôn objective to the second verb. (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* - [TWOT page 668](#) Online)

**Elyon - 31 verses - high(1), most high(30).** Gen. 14:18; Gen. 14:19; Gen. 14:20; Gen. 14:22; Num. 24:16; Deut. 32:8; 2 Sam. 22:14; Ps. 7:17; Ps. 9:2; Ps. 18:13; Ps. 21:7; Ps. 46:4; Ps. 47:2; Ps. 50:14; Ps. 57:2; Ps. 73:11; Ps. 77:10; Ps. 78:17; Ps. 78:35; Ps. 78:56; Ps. 82:6; Ps. 83:18; Ps. 87:5; Ps. 91:1; Ps. 91:9; Ps. 92:1; Ps. 97:9; Ps. 107:11; Isa. 14:14; Lam. 3:35; Lam. 3:38

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Melchizedek?](#)

**ANSWER** - Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness," was a king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18–20; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6–11; 6:20–7:28). Melchizedek's sudden appearance and disappearance in the book of Genesis is somewhat mysterious. Melchizedek and Abraham first met after Abraham's defeat of Chedorlaomer and his three

allies. Melchizedek presented bread and wine to Abraham and his weary men, demonstrating friendship. He bestowed a blessing on Abraham in the name of *El Elyon* (“God Most High”) and praised God for giving Abraham a victory in battle (Genesis 14:18–20).

Abraham presented Melchizedek with a tithe (a tenth) of all the items he had gathered. By this act Abraham indicated that he recognized Melchizedek as a priest who ranked higher spiritually than he.

In Psalm 110, a messianic psalm written by David (Matthew 22:43), Melchizedek is presented as a type of Christ. This theme is repeated in the book of Hebrews, where both Melchizedek and Christ are considered kings of righteousness and peace. By citing Melchizedek and his unique priesthood as a type, the writer shows that Christ’s new priesthood is superior to the old levitical order and the priesthood of Aaron (Hebrews 7:1–10).

Some propose that Melchizedek was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, or a [Christophany](#). This is a possible theory, especially given that Abraham received such a visit later, in Genesis 17—18, when Abraham saw and spoke with the Lord (*Yahweh*) in the form of a man.

Hebrews 6:20 says, “[Jesus] has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” This term *order* would ordinarily indicate a succession of priests holding the office. None are ever mentioned, however, in the long interval from Melchizedek to Christ, an anomaly that can be solved by assuming that Melchizedek and Christ are really the same person. Thus the “order” is eternally vested in Him and Him alone.

Hebrews 7:3 says that Melchizedek was “without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.” The question is whether the author of Hebrews means this *actually* or *figuratively*.

If the description in Hebrews is literal, then it is indeed difficult to see how it could be properly applied to anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. No mere earthly king “remains a priest forever,” and no mere human is “without father or mother.” If Genesis 14 describes a theophany, then God the Son came to give Abraham His blessing (Genesis 14:17–19), appearing as the King of Righteousness (Revelation 19:11,16), the King of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and the Mediator between God and Man (1 Timothy 2:5).

If the description of Melchizedek is figurative, then the details of having no genealogy, no beginning or ending, and a ceaseless ministry are simply statements accentuating the mysterious nature of the person who met Abraham. In this case, the silence in the Genesis account concerning these details is purposeful and better serves to link Melchizedek with Christ.

Are Melchizedek and Jesus the same person? A case can be made either way. At the very least, Melchizedek is a type of Christ, prefiguring the Lord’s ministry. But it is also possible that Abraham, after his weary battle, met and gave honor to the Lord Jesus Himself. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the order of Melchizedek \(Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:17\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the Melchizedek priesthood? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Genesis 14:19 He blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;**

- **he blessed:** Ge 27:4,25-29 47:7,10 48:9-16 49:28 Nu 6:23-27 Mk 10:16 Heb 7:6,7
- **Blessed be:** Ru 3:10 2Sa 2:5 Eph 1:3,6
- **high:** Mic 6:6 Ac 16:17
- **possessor:** Ge 14:22 Ps 24:1 50:10 115:16 Mt 11:25 Lu 10:21
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES ABRAM

