

# genesis

## God's Book of Beginnings

### Abram Rescues His Nephew Lot (Genesis 14)

**14:1-10** Kedorlaomer, the king of Elam (the land of Persia/Iran, just north of the Persian Gulf), ruled over five kings from an area around the Dead Sea. The five kings banded together to win their freedom, but Kedorlaomer and the three kings from the region around Mesopotamia created an alliance. The four kings of the east under Kedorlaomer defeated the uprising of the five kings, as well as conquering many other areas in the region of Canaan.

Notice the subtle reference to hydrocarbon deposits in the Middle East <sup>v.10</sup>.

**14:11-12** When the four city-states under Kedorlaomer defeated all of their enemies, they "seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food" and then started for home. In addition to the spoils, they took many people, including "Lot and his possessions".

**14:13-16** Abram heard from one of Lot's men who escaped that Lot had been taken captive. Abram left to save his "relative" (probably nephew) with his 318 "trained men". They routed the kings, attacking and pursuing them from Dan (north of Galilee) and to beyond Damascus. The army, led by Abram, successfully recovered Lot, his family/others and his possessions.

While Abram's private army (his 318 "trained men") were the leaders of the attack, it appears that Abram also had allies from the Amorites Mamre, Aner and Eshkol who accompanied them <sup>v.24</sup>.

Notice Lot had moved from being close to Sodom <sup>Genesis 13:12</sup> to actually living in the sinful city. Furthermore, even after being saved by Abram and his men, Lot moved back to Sodom <sup>Genesis 19:1-15</sup>. When tempted, if a person does not rebuke the sin, they will get close to it and then embrace it. However, the Bible states: "Lot [was] a righteous man...tormented in his righteous soul" <sup>2 Peter 2:4-9</sup>.

This was the first time in the Biblical text that Abram was referred to as "Abram the Hebrew" <sup>v.13</sup>.

**14:17-20** While returning home, Abram was met by the king of Sodom in the King's Valley. Then, the king of Salem ("king of peace" <sup>Hebrews 7:2</sup>, and a short name for Jerusalem <sup>Psalms 76:2</sup>), Melchizedek ("king of righteousness" <sup>Hebrews 7:2</sup>), who was the "priest of God Most High" <sup>v.18</sup> met with the victorious Abram. Melchizedek "brought out bread and wine" and offered a blessing over Abram which included a reminder who was really responsible for the victory: "God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth" <sup>v.19-20</sup>. Abram responded by presenting a gift to Melchizedek of a tenth of everything they had gained in the battle <sup>Hebrews 7:4</sup>.

## Genesis 14-16

The only other “person” who is both a king <sup>Psalm, 110:1-3, Isaiah 9:6, John 18:37, Revelation 17:14, 19:11-16</sup> and a priest <sup>Psalm, 110:43, Zechariah 6:13, Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:21</sup> is Jesus Christ, who was not in the imperfect Levitical line of priests (“not in the order of Aaron”), but “one in the order of Melchizedek” <sup>Hebrews 7:11</sup>.

Melchizedek brought out bread and wine for Abram, just as Jesus did later for “many” <sup>Mark 14:22-24</sup>. These elements were also alluded to in the dreams Joseph interpreted while in prison <sup>Genesis 40:1-22</sup>.

Who was Melchizedek? There are two major interpretations: (1) his Hebrew name seems to indicate he was appointed by God to serve as a priest and king in the foreshadowing role as a type of Christ or (2) the appearance of Melchizedek was a Christophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus).

This is the first Biblical mention of a tithe (a king’s share <sup>1 Samuel 8:15,17</sup>), a foreshadow <sup>Genesis 28:22</sup> of the tithe required by the Mosaic Law <sup>Leviticus 27:30-33, Deuteronomy 14:22-29</sup>, and later confirmed <sup>Malachi 3:8-10</sup>.

The “King’s Valley” cited here may be later called the Kidron Valley <sup>John 18:1</sup>, east of Jerusalem.

**14:21-24** Sodom’s king told Abram to keep the “goods”, but return people taken from Sodom. Abram rejected the suggestion of Sodom’s king, stating he would take nothing belonging to the king except the food they had already consumed and “the share [belonging] to his men”. Abram responded in this way because he did not want to be obligated to Sodom’s wicked king and wanted everyone to know that his blessings were entirely from the “God Most High” <sup>v.22</sup>.

