

Who is King?

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. So nice to see you all this morning. Well, this morning we are continuing our series in the book of Genesis. So this morning we're going to continue to look at the life of Abraham, and that means we're picking up from where we left off last week. So that means we're coming this morning to Genesis chapter 14, and we're going to be looking at verses 1 to 24. We're going to be looking at the whole chapter. Now I have asked Naomi if she would be willing to come and do this reading for us this morning, and I have to say that I am just delighted that she said yes, because let's just say there are some names in this chapter that I think I would struggle even to know where to begin to pronounce. So I've asked Naomi if she'd be willing to come and read it. So thank you very much, Naomi, for doing this for us or doing it for me. I appreciate that.

Okay, so we're going to read the whole chapter. If you're following in a church Bible, it's on page 14. So it's Genesis chapter 14, and I make no claims to know how to pronounce these words, but I'll do my best. So here we go. Genesis chapter 14, starting at verse 1.

At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar, Ariak king of Elessar, Kedorleomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goyim, these kings went to war against Bira king of Sodom, Bersha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Adma, Shemaber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is Zor.

All these latter kings joined forces in the valley of Sidom, that is the Dead Sea Valley. For 12 years they had been subject to Kedorleomer, but in the 13th year they rebelled.

In the 14th year, Kedorleomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephites in Ashtaroth Karnam, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emities in Shavah Kiriathame, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran, near the desert. 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. Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Adma, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is Zor, marched out and drew up their battle lines in the valley of Sidom against Kedorleomer, king of Elam, Tidal, king of Goyim, Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Ariok, king of Elessar. Four kings against five.

[2 : 59] Now the valley of Sidom was full of tar pits, and when the king of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them, and the rest fled to the hills. The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, then they went away. They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom. 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 Eshcol, and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram.

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. During the night, Abram divided his men to attack them, and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

After Abram returned from defeating Kedder Lamer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Shava, that is, the king's valley. Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, Blessed be Abram by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. The king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself. 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, 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. 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. Well, thank you, Naomi. I think there's one thing for sure. If anyone is looking for some new ideas for baby names, I think that this passage has got some cracking names. But anyway, thank you, Naomi.

[5 : 53] You definitely did a better job than I could have done, so that's really appreciated. Well, as you were listening along to Naomi there, I don't know about you, but when I was first looking at this passage for this morning, I was thinking, there's just so much going on in this passage that it's kind of hard to make sense of it. It's hard to keep track of it all. You know, if you're here thinking even now after that reading, you know, wait a minute, what is happening here? Well, then you wouldn't be alone because that's what I was thinking too. Maybe I still am thinking that, but as I started to look at this passage a little bit, I think what really started to stand out to me was the amount of times that the word king or kings is mentioned in this chapter. In fact, 29 times in this passage, the word king or kings is mentioned. And that's 29 times in 24 verses that we see the word king or kings. Well, in general, in Hebrew writing, words are repeated to draw attention. In general, words are repeated to kind of emphasize. So in terms of considering what might be a team in this passage, in terms of considering what might this passage be pointing to, well, I think we cannot ignore the words king or kings in this chapter. We cannot ignore the team king or kings in this chapter. And just taking that a step further, with so much going on in this chapter with all of these different kings kind of jostling for position, at the end of it all, at the end of the chapter, I think the question that we're kind of left with and almost encouraged to consider is, who is king? There's so much going on in this chapter with all of these different kings. I think at the end of it all, we're almost encouraged to consider the question, who is king? So that's what I would like us to consider just for a few minutes as we as we think through this chapter together. Who is king? So in this chapter, in this passage, we start off with two groups of kings. Four kings are mentioned in verse one, and they're one group, and they are in an alliance with each other. And then in verse two, these five kings are mentioned, and they're another group, and they are in alliance with each other. So in verses one and two, we start off with two groups of kings. Well, then what happens in this passage is basically the four kings decide to take on the five kings. The four kings were basically sick of, they had had enough of being under the rule of the five kings, of being in the shadow of the five kings. So they decided that they would take on the five kings. So these two groups of kings, they essentially go to war with each other. They battle each other. And who do you think would win? The four kings or the five kings? Five kings. We would think that the five kings would win, but actually they don't.

The four kings actually overpower the five kings. So guess what happens? The five kings are defeated. And we see in verses 11 and 12 that the four kings, with their victory, they captured possessions, people, and goods from the places that they conquered. And with that, who did the four kings capture?

They captured Lot. They captured Lot. And where did they capture Lot? Well, we're told in verse 12 that they captured Lot from Sodom, where he was living at that time. So just pausing here just for a moment, considering our question, who is king? Well, at this point in the passage, it looks like these four kings, they are the business. You know, these four kings at this point, they're on top of the pile. These four kings are king at this point, so to speak. Well, that was all fine until Abraham came bursting onto the scene.

And we read in verse 13 that Abraham was told by someone who escaped the war what had happened. So Abraham was told that his relative Lot was captured. So verse 14, Abraham decided that he would do something about it. Abraham decided that he would step up and do something about it. So Abraham and his 318 specially trained men decided that they would go and chase down these four kings on this big rescue mission to try to rescue Lot. I mean, this, at this moment, I think, is a really exciting scene. If you're into action, if you're into adventure, at this point, Abraham and these 318 men are chasing down these four kings on this big rescue mission. Well, amazingly, in verses 15 and 16, Abraham, we are told with these 318 men, using great strategy at night time, was able to take over these four kings. They were able to recover all of the goods that were taken, and they were able to rescue Lot. So Abraham and these 318 men defeated the four kings and rescued Lot. Someone said they rescued Lot and they rescued Lot. For Abraham, though, this was such a great success. You know, this was such a great achievement. This was such a great victory. So at this point, just pausing here for a moment, again, thinking about our question, who is king?