**He blessed** ([barak](#); Lxx - [eulogeo](#)) **him and said**, “**Blessed** ([barak](#); Lxx - [eulogeo](#)) **be Abram of God Most High God** ([el](#)) **Most High** ([elyon](#); Lxx - [hupsistos](#)), **Possessor of heaven and earth;**

**NET NOTE** - Some translate “possessor of heaven and earth” (cf. NASB). But cognate evidence from Ugaritic indicates that there

were two homonymic roots **קָנָה** (qanah), one meaning “to create” (as in Gen 4:1) and the other “to obtain, to acquire, to possess.” While “possessor” would fit here, “creator” is the more likely due to the collocation with “heaven and earth.”

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#### **F B Meyer - Genesis 14:19 God Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth. (R.V. marg.)**

It was to Melchizedek, the lonely king-priest living outside the busy rush of the world, that this new name of God was given. There are some to whom God gives these direct revelations of Himself, that they may communicate them to others. These are our seers. This title for God, which Abram immediately appropriated, was the source:—

**Of Humility.** — To think of God as the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth induces the profoundest humility of heaven. “They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou didst create all things.” How great God is! His greatness is unsearchable. Earth and heaven are his handiwork. Take time to think of this, but never forget that He is Love; then, with the familiarity of the child, thou wilt combine the lowly reverence of the creature.

**Of Steadfastness in the hour of temptation.** — When the king of Sodom desired Abram to share in the spoils of the kings, setting before him a most subtle temptation, and one which might have dragged him from the life and walk of faith, Abram fell back on the revelation of God just vouchsafed to him, and said in effect: “What need is there that I should do this thing, or receive of thy gold? All God is mine; in God all things are mine also. What I need He will assuredly give. What He withholds I will receive from no other source.” There is no need for us to get wealth wrongly; God can supply all we need.

**Of Security.** — God owns all; all the earth is his empire; wherever we travel we are within his dominion, breathe his air, are ministered to by his angels. We have a right to the best in all good things, since they are our Father’s, and we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

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#### **Genesis 14:20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” He gave him a tenth of all.**

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- **blessed:** Ge 9:26 24:27 Ps 68:19 72:17-19 144:1 Eph 1:3 1Pe 1:3,4
- **Who:** Jos 10:42 Ps 44:3
- **tenth:** Ge 28:22 Lev 27:30-32 Nu 28:26 De 12:17 14:23,28 2Ch 31:5,6,12 Ne 10:37 13:12 Am 4:4 Mal 3:8,10 Lu 18:12 Ro 15:16 Heb 7:4-9
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### **MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES THE GOD OF ABRAM**

**And blessed** ([barak](#); Lxx - [eulogeo](#)) **be God Most High God** ([el](#)) **Most High** ([elyon](#); Lxx - [hupsistos](#)) (See [El Elyon](#)), **Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” He gave him a tenth of all** In Genesis 12:2-3 God blessed Abram 3 times.

**NET NOTE** - Heb “blessed be.” For God to be “blessed” means that is praised. His reputation is enriched in the world as his name is praised. **Who delivered.** The Hebrew verb **מִגֵּן** (miggen, “delivered”) foreshadows the statement by God to Abram in Gen 15:1, “I am your shield” (**מִגֵּן**, magen). Melchizedek provided a theological interpretation of Abram’s military victory.

**Bob Utley** - “**a tenth of all**” This is the first mention of a numerical concept that develops into the tithe in Leviticus (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: TITHES IN THE MOSAIC LEGISLATION](#)). This gesture on Abram’s part was a way of thanking YHWH for the victory and acknowledging that He was the victor! By giving this to Melchizedek he was recognizing him as one who truly knew and served the same God who called him from Ur (cf. Gen. 14:22).