### The Affirmation of God’s Covenant with Abram (Genesis 15)

**15:1** The LORD comforted Abram by telling him: “Do not be afraid”, because He was with him.

This chapter contains the first uses of the phrase “the word of the Lord” <sup>v.1,4</sup> in the Bible.

As Abram’s “shield [and] reward” <sup>Psalm 7:10</sup>, God was promising to always bless and protect him. God often comforts those He loves with “*Do not be afraid*” (e.g., Joshua <sup>Joshua 1:9</sup>, Daniel <sup>Daniel 10:19</sup>, Jerusalem/Judah <sup>Zechariah 8:13-15</sup>, believers <sup>Luke 12:4</sup>, Paul <sup>Acts 18:9-10</sup>, John <sup>Revelation 1:17</sup> and us <sup>John 14:27</sup>).

**15:2-3** Abram responded to God’s encouragement <sup>v.1</sup> with despair, because he could not see how God’s promises of him having many descendants <sup>Genesis 13:16</sup> and his becoming a “great nation” <sup>Genesis 12:2</sup> could become true since he remained “childless”. Consequently, Abram assumed his heir would have to be his most trusted servant <sup>Genesis 24:2</sup>: Eliezer of Damascus. Abram’s impatience and lack of trust in God’s promises led him to the conclusion that he was being forced into embracing the Mesopotamian custom of a childless man adopting a servant as his heir. However, Paul stated that to be an heir of someone, we must be that person’s child <sup>Romans 8:16-17</sup>.

**15:4-6** God did not get angry, but assured Abram he would have a child from his “own body”, and his descendants would be like the number of stars in the sky <sup>Romans 4:18, Hebrews 11:12</sup>. Abram “believed the LORD”, and so God “credited [Abram with] righteousness” <sup>Hebrews 11:7</sup>. Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

## Genesis 14-16

This is the first Biblical mention of the primary condition of salvation: belief, faith (*'āman*) <sup>v.6</sup>.

Salvation: 'a faith that leads to obedience'. Everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ is an offspring of Abraham <sup>Galatians 3:29</sup>; a descendant of his response to the eternal question for everyone <sup>Matthew 16:15</sup>. Abraham was justified ("credited [with] righteousness") by faith <sup>Romans 4:3,9,22, Galatians 3:6, James 2:23</sup> and that same justification is accredited to all who have genuine faith "in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" <sup>Romans 4:23-25</sup>. And, true faith will be exhibited in actions honoring to God <sup>James 2:20-24</sup>.

**15:7-8** Even after believing God would give him a natural heir and God reminding Abram it was He who brought him out of his homeland, Abram questioned God's promise to deliver the PL. However, the inquiry may have been a genuine request for an assuring sign <sup>Judges 6:17, Luke 1:18</sup>. In response to Abram's question, God affirmed His covenant in the remainder of this chapter <sup>v.9-21</sup>.

**15:9-11** The LORD instructed Abram to bring a number of 3-year-old animals: a heifer, a goat and a ram, along with two birds (a dove and a pigeon). Abram cut the animals (not the birds) in half and arranged them in a row, with the halves separated. He drove off the birds of prey. Animals that were of the age of three were considered to be ideal for sacrificing <sup>1 Samuel 1:24</sup>. Abram arranged the divided animals in the pattern of the ancient covenants. The pledging parties would walk between the animal halves, indicating that each of them agreed with the pledge and understood they would end up the same (cut in two) if they violated the covenant <sup>Jeremiah 34:18-20</sup>.

**15:12-17** Abram fell asleep, because there was no need for him to pass through the sacrifices, since the covenant did not involve any promise on his part. Then the LORD shared the story of Abram's descendants going into "a country not their own" (Egypt) <sup>Genesis 46:5-7</sup>, being slaves for 400 years <sup>Exodus 12:40, Acts 7:6</sup>, but they would leave Egypt with great wealth <sup>Exodus 12:35-36</sup>. Abram learned his offspring would return to the PL <sup>Acts 7:7</sup> when the residents ("Amorites") had repeatedly rejected God until their sin made them beyond redemption <sup>v.16, Mark 3:29</sup>. In a sign of the LORD's covenant promise, His presence was symbolized by the smoking firepot and blazing torch <sup>Exodus 14:24, 19:18, 1 Kings 18:38, Acts 2:1-4</sup> passing between the sacrificial pieces.

