

# HOW TO INCREASE YOUR FAITH | (GENESIS 14:1-24) | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 7/23/2023

I. By Warfare (1-16) | II. By Worship (17-20) | III. By Withstanding (21-24)

**INTRO:** I find it amazing to see Abram go up and down in Faith. At first, he fearlessly **Stepped out**, and then fearfully **Stepped back**, yet now we see how he fearlessly **Steps up!** – In this chapter Abram, the man of faith, fulfills **three special roles**: He **Wars (1–16)**, He **Worships (17–20)**, and He **Withstands (21–24)**. In all three roles, Abraham exercised faith in God, thus revealing that **HIS FAITH WAS INCREASING**.

**I. BY WARFARE (1-16)** – Several years has passed since Lot separated from Abram (13:14), during which **Abram lived in Peace and Prosperity**. But times were about to change because **sin exists in the hearts of men**. Selfish people would take possession by force! And so, we have here **the first account of a War in the Bible**.

**A. Battle of Kings (1-10)** – **Four Kings** from the East **MADE WAR** with **Five kings** of the West. – The **eastern kings** were from the **Babylonia area**, the **western kings** dwelt near the Salt Sea (*Jordanian plain*), the Valley of Siddim.

1. The **Five western kings** were **VASSALS (4)**, to the **Four kings** of which **they paid tribute, for twelve years**. A Vassal is a person or people under the protection of a feudal Lord. But In the 13<sup>th</sup> year...they REBELLED. (*1<sup>st</sup> mention of 13 in the Bible and it is associated with rebellion!*)

2. In (v.5-7), we see that the four eastern kings led by **Chedorlaomer**, made their way to **annihilate the rebellious five** in the 14<sup>th</sup> year. – They traveled southwest and destroyed every city-state in their path. – **Some of them were giants: Rephaim, “strong ones,” Zamzummim, “powerful ones” (Deut 2:20), and Emim, “terrible ones” (Deut 2:10), all possibly “Sons of Anak,”** the son of Arba, (Josh 15:13). – The existence of these scattered giants seems to infer that **after the Flood**, another demonic attack was launched, thus producing these tribes. **Moses, Joshua** and even **king David** would later exterminate them. – Others mentioned were the **Horites, Amalekites** and **Amorites**, who would suffer for the raids.

**B. The Five kings of Canaan (8-10)**, **joined forces to fight** against the **Four eastern kings** – **FOUR KINGS** *against FIVE KINGS*, but the Five **miscalculated terribly**, and **LOST!** Many died in the **Bitumen pits**, some fled to the mtns., and **the kings of Sodom & Gomorrah also fled!**

- **To the Spoil! (11-12)** – **All the goods and provisions were taken.** *The game-changer* for Abram is mentioned in (v.12). *They also took Lot and his goods.*

**P/A** – Up to this point Abram was protected by God and not personally affected by these four kings. But NOW, we learn the importance of family as Abram shifts into **Warfare Mode**, by Faith! **Church, there comes a time when we are to get involved!** **Edmund Burkes** is attributed for saying, **“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing.”** – E. Burkes

**C. Battle for His Brother (13-16)** – Upon receiving news of **his nephew’s fate**, **Abram’s faith was activated once again!** – Notice first his title, **Abram the Hebrew**, i.e., the **“one from beyond”** or **“from the other side.”** He was **an Eberite (10:21)**, who was a **descendant of Shem.**

P/A – Think about it! ***The one from the other side was ready to wage warfare!*** (As sons of God, we too are from the other side! – We should be willing to fight for good and in the name of our Lord!)

- He dwelt in (**Mamre**) and allied himself with Mamre and his bros., Eschol and Aner, who were Amorites.

1. Without hesitation, Abram was determined to **TAKE ON** the 4 most powerful kings! – In preparation, he already had **318 train servants**.