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**Blessed** ([01288](#)) [barak](#) is a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one’s knees - Camel in Ge 24:11, Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To give divine blessings (Ge 1:22, 9:1-7) To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27)

The Greek ([Septuagint](#)) usually translates **barak** with the verb [eulogeo](#) (from **eú** = good, well + **logos** = word. English = eulogize, eulogy = commendatory formal statement or set oration; high praise; to extol) means literally to a good word and so to speak a good word of , to speak well or favorably of someone (especially God - Lk 1:64, 1Cor 14:16) or some thing. To say something commendatory, to praise, to extol.

**Barak** is a frequent verb in Genesis - Gen. 1:22; Gen. 1:28; Gen. 2:3; Gen. 5:2; Gen. 9:1; Gen. 9:26; Gen.

12:2; Gen. 12:3; Gen. 14:19; Gen. 14:20; Gen. 17:16; Gen. 17:20; Gen. 18:18; Gen. 22:17; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 24:1; Gen. 24:11; Gen. 24:27; Gen. 24:31; Gen. 24:35; Gen. 24:48; Gen. 24:60; Gen. 25:11; Gen. 26:3; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 26:12; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 26:29; Gen. 27:4; Gen. 27:7; Gen. 27:10; Gen. 27:19; Gen. 27:23; Gen. 27:25; Gen. 27:27; Gen. 27:29; Gen. 27:30; Gen. 27:31; Gen. 27:33; Gen. 27:34; Gen. 27:38; Gen. 27:41; Gen. 28:1; Gen. 28:3; Gen. 28:6; Gen. 28:14; Gen. 30:27; Gen. 30:30; Gen. 31:55; Gen. 32:26; Gen. 32:29; Gen. 35:9; Gen. 39:5; Gen. 47:7; Gen. 47:10; Gen. 48:3; Gen. 48:9; Gen. 48:15; Gen. 48:16; Gen. 48:20; Gen. 49:25; Gen. 49:28

**Genesis 14:21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself."**

- persons: Heb. souls, Ge 14:21
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### LET'S TRADE PEOPLE FOR GOODS

**The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself."** Hebrew = "Give me the soul, and take thou the substance." The king of Sodom said, in effect, "Give me the persons; you take the material things."

*"Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle,"*

-- Andrew Bonar.

So Satan still tempts us to be occupied with toys of dust while people around us are perishing. Abram replied that he wouldn't take anything from a thread to a sandal strap. Forever after, when anybody would say, "That man Abram is certainly a wealthy man. God has blessed him," I think that the king of Sodom would have said, "Blessed him, my foot! God didn't bless him. I gave it to him; I'm the one who made him rich!" Abram knew that. Abraham refused to take anything from the king of Sodom, lest he become obligated to him. By this Abraham demonstrated his total allegiance to the Most High God and rejected any attempt by the king of Sodom to assume the role of overlord and make Abraham his vassal. Abraham took only food for his men and gave his allies liberty to accept the spoils due them.

**John MacArthur:** If Abram acceded to the king of Sodom's request, he would have allowed that wicked king to attribute Abram's wealth to the king's generosity, thus distorting the clear testimony of the Lord's blessings on his life. To accept such payment would belie his trust in God! Such a personal commitment would not be foisted upon his allies, who could make their own decisions. As for his own servants, their meals taken from the spoils was sufficient compensation. Undoubtedly, the servants remembered their master's reaction and testimony; it overcame much of the negative aspects in the memory of the earlier exit from Egypt (12:20).

**Genesis 14:22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,**

- lift: Ex 6:8 De 32:40 Da 12:7 Rev 10:5,6
- unto: Ge 21:23-31 Judges 11:35
- the most: Ge 14:20 17:1 Ps 24:1 83:18 Isa 57:15 Da 4:34 Hag 2:8
- possessor: Ge 14:19 21:33
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

### ABRAM TELLS PAGAN KING OF HIS OATH TO EL ELYON

**I have sworn** - "I have lifted up my hand." NET = "I raise my hand." This indicates Abram made an oath to God, made a solemn promise.

**To the LORD God (el) Most High (elyon;** Lxx - [hupsistos](#)), **possessor of heaven and earth** - NIV = "God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth." Note that here Abram links the Names [Jehovah/ Yahweh](#) and El Elyon identifying them as One and the same.

