

5. How do we balance using the means God has placed at our disposal with trusting God?
6. While we never hear from Melchizedek again, he will live on in the Biblical story. In Psalm 110, David envisions a future king who surpasses him and every way. He describes the king as “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.” While this is the only other mention of Melchizedek in the Old Testament, we run into Melchizedek no less than nine times in Hebrews 5-7. The writer of Hebrews has Psalm 110 in mind. He argues that Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood because Abram (the great grandfather of Levi) received a blessing from and paid tribute to Melchizedek. Some of the Rabbi’s taught that Melchizedek was eternal because the Bible does not give his origin or destiny. Some New Testament interpreters believe Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. Whether or not this is true, it is clear that Jesus is the embodiment of every image Melchizedek brings to mind. Jesus is our priest and king. He is without beginning or end. His reign brings righteousness and peace. How do Psalm 110 and Hebrews 5-7 contribute to our understanding of this passage and the Bible as a whole?
7. This is the first reference in Scripture to a covenant sealed in bread and wine. How does this simple meal bring Jesus to mind?

ABRAM REFUSES TO BE ENRICHED BY THE KING OF SODOM (21-24)

²¹ *The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.”*

²² *But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “With raised hand, I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”*

1. Although Abram had been enriched by Pharaoh, he refuses to be enriched by the King of Sodom. How has Abram’s understanding of God’s provision grown over time?
2. How does Abram’s experience shape our understanding of God’s provision in Christ?



We have been following Abram on his journey of faith. In many ways, his story is unique. God asks Abram to leave everything comfortable and familiar and follow him. God does not tell him where he is going; he simply asks Abram to trust him. God sustains Abram with the promise that he will make him into a great nation; he will make his name great, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1-3). God’s promise to Abram becomes the bedrock of the biblical story and the foundation of the blessings we receive in Christ. Abram’s faith becomes the pattern for our faith.

Though his story is unique, we soon find out Abram is made of some the same stuff we are. There are times when Abram is firmly rooted in God’s promises, and there are times when he takes matters into his own hands. When Abram trusts God, he enjoys God’s blessing and protection. When Abram takes matters into his own hands, God sovereignly preserves him, but there are always unintended consequences.

When we come to Genesis 13 and 14, we find Abram at his best. In chapter 13, he offers his nephew Lot, the best of the land, and trusts God to take care of him as well. In chapter 14, Abram is called on to rescue Lot from what will soon prove to be a fateful decision.

As the story ends, we experience a beautiful portrait of Christ in a simple meal of bread and wine.

A LAND IN TURMOIL (vv. 1-10)

At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar, ¹ Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goyim, ² these kings went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea Valley). ⁴ For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵ In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emitees in Shaveh Kiriathaim ⁶ and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. ⁷ Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.

⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboyim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. ¹¹ The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. ¹² They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

1. While we are often intimidated by long lists of difficult names and strange places, this passage plays a vital role in Abram's story. The land of Canaan was dotted with small city-states—each with their king. These city-states often formed alliances for mutual protection. The southern region of Canaan is being terrorized by four kings from the north (modern Iran, Iraq, and Turkey). When the kings of the South rebel, the kings of the north conquer even more territory on their way to subdue and plunder the rebel alliance (star wars reference intended). Abram will eventually defeat the kings who have terrorized and plundered so many other kings. The passage is a clear testimony to Abram's increasing power and influence in the region. What fatal event brings Abram into the story?
2. In Genesis 13 we are told "Lot pitched his tent near Sodom (13:12);" here we are told "he was living in Sodom;" in chapter 19 we are told, "he was sitting in the gateway (or the social hub) of the city (Genesis 19:1)." What do these subtle movements tell us about Lot's increasing comfort in a city that was "sinning greatly against the Lord?" What do they tell us about the influence our culture can have on us? How can we live "in the world" without being influenced "by the world?"

ABRAM WINS A DECISIVE VICTORY (vv. 13-16)

¹³ A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

1. What do we learn about Abram from this passage?
2. If Abram had "318 trained men born in his household," he may have had as many as 1000 people serving in his household. How is God fulfilling his promises (see Genesis 12:1-3) to Abram?

ABRAM RECEIVES A BLESSING FROM THE KING OF SALEM (17-20)

¹⁷ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying,

*"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.*

*²⁰ And praise be to God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand."*

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

1. Melchizedek means "king of righteousness." He is also described as the "king of Salem," which could be translated, "king of peace." In addition to being a king, Melchizedek is also a priest—two offices that would remain distinct in Israel until they are united in Christ. What else do we learn about Melchizedek from this passage?
2. While we might be tempted to think Abram won a decisive victory through strategic alliances, well-trained men, and a brilliant battle plan, Melchizedek identifies the underlying foundation of Abram's success. How does Melchizedek describe the nature of Abram's victory?
3. What happens when we fail to recognize God's hand in our successes/victories?
4. What role did strategic alliances, well-trained men, and a brilliant battle plan in Abram's success/victory?