

# 17-18 Bible Study #24

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# Genesis 13

# Genesis 12 (Cont)

- God expands on the three blessings He gave to Abraham (Gn 12:1-9) in:
  - **Genesis 15:1-2** - Land
    - Promised Land
  - **Genesis 17:1-11** Royal dynasty
    - Name Changed to Abraham
    - Circumcision is sign of new covenant
  - **Genesis 22:1-19** - Blessing of the nations
    - Bring nations dispersed at Babel back to God
- Blessings and curses were the language of covenant and they offered a resolution to the problem of sin

# Genesis 13

- **Genesis 13:1-7**

- “Cattle” meant “live stock”
- Therefore, *Abram* left with all of the stuff he collected in *Egypt*, returned to the ***Negev*** and then back to ***Bethel*** where he began his sojourn
- As we saw in **Genesis 12**, the *Canaanites* were occupying the land along with the *Perizzites* who were also descendants of *Ham*
- Here *Abram* faced a new problem dealing with his and Lot’s wealth \*

# Genesis 13 (Cont)

- **Genesis 13:8-9**

- The *Hebrew* word here for “kinsmen” is the same word as used for “brothers”
- At this point *Abram* gave *Lot* a choice to decide in which land he would like to settle
- This was just like the choice *Abram* had made earlier when he decided to go the *Egypt* rather than remaining in *Canaan*
- *Lot* had a choice of remaining with *Abram*, the source of the blessings of God, or leaving for the greener pastures where he hoped for security
- This was a test for *Lot* \*

# Genesis 13 (Cont)

- **Genesis 13:10-13**

- Look at the parallels here
- The author reminds us that *Lot* thought that he was going to make the better choice by going to the rich land of *Sodom and Gomorrah*
- Once again he headed “east”, away from *Abram* and the land God had given them
- He headed “east” and back to where they came from!
- The author is bending over backward to show us that *Lot* was making a wrong decision \*

# Genesis 13 (Cont)

- **Genesis 13:14-18**

- There was plenty of room in *Canaan* for both families and it all belonged to *Abram*
- *Lot* could have stayed with *Abram*
- *St Ephraim* points out that the description of the land to the north, south, east and west was blessed and formed the sign of the cross
- *St Augustine* says that the Old Testament is revealed in the New and the New Testament is hidden in the Old

# Genesis 13 (Cont)

- We can see many interesting “types” or “images” pointing to the cross in the Old Testament
- Many of these texts are presented at the **Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross** (September 14) in the “Liturgy of the Hours”
- Again, *Abram* pre-figures the cross as Moses pre-figured it when he will throw the branch into the bitter waters during the **Exodus** \*



# Genesis 14

# Genesis 14

- **Genesis 14:1-9**

- This story is about a big war
- Like World War 1 everyone in the region began killing each other
- The Kings of *Sodom and Gomorrah* were caught up in this big battle
- Five kings went to war against four kings \*

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- **Genesis 14:10-12**

- This was the region at the most southern end of the *Jordan Valley* near the *Dead Sea*
- Even today one can find large chunks of tar floating on the surface of the *Dead Sea*
- The reason we are told of this battle is because *Lot* and his family were captured
- Once again, if we did not see the error in *Lot's* decision to separate from *Abram*, we can surely see its consequence here
- *Abram* had to go and rescue *Lot* and his family from their captivity \*

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- **Genesis 14:13-16**

- As we will discover when we get to the arrival of *Israel* in the “Promised Land”, *Dan* was one of the twelve sons of *Israel* and also was the name of one of the tribal portions of the land \*<sub>1</sub>
- This example will help us date the time that this story was formally written down (after the Exile)
- Originally, the tribe of *Dan* was given land on the west coast of *Israel*
- Sometime later they move to the most northern portion of the land
- What is happening here is that this book was still in formation at the time of the Book of Judges or early First Kings

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- This can be seen as an example of scribal correction or clarification
- It is also an example of Textual or Form Criticism vs what we are doing in this class, which is Narrative Criticism
- At this point we discover another amazing bit of information
- Abram had 318 men within his family who were willing to fight for him
- Upon purchasing them, or being given them in *Haran* and *Egypt*, he gave them their political and spiritual freedom, and treating them like members of his family