**Genesis 14:23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'**

- That I: 1Ki 13:8 2Ki 5:16,20 Es 9:15,16 2Co 11:9-11 12:14
- lest: 2Co 11:12 Heb 13:5
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **ABRAM'S PROPER PERSPECTIVE**

This passage continues his vow in v22 and gives the specific stipulations of his vow.

**that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.**  
**NET** - "...that I will take nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal. That way you can never say, 'It is I who made Abram rich.'"

Viewing God as El Elyon the Possessor of Everything helped Abraham keep himself (and his personal possessions), his victory (and material spoils) and the honor and hospitality offered by the other kings in a proper perspective.

**NET NOTE** - The oath formula is elliptical, reading simply: "... if I take." It is as if Abram says, "[May the LORD deal with me] if I take," meaning, "I will surely not take." The positive oath would add the negative adverb and be the reverse: "[God will deal with me] if I do not take," meaning, "I certainly will."

**Bob Utley** - "I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours" This hyperbolic language is typical (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 120) of Ancient Near Eastern bartering language (cf. Genesis 23). It is an idiom for "taking nothing." Clothing was one of the spoils of battle. Abram wanted to make it perfectly clear, he was not entering or had never been in a covenant relationship with the king of Sodom.

**Matthew Henry:** A lively faith enables a man to look upon the wealth of this world with a holy contempt, 1 Jn. 5:4. What are all the ornaments and delights of sense to one that has God and heaven ever in his eye? He resolves even to a thread and a shoe-latchet; for a tender conscience fears offending in a small matter.

The King of Sodom wanted to bargain with Abraham and get him to compromise by accepting the wealth of Sodom, but Abraham refused. The wealth of Egypt had proved a snare. The wealth of Sodom would be worse. Had Abraham not been on his guard, he would have fallen for this subtle temptation and would have taken all the glory away from God. The people would have said, "Abraham rescued Lot for what he could get out of it, not because of his faith and love. Abraham refuses to live in Sodom with Lot, but he enjoys the goods of Sodom just the same." Abraham would have lost his testimony.

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### **G Campbell Morgan - —Gen. 14.23.**

These words show how high an order of faith was that of this man Abram. He had rendered a great service to the King of Sodom, in the victory he had gained over the five kings, even though he had entered into the conflict, not on his behalf, but for the sake of Lot. To a man of less keen perception it would have seemed perfectly natural, and quite harmless, to receive from this king a gift of the material sub-stance which he had rescued. But true faith always sees beyond the immediate, and refuses to compromise its future by any action in the present. Abram saw at once, and saw clearly, what might eventuate; and he refused to put himself in any way under obligation to one who might at some later period take advantage of his action in such a way as to bring discredit upon his God. How wide in its application is the principle here revealed; and how much stronger men of faith in all ages would have been had they acted upon it! How often has the Church or a church, found its spiritual influence limited, and in many cases destroyed, because she has received gifts from those who in all the facts of their lives were in rebellion against God. Moreover, Abram had no need of such gifts, nor was he impoverished by refusing them. The next chapter begins with the words: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Such a man needed no reward which the King of Sodom had to offer him.

**Genesis 14:24 "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."**

- **except:** Pr 3:27 Mt 7:12 Ro 13:7,8

- **Aner:** Ge 14:13
- **let:** 1Co 9:14,15 1Ti 5:18
- [Genesis 14 Resources](#) - Multiple sermons and commentaries

## **ABRAM REFUSES THE WORLD'S "SHINY TRINKETS"**

**I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."**

Abram was tempted to use God's victory for personal gain, but he refused the offer. The king of Sodom came with a bargain, but the king of Salem (a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ [Heb 7:1-3]) came with a blessing. Even a shoelace from Sodom would have defiled Abram's godly walk! After every battle, give God the glory; and beware the devil's bargains. If you aren't careful, you may win the war and lose the victory. Did this battle and night of danger bring Lot to his senses? Alas, it did not! In Ge 19:1 we see him right back in Sodom. Lot's heart was in Sodom, so that is where his body had to go. "Abraham was the father of the faithful," wrote Alexander Whyte in his classic Bible Characters. "And Lot, his nephew, was the father of all such as are scarcely saved." Some will be saved "so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15+), but it is far better to have "an abundant entrance" into the Lord's everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:11+).