Here, the LORD used the approximated number of 400 to describe the number of years Abram's descendants would be in Egypt. Later, Moses explained the exact number was 430 years <sup>Exodus 12:40</sup>.

**15:18-21** With the unilateral covenant having been affirmed, the LORD then defined the PL that Abram's offspring would inherit: from the Wadi El Arish to the great river Euphrates. The Bible has general e.g., Exodus 23:31 and specific e.g., Numbers 34:1-12, Ezekiel 47:15-20 descriptions of the PL, and many times they do not agree. The LORD described the PL to Joshua before they entered: from the desert [the Negev?] to Lebanon; from the Euphrates to the [Mediterranean] Sea <sup>Joshua 1:4</sup>. Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

## Genesis 14-16

Moses included a list of the ten people groups who were living in the PL at that time <sup>Genesis 10:15-18</sup>.

The Abrahamic Covenant was declared eternal and unconditional, affirmed by an oath <sup>Genesis 22:15-18</sup>, confirmed to Isaac <sup>Genesis 26:2-5</sup> and Jacob <sup>Genesis 28:10-17</sup>, and declared immutable <sup>Hebrews 6:13-18</sup>.

A literal translation of the phrase “made a covenant” <sup>v.18</sup> is “cut a covenant”, referring to the cutting of the sacrificed animals. This Biblical truth is the origin of the U.S. military’s phrase “cut an order”.

### Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 16)

**16:1-4a** At this time, Sarai and Abram believed God when He promised Abram would have a child from his “own body” <sup>Genesis 15:4</sup>. However, since they had been in Canaan for 10 years and they were still childless, Sarai decided and Abram agreed <sup>Genesis 3:6</sup> that Abram should “sleep” with Sarai’s Egyptian maidservant Hagar. Abram did and Hagar “conceived”.

This was another ancient custom <sup>Genesis 15:2-3</sup> for producing a male heir in a childless marriage. However, giving children to barren women is wholly the job of “the LORD our God” <sup>Psalms 113:1-9</sup>.

**16:4b-6** As soon as Hagar knew she was pregnant, she relished her position changing from servant to one of preeminent importance in the household <sup>1 Samuel 1:1-6</sup>. Incensed at Hagar’s change in attitude, Sarai blamed Abram for the trouble (even though it was her idea <sup>v.1-2</sup>) and she demanded judgement on Hagar. However, Abram transferred the responsibility back to Sarai to decide what to do by saying “Do with her whatever you think best.” In her anger, Sarai abused (“mistreated”) Hagar, treating her so badly that Hagar chose to flee.

**16:7-10** The angel of the LORD found Hagar at a spring near the road to Shur <sup>Genesis 25:18</sup>. He asked Hagar some questions (accountability <sup>Genesis 3:9</sup>) and insisted that Hagar return and “submit” to Sarai. “The angel” promised Hagar she would have innumerable descendants. The Angel of the LORD <sup>e.g., Exodus 3:2-6, Numbers 22:22-35</sup> was a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

**16:11-14** The “angel of the Lord” announced the good news: Hagar’s baby would be a son, and she would name him Ishmael, which means “God hears”, because God had heard her misery. He also proclaimed bad news: Hagar’s son would be a “wild donkey of a man”, who would be against both their enemies and “brothers” (eventually producing the Arabs of today). Hagar recognized the “angel of the Lord” as Deity by saying “I have seen the [God] who sees me”. Hence, the well nearby was known as *Beer Lahai Roi* (“well of the living one who sees me”). The sin of Sarai has resulted (Joseph taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelites <sup>Genesis 37:28</sup>) and is resulting (the actions of today’s Arab terrorists) in tremendous upheaval toward her offspring with Abram.

**16:15-16** Hagar had their son, and the 86-year-old Abram “gave [him] the name Ishmael” <sup>v.11</sup>. Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, pricegang@integrity.com.

## **ADDENDUM**

Discernment is a key aspect in correctly understanding the Biblical text.

† The Bible talks about both the physical and spiritual offspring of Abraham

### **John 8:31,33,37-39,41-42,44**

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." ... They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone." ... [Jesus replied:] "I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father."

"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. ... You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires."

† The spiritual offspring of Abraham are people who have genuine faith in God

### **Galatians 3:7**

Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.

### **Galatians 3:29**

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

† Another way the Bible speaks about Abraham's offspring concerns his wives

### **Galatians 4:21-24,28,31**

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ... Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ... Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.