

# Faith's Battles

## The Life of Abraham—part 4

June 28, 2026

*Genesis 14:1-24*

A quick review of Abraham so far: Week 1: The beginnings of faith. Week 2: faith's tent and altar. Week 3: faith's choices. Now we come to faith's battles. There are two kinds: outer battles and inner battles.

### **DAY 1: Outer battles**

1. Lot had moved closer to Sodom, which put him, his family, and flocks in mortal danger.
2. War erupted in the middle east, five kings against four.

*Genesis 14:10 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. <sup>11</sup> **The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. <sup>12</sup> They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.***

3. The invaders captured Abraham's nephew, Lot, his family, servants, herdsmen and flocks. Lot had entrusted his family's safety Sodom's king who failed. Many people have entrusted themselves to those who would fail them. Business partners sue each other. That Prince Charming you married turned out to be a frog. Get-rich-quick schemes leave you penniless. That car or house you just had to have has put you in financial bondage.

*Genesis 14:13 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.***

*Genesis 14:14 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. <sup>15</sup> During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.*

4. What seems very small in our eyes can be formidable when placed in God's hands. Our small amounts of giving to the Lord, simple lunches that you host for others, small acts of connection matter.

*Zechariah 4:6...not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord.*

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

5. Why is this story in the bible?

- We should not be surprised when there is conflict.
- We should not be surprised when we have to engage in spiritual warfare.
- Life sometimes feels like a battle, and it is! We fight not against flesh and blood but against Satan.
- There is also a fight we wage within ourselves, against our fleshly, self-centered nature. We will always be Romans 7 and Romans 8 people.
- Like Abraham, let us follow his example in strategy. He did not go chasing after the kings by himself.

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 2: Inner battles, for a testimony and your reputation

### King of Sodom

*Genesis 14:17 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).*

1. Notice where the king of Sodom met Abraham, at the King's Valley, later known as the Kidron Valley, the place to later become the city of Jerusalem!

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

*<sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> 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.' <sup>24</sup> I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me.... Let them have their share."*

### An insidious temptation

2. On the surface, the offer of all the goods recaptured and given to Abraham as a reward was "normal." Abraham was a conquering hero to the hostages and the king of Sodom. Abraham could have seen this as an, "everyone does it," offer.

3. Abraham smells a rat!

4. What is the subtle temptation, almost invisible in nature, but insidious, nonetheless? Some gifts come with strings attached. Those strings usually come with unspoken obligations.

5. From what Abraham knew of Sodom and the king of Sodom, that kind of obligation would have been an albatross around his neck.

6. This reminds us of Paul's words:

*1 Corinthians 6:12... I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.*

7. What made this gift really tempting was that it came after a victory. Abraham's words strike three chords:

a. First, notice how emphatic Abraham is. "*nothing...not even a thread...strap...sandal...*"

b. Second, notice how serious Abraham is! "*With raised hand...sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth...*"

c. Third, notice his rationale: "...lest you should say, 'I have made Abraham rich.' I don't want to be in any man's debt. If I get wealthy, I want it to be from the hand of God."

8. The top consideration of whether or not to receive the king's offer was not the amount of treasure. It was his reputation and character, God's reputation, the desire to honor God, and to reflect the value of living for God.

9. This must have stunned the king of Sodom. And it should have stopped him in his tracks to consider the life he was living and his leadership of the wicked city of Sodom. Unfortunately, it apparently did not.

10. When you are faced with choices of decisions, what are your top criteria? Your bank account? What "everybody" thinks is normal? Your reputation and your testimony? What does God want me to do?

11. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 3: Inner battles to do right by God and His purposes

### Melchizedek

*Gene sis 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,<sup>19</sup> and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.<sup>20</sup> And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.”*

*Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

1. You may wonder how Abraham saw through this temptation so clearly and rejected it so decisively. There are undoubtedly two reasons.

- a. First, Abraham had seen the hand of God in the utterly decisive victory over his enemies.
- b. Second, just prior to this enticing offer from the king of Sodom was this incident with a mysterious person named Melchizedek.

2. What do we know about King Melchizedek?

- a. He will meet with Abraham and then disappears from the pages of the Old Testament for a thousand years until the time of David. David declares in Psalm 110 that **the Messiah to come “will be made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”**
- b. Then, Melchizedek vanishes again, this time from the rest of the Old Testament.
- c. A thousand years later, Melchizedek pops up in the book of Hebrews. His name means “**king** of righteousness.” He is the king of Salem, later to be known as Jerusalem.
- d. The bible is loaded with genealogies, but with Melchizedek, there is none—no father mentioned, no mother mentioned, no birth date, no date of death.

3. To understand the significance of Melchizedek we need to understand one of the features of the Old Testament, called “**typology**.” Typology gives us a picture of what to look for in the future. A “type” is a “heads up” of what to look for that is coming.

4. The writer of Hebrews takes all of this evidence of what we know and what we don’t know and concludes that Melchizedek gives us a “type” of what’s to come of the Messiah and His priesthood.

#### **The Messiah to come will:**

- a. Have an eternal priesthood,
  - b. Literally have no beginning nor end,
  - c. Live to pray for all of us, and
  - d. Connect people to God, the role of a priest.
5. Before we connect this interaction with how it affected Abraham and the offer from the King of Sodom, let’s camp on the amazing story and mysterious character known as Melchizedek.
6. Melchizedek serves us in a similar way as the Old Testament prophets. We are (1) guided into the future, (2) armed with what to look for, (3) in order to understand God’s purpose and Person (Christ, the Messiah) in our redemption!
7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## DAY 4: Inner battles to do right by God and His purposes

*Genesis 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,<sup>19</sup> and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.<sup>20</sup> And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.”*

*Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

1. “God Most High” is “El Elyon,” who owns everything on earth.
2. Now we can see why God led Abraham back home through the king’s valley. King Sodom was approaching from the east.
3. Notice the ministry of Melchizedek to Abraham.
  - a. First, Melchizedek reminds Abraham of the character of God. He is above everything and made everything. It all belongs to Him. God can give you what you need.
  - b. Second, Melchizedek gave him bread and wine. Bread is a symbol for strength and wine is a symbol for joy. When we take communion, we take the bread and wine, symbols of the death of Jesus Christ for us who strengthens us and gives us the joy of forgiveness, regeneration, restoration, on-going sanctification, and God’s thorough steadfast love.
  - c. Third, the effect of Melchizedek’s ministry to Abraham was an act of worship and dedication—giving. Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of what he had.

4. When the king of Sodom later offers Abraham a fortune, not only does he emphatically decline it, but he had **already** given a tenth of what he had to the Lord!

5. Anybody can say they believe in God. Sometimes, words are cheap—really cheap!

*James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

6. Real faith is faith acted on, demonstrating our commitment to God and His purposes as primary in our lives.

7. Consider the testimony of the Macedonian Christians:

*2 Corinthians 8:1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.<sup>2</sup> In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*

*2 Cor. 8:3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,<sup>4</sup> they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.<sup>5</sup> And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.*

8. Abraham tasted the ministry of Jesus Christ in that valley, just **before** the king of Sodom came to him. In that same valley where Jesus Christ would one day sweat great drops of blood, Abraham, by faith, looked forward to that day—he had an inkling of what was to come. He was reminded of the God who gave him victory over powerful enemies, refreshed and reminded him through the bread and the wine, and finished with a heart satisfied and anchored in the character of God. He worshipped.

9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?