### **Alexander Whyte Bible Characters**

#### **GOD DELIVERED JUST LOT**

WE are still away up among the fathers and the founders of the great families of mankind. Terah was the father of all those old men among us whose day is not done, nor their eye dim, nor their natural force abated. Abraham was the father of the faithful. And Lot, his nephew, was the father of all such as are scarcely saved. Lot began his religious life very early in life, and he began it very well. Lot was singularly happy in having a grandfather like Terah, and an uncle like Abraham. And Lot himself must have had something very good about him to begin with, when he left all his youthful associates, both young men and young women, and set out he knew not whither. Only, the two best men on earth-they knew. They were going out of Chaldea; and if they would let him Lot would go with them. Now that same is all the religion that many of our own young men have still. And, in a way, and for some men, it is quite enough to begin with. All men are not gifted as Abraham was gifted. All men are not called as Abraham was called. All men are not made to lead. All men are not fitted to be explorers and pioneers in morals or in religion, any more than in science, or in art, or in business, or in public life. There are great, and powerful, and original, and epoch-making men; and then there are men who follow those great men, and who fill up what they find out and set agoing. And the most part of our young men cannot do a wiser or a better thing for a long time to come than just to follow their fathers and their other forerunners like Terah and Abraham. Had Lot just held on as he began; had he kept close to Abraham, and had he been content to share Abraham's prospects and prosperity and peace, Lot would have lived a pure and a happy life; he would have escaped many sorrows, and, instead of being scarcely saved; saved indeed, but saved with the fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrah smouldering in his skirts; he would have gone down to a truly patriarchal grave, an elder of a good report and a father of a blameless name. All went well enough with Lot as long as he had the good sense, and the good feeling, and the good manners to know his proper place and to keep it. He left Chaldea and came to Haran with the Abrahamic emigration. He held a grandson's cord at Terah's grave, and he received his share of Terah's testament. When Abraham rose up and left Haran and entered the land of promise Lot went all the way with him. Wherever Abraham went, Lot went. Where Abraham built an altar, Lot either offered at that altar or he built another like it for himself. When the Lord spoke to Abraham, the uncle never hid from the nephew any word of the Lord that could either guide him in his behaviour or confirm him in his pilgrimage. When the terrible famine fell on Canaan, Abraham took Lot down to Egypt with him; and after the famine passed off, Lot returned to the land of promise with his chastened uncle.

I am not sure that Egypt had not been a sore temptation to Lot as well as to Abraham. Nay, I am quite sure, when I think of it, that it must have been. Mean-minded men, sordid-minded men, self-seeking men have constant temptations wherever they go. Wherever they go they carry their temptations with them. They manufacture temptations to themselves in every place and out of every thing. And Lot was not a high-minded man. With all his early opportunities, and with all his early promises, Lot was not, and never became, a high-minded man. We are never told all his life one large-hearted, or one noble-minded, or one single self-forgetful thing about Lot. Low-minded men see their opportunity in everything. Your stumble, your fall, your misfortune, your approaching age, your illness, your death-all is grist to the mill of the mean-minded man. And Abraham's fall in Egypt, and, especially, Abraham's fast-growing indifference to his fast-growing wealth, would be a secret delight to Lot. And then, that Abraham and Sarah with all their wealth had



no son! Why, let Lot just wait on a few years and the whole of the immense family inheritance will be his. He will be the undisputed heir of Terah, and Abraham, and Sarah, and all. Lot is the father of all of you who are waiting for dead men's shoes. You all take of Lot who marry, and build, and borrow money on the strength of this rich man's old age, and that ageing woman's childlessness. True, there was that Eliczer of Damascus, and some other men who were deep in Abraham's confidence, and much trusted by him,-but blood is thicker than water, and Lot will live in hope.