[12 : 40] Well, is Abraham king? Is the point of this passage for us to look to Abraham as king? I mean, at this point, Abraham has just defeated the four kings. Who defeated the five kings? So at this point, Abraham is on top of the pile. At this time, Abraham is king. He looks like he is king. As I said, is the point of this passage for us to look at Abraham and think, look at this great man? Well, it is at this point, in verse 18, just when Abraham returned from his victory against these four kings, that this guy called King Melchizedek comes on the scene. Well, it is true Melchizedek that we really start to see the true king that this passage is pointing to. Because King Melchizedek, he points us to another king. He points us to the true king. He points us to the true king that all of scripture points to. He points us to the true king that all of scripture points to. He points us to the true king of kings. He points us to Christ. Melchizedek is known as a type of Christ or a foreshadow of Christ, basically meaning that in different ways he points us to Christ. In different ways he points us to Jesus. Melchizedek, he points us to Christ through his name. The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness. And that points us to Christ, who is, of course, the ultimate king of righteousness. Melchizedek points us to Christ through his role. Verse 18, Melchizedek being a high priest of the most high points us to Christ in that Christ is the ultimate high priest of the most high. In relation to his role again, Melchizedek points us to Christ in that he is both a high priest and a king at the same time. Well, of course, Christ is the king of kings and our great high priest at the same time. Well, to add to that again, not only does his name, his roles, his titles point us to Christ, Melchizedek also points us to Christ in that Christ actually comes from the line or the order of Melchizedek. Just looking at Hebrews chapter 7, we're told in Hebrews chapter 7 that

Christ is a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So how is that the case? How is he in the order of Melchizedek? Well, we're told in verse 18 of our chapter here that Melchizedek is the king of Salem. Well, looking at verses like Psalm 76 verse 2, we see that the name Salem refers to Zion and that refers to Jerusalem. So it seems that Salem is short for Jerusalem. So Melchizedek is the king of Jerusalem. So Melchizedek being the king of Jerusalem, it would mean that his throne in time would be sat on by another king and that king would be David. Well, of course, Jesus is in the line of David. Jesus is the root of David. So in that sense, Jesus is also in the line or the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is a foreshadow. He's a type of Christ in that his names, his titles, his role, where he is king, all points us to Christ. Even what Melchizedek said to Abraham at the end of our chapter points to Christ.

Melchizedek spoke about the creator of heaven and earth. Well, as Grace mentioned earlier, looking at that verse in Colossians, the creator of all things is Christ. So even in what he said, he points us to Christ. So just looking at our chapter here, considering our question, who is king? We are shown in this passage that these five kings are not king. We are shown that these four kings are not king. We are shown that Abraham is not king. And we're even shown that Melchizedek is not king. But true Melchizedek, we are pointed to the king of kings. True Melchizedek, we are pointed to Christ. We are pointed to King Jesus, the true king of kings. And I think that that is ultimately what this chapter is pointing to. I think ultimately that is what the Lord wants us to see through this chapter, that Jesus is the true king of kings. And he is the king of all things. It's almost like all of this happened in this chapter, with all of these kings jostling for position, just to point Abraham and to point us to who the true king is of our lives.

Abraham, at this point, he was getting more and more established, and he was growing. And it was important for him to remember that ultimately, it was the Lord who was the true king of his life. It was the Lord who gave him the victories. It was the Lord who gave him anything good in his life. And so it is the Lord who should get all of the honor and the praise and the glory, and not himself or anyone else. And we see in this chapter that to express all of this towards the very end, Abraham did not point to himself for this victory. He did not point to any earthly king for this victory or his 318 men. No, at the end of it all, he turned to the Lord and he worshipped him.

He worshipped the Lord with offering and thanksgiving. He gave to the Lord, true Melchizedek, a tent of all that he had. Abraham, at the end of the day, after all of this jostling for position, after all of these kings, he turned to the true king of his life, and he worshipped him, and he gave him all of the honor and the praise and the glory. Well, I would just encourage us to do the same. Let's let this passage, this chapter, serve as a fresh reminder of who is the true king of our lives, because there is often so much activity in our lives, so much busyness, so much going on in our lives, there's so much jostling that it's often easy to forget who is the true king of our lives. It's so easy in the busyness of life to look to ourselves, or to look to others, or to look to our work, or to look to our

passions, or to look to something else as the king of our lives. You know, I think there's so much in life that is jostling for position to be king in our lives. There's so much things that can kind of squeeze their way in to be at the center, but let's let this passage remind us that King Jesus is the true king of our lives. It is him who gives us victory. It is him who watches over us. It is him who gives us anything good that we have is from him. It's him who, by his grace and mercy, has brought us into his eternal kingdom forever and ever. And so it is to him that we should pour out our praise, our worship, our offering, our thanksgiving, because I think that that is the only fitting response to the king who, for once and for all, for us defeated sin, death, and the enemy, so that we could be forgiven, we could be set free, and we could be his forever. What a savior we have, what a king we have, King Jesus. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you that you are the king of kings, we thank you that you are the king of our lives, and Lord, we thank you that you are the one who gives us victory. You're the one who gives us anything good in our lives. We thank you, King [22 : 11] Jesus, that you went to the cross and you rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death, and the enemy, so that we could be yours, we could be set free, and we could be part of your eternal kingdom forever and ever. Lord, I just pray that this passage would encourage us to respond to you in a fitting way. Oh, Lord, in that sense, help us to learn from Abraham. Help us to pour out our praise, our offering, our thanksgiving, our lives to you, for you are the true king of kings, and you're worthy of all of that.

So, Lord, we thank you for the reminder of this this morning in this passage. In Jesus' name, amen.