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- Otherwise how could he trust and arm these slaves to fight his battles?
- This is very important as we will see when we get to the **Exodus** story where God will do the same for the people of *Israel*
- This reveals that God was interested in the Gentiles from very early on in Salvation History
- Remember that one of the promises to *Abram* was that through him all of the nations would be blessed
- Further, the reason that these 318 men could defeat the well-armed armies of the five kings was because God was fighting for them

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- This will be important for the **Exodus** story where we will hear that God was with them like he was with *Abram*
- Again, “kinsmen could be translated as “brother”
- This helps us understand Jesus’ use of the term “brother” in the New Testament \*

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- **Genesis 14:17-24**

- Here we meet King *Melchizedek* who blessed *Abram* in the name of the “God Most High” which obviously was the God of *Abram* who had just delivered him to victory
- *Abram* then gave King *Melchizedek* 10% of everything he had captured
- It is obvious that *Abram* recognized *Melchizedek* as a priest/king of the same God he worshiped who was the God of **Genesis 1 and 2**
- He is the God of the entire story *Moses* has been revealing to his listeners at the foot of *Mount Sinai*



# Melchizedek

## Gn 14:17-24

- Upon his victorious return, *Abram* met *Melchizedek* (priest and King of Salem) and offered him 10% of his booty
- *Melchizedek*:
  - Gave *Abram* and his men bread and wine
  - Was a priest not in the line of *Levi*
  - May be a pseudonym for *Shem*, the son of *Noah*
- Jesus will be called a priest in the line of *Melchizedek* (to differentiate from the line of *Levi*)

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- Father Sebastian pointed out some commentators speak about *Melchizedek* as:
  - A guy who was most likely a Jebusite pagan priest because he was the King of Salem (which might possibly have been Jerusalem)
  - An insignificant player in a little story that the editors of the Pentateuch decided not to leave out
- This is not so, as this story is critical for the narrative about *Abram* and Salvation History
- It is obvious that *Melchizedek* was not a pagan because the author tells us **three times** that he was a priest of the God of *Abram*

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- It is also a critical part of the bigger picture
- Earlier we heard God say, “I will bless you” (Gn 12:2)
- As we read through the **Genesis** narrative, we see the theme of the blessing being handed down from the father to the son as a part of the descendency
- Scott Hahn goes into great detail in his book about these three blessings
- This is a big story as *Melchizedek* is the priest and king of *Salem* as we can see in **Psalm 76:1-2**

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- This is classic synonymous parallelism that we find throughout *Hebrew* poetry
- In *Judah*, God is known, which means that his name is great in *Israel*
- *Judah* was the most important tribe and the primary kingdom for the people of *Israel*
- His abode has been established in *Salam* and his dwelling place was in *Zion* (the name for *Jerusalem*)
- *Zion* and *Salem* are the same place

# Psalm 76 (Cont)

- According to Rabbinic tradition *Salem* is *Jerusalem*
- It will first be called *Jerusalem* at the end of the narrative of *Abraham*
- *Isaac*, the son of *Abraham*, will call it *Jerusalem*
- *Melchizedek* was a priest and King of *Jerusalem* and the first king mentioned by name in the Bible
- As priest and king of *Jerusalem* he offered *Abraham* and his men “bread and wine”
- Further, **Psalm 110:4** also presents its importance

# Psalm 110

- **Psalm 110:4**

- You are a priest forever after the order of *Melchizedek*
- *David* (in this psalm) refers to his descendants has having a priesthood in the line of *Melchizedek* (*not the Levitical line*)
- This is because *Melchizedek* was believed to be the King of *Jerusalem*
- If one (like David) was the King of *Jerusalem*, he would have inherited the throne of *Melchizedek* and, therefore, his priesthood

# Psalm 110 (Cont)

- This becomes very important when we get to the New Testament where we learn that Jesus was a descendant of *David* and thus has the right to the throne of *Jerusalem* (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7)
- We also see *Melchizedek* offering “bread and wine” because he is the Messiah (anointed one) King
- **Hebrew 5-10** discusses this in great detail
- This is all about Jesus being the new King and high priest according to the order of *Melchizedek*

# Genesis 14 (Cont)

- Here we see that it was through *Melchizedek* that God blessed *Abram*
- Remember the promised blessing in **Genesis 12:1-3** where God blessed *Abram* through *Melchizedek*
- With this everything falls into place
- This will be followed by the establishment of the Covenant between God and Abraham in **Genesis 15; 17; 22**