It was Lot's highest interest to behave himself well before Abraham, and to do nothing that would lead Abraham to suspect his nephew's false and sordid heart. But sordid-heartedness like Lot's will not always hide. Lot struck what might well have been a fatal blow at his own dearest hopes with his own hand. And had Abraham not been a weak, old, unworldly soul; had Abraham not borne all things, and believed all things, and hoped all things, and endured all things, Lot would soon have reaped as he had sown. But Abraham was what he was, and Lot had his profit out of that. Abraham had come up out of Egypt overwhelmed with shame and broken in his heart; and one result of all that was that he was overwhelmed with shame at his increasing prosperity also. Abraham, after Egypt, was the first father of all those who since his day have every day said, He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Every new acre of pasture land, and every new well of water for his cattle, and every new time of stocktaking, only made Abraham confess himself more and more a stranger and a pilgrim with God on the earth. But not his nephew. Not Lot. Lot was fast becoming the father of all hard-faced, hard-hearted, close-fisted, money-loving men. And Lot's herdmen knew their master, took of him, and studied how to please him. They removed the landmarks; they drew off the water; they picked constant quarrels with Abraham's patient herdmen, till the strife between the two camps was the scandal of the whole country round. But blessed are the peacemakers. Hear, then, what the first peacemaker in the Bible said, and go and say and do likewise, 'And Abraham took Lot and said to him, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself,' I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And then hear this, and resolve never, all your days, under any offer, or opportunity, or temptation of any kind to do what miserable, mean-spirited Lot did. Just hear what he did. You would not believe it. 'And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest into Zoar. And Lot chose all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tents toward Sodom.' O my friends, labour to have a heart created within you that will make it simply impossible for you ever to do to anybody what Lot did that day to Abraham. What a man chooses, and how a man chooses, when opportunities and alternatives and choices are put before him-nothing more surely discovers a man than that. Abraham chose household peace; while Lot chose good pasture ground at the cost of disgrace, and shamelessness, and all unhandsomeness and ingratitude, and got Sodom to the boot of the bargain. Abraham, though the older man, and the man, moreover, with all the title-deeds to all the land of Canaan in his hands, put all that wholly aside and placed himself on an equality with his dependent nephew; placed himself under Lot, indeed, and gave him his choice. One would have thought that if anything would have melted Lot's brazen face and made him blush and become a man, it would have been the nobility, the munificence, and the fine high-mindedness of his uncle. But Lot's heart was turned to stone. Till with his hard eyes Lot stood up and looked out the best land and the best water in all the country round, and drove his flocks down into it without a moment's hesitation, or a touch of remorse, or so much as a Thank you. Lot knew quite well both the name and the character of that city lying in the rain and sunshine below. He had often heard his uncle praying and plotting with God with all his might for Sodom. But Lot had no fear. Lot did not care. His cattle were already up to their bellies in the grass around Sodom, and that was heaven upon earth to Lot.

It is a time of most tremendous import when a young man is still choosing toward what city he is to pitch his tent for life. And how often our young men make their choice as if the history of Lot had never been written. Think, fathers; oh, think, mothers; think, young men, also, with so much at stake-think what the temptations and the dangers and the almost sure issues of this and that choice in life must be. All our trades, professions, occupations in life have, each one, its own perils and temptations and snares to the soul; as well as its own opportunities of gain, and honour, and praise, and service. The ministry, teaching, law, medicine, the army, political life, newspaper life, trade of all kinds, the money-market of all kinds, and so on. Open your eyes. Count the cost. Are you able? Will you venture? Take that line of life which you are just about to choose. Take time over it. Look all round it. Imagine yourself done with it. Look at this man and that man who are done with it. Would you like to be like them? Study well the successes and the failures in that line of life. Read the thirteenth and the nineteenth chapters of Genesis, and then take those two chapters with you to your knees, and so make your choice. Look at your motives in making your choice. Look at its dangers, its temptations, and especially at its companionships. Look at the people you will have to part company with, and at the people among whom you will henceforth dwell, and then let the die be cast. Lot chose all the plain of Jordan, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Just when Lot is beginning to make the acquaintance of the men of Sodom, and is finding them, as he was sure he would find them, not so bad as they were reported; just as he was opening accounts for his tent and his camp with the merchants of Sodom, the Lord is hastening down to redress the wrong and to recognise and recompense Abraham. You put God in your debt as often as you do any handsome and unselfish thing; and, especially, anything in the pure interests of righteousness and peace. And it is wise and politic to put God in your debt now and then. For He always pays His debts sooner or later. And lie always pays you with His gold for



your paper, and with His usury to your uttermost farthing. And thus it is that we go on to read that the Lord said to Abraham, after that Lot was departed from him, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for to thee will I give it. Then Abraham removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the land of Mamre, and built there an altar to the Lord.' With all that, then, which is it to be with you? The plain of Jordan with Lot, or the plain of Mamre with Abraham? A family altar with the father of the faithful, or a seat at sunset in the gate of Sodom with Lot?

Lot was not long in getting a lesson that would have brought a less besotted sinner to his senses. The first war in the Bible broke out in the valley of the Jordan not very long after Lot had settled in Sodom. The war is known in ancient history as that of the four kings against five. Moses would have had no interest in that dim old dispute but for Lot. Lot, with all his great faults, nay, rather, because of his great faults, gets chapter after chapter of Moses' precious space. Well, the upshot of that war was that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were defeated and fled, and Lot was taken prisoner with all his possessions, and was marched off in great haste up the Jordan and away to the mountains. But as Lot's guardian angel would have it, one of Lot's herdmen escaped; and how his heart would sink as he came near Abraham's encampment at Hebron! But to whom else could he go? His own conscience of the past bitterly upbraided him as he told Abraham the disaster; but Abraham had something else to do than to trample on a fallen man. In three crowded verses Moses tells his readers the result. Abraham fell upon the sleeping camp, and Lot was a free man next morning with all his goods. Now, you know yourselves how you return back again to your former life as soon as the strain of the tribulation is over. As the cruel kings hurried Lot up the Jordan with a rope round his neck, how that chastised saint vomited up Sodom and all her works, and how he cursed himself as the greatest fool in all the land of Canaan. You can all cast your stones of anger and scorn and astonishment at Lot; I cannot. Till you try to break loose from an old evil way, you will never believe me how impossible it is for you to do it.

All this time there must have been something far better in Lot than anything that Moses lets us see. To read Second Peter on Lot is far more comforting than to read Hoses. For Peter tells us in his Second Epistle that, when God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, He delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. But, then, to read that only makes us stop and say and ask, Why did a man with a beginning like Lot, and with past experiences like Lot, why did he not rise up and leave a life, and a neighbourhood, and an occupation, and a companionship out of all which so much danger and so much vexation of soul continually sprang? The reason was that he had invested in Sodom, as our merchants would say. He had invested money, and he had embarked himself and his household in the land round Sodom, in the produce of Sodom, and in her splendid profits. And with all the vexations that wrung his heart Lot could never make up his mind to be done with Sodom and Gomorrah for ever. I suppose there must be just men among ourselves who have chosen early in life, or who have inherited, or who have themselves built up a business, the partners in which, the questionable righteousness of which, nay, the not questionable unrighteousness of which, often vexes their hearts far more than we know or would believe. But to come out of that manufacture, that import, that export; to refund with usury those moneys; to rise up at the loss of thousands and thousands, nay, possibly at the loss of every penny a man possesses; to leave a splendidly paying business merely at the twinge of a secretly tortured conscience,-no man ever does it. Lot therefore is the father of all those men whose righteous souls are vexed with the life they are leading, but who keep on enduring the vexation. And Peter's New Testament point is this-that righteous men will go on enduring vexation like that of Lot till the Lord Himself rises up and comes down to deliver them. Lot's deliverance came through a catastrophe the sound of which and the smoke of which blows like opening hell into our eyes to this day. Just what God will have to do to deliver your soul and mine from the things that so endanger our souls and so vex them His time will tell. Only, this we may rely upon, that the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of their temptations, and He will do it too, if He has to burn up all we possess with fire and brimstone from heaven. In that terrible day may His angels be near to lay hold of us!

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