2. Abram **RISKED HIS LIFE** to save Lot. – He rose and traveled over **150 miles to battle...** **Why? Not land, money or sport... His Motive was love!** – *And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 John 4:21)*

3. Abram **ARMED** his Men (**14**) – It takes more than zeal and courage to win a war: **You must also have effective equipment!** – *Spiritually*, the Christian soldier **MUST wear the whole armor of God** and **USE the spiritual weapons** God has provided (**Eph. 6:10–18**). *Our weapons are spiritual, not fleshly* (2 Cor. 10:3–5); and we use them in the power of the Holy Spirit! – (2 Cor 10:4) *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...*

4. He Brought Back **EVERYTHING** (**16**) – In particular...**LOT!** (*His Family...His Brother, His Blood*)

- Did the Lord's goodness in rescuing Lot do him any good? The goodness of God should have led him to repentance (**Luke 15:14–19; Rom. 2:4**); but Instead of repenting, Lot returned to Sodom!
- Abram's actions bore witness to the fact that he was the **"father of the faithful,"** and Lot, his nephew, was the **"father of all such as are scarcely saved."** Some will be saved **"yet so as through fire"** (**1 Cor. 3:15**): But it is far better to have **"an abundant entrance"** into the Lord's everlasting kingdom (**2 Peter 1:11**).

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** If you want to **Increase Your Faith**, then **be prepared for war!** War against Satan and his foes... War against anything that comes against your Family...War against things that are evil in this world and especially in your life! – In (**1 Tim 1:18b**) Paul charged Timothy to **"wage the good warfare..."** and in (**2 Tim 2:4**) he reminds Timothy that, **"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."** (**2 Tim 2:4**)

**II. BY WORSHIP (17-20)** – Here, Abram shows us both **WHO** and **HOW** worship boosts our faith. – Once the physical battle was over, Abram had to face a new battle, which **tested his faith even greater**. – *Abraham had to choose between two kings who represented two opposite ways of life*. **BERA**, the King of Sodom (**2,17,21**), or **MELCHIZEDEK** the King of Salem (**18-20**)

**A. The KING OF SODOM Approached Abram First (17)** – Inquiring...*Who was this, Abram?* But he deferred the King of Salem before continuing with his request in (**21**).

**B. The Appearance of MELCHIZEDEK (18-20)** “Immediately presided” over the meeting! **Who was this mysterious King?** – His name *Melchizedek*, means “King of RIGHTEOUSNESS.” – (v.18a) tells us that he is the *King of Salem*, which means “PEACE.” – Both **Hebrews 7** and **Psalm 110** connect Melchizedek with **JESUS CHRIST**, the “King of peace” and the “King of righteousness.” – **Melchizedek then, is a TYPE of Christ, not a Christophany!**

- **Christophany** is an appearance, or non-physical manifestation, of Christ.
- **Theophany** is an appearance of God to a human, a divine manifestation.

1. (v.18c) – Tells us that **Melchizedek** was “*The Priest of God Most High.*” i.e., *the One who ministers on behalf of Jehovah, (tt. Psalm 110)*

2. Shows us that Melchizedek came to **BLESSED Abram!** *With...*

- **Bread and Wine (18b)** – The 1<sup>st</sup> mention of the two elements together (*Communion*).
- **An Acknowledgment (19):** That he belonged *God Most High, possessor of heaven & earth.*
- **Clarity of Deliverance:** God is to be blessed. *El Eyon delivered* Abram’s enemies to him.

3. **Abram worshipped God by honoring MELCHIZEDEK (20)** – He gave a tenth of ALL. **This is the 1<sup>st</sup> mention of a Tithe Offering.** Later, the Mosaic Law included commands to give a tenth for tabernacle worship. – **Tithing** is mentioned **18 x’s in the Law**, while in the **NT, NO Specific Amount** is commanded, and no percentage is suggested. However, a **Cheerful Heart is encouraged** when supporting Church efforts and the needs of others (**Acts 2:45; Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:11-12; 1 Tim 5:18**)

- Worship is a response to God for all that He is and all that He has done. – Previously Abram worshipped by **Stepping Out, Faithfully** – **Building altars, Physically** – **Calling on the Lord, Verbally** – And now **Financially**, by **Offering from All he possessed!** – The more Abram understood who God was and His favor toward him, the more Abram gave back to God in worship!
- Like Melchizedek in Abram’s day, **Jesus Christ is our King-Priest in heaven**, enabling us to enjoy righteousness and peace as we serve Him (**Isa 32:17; Heb 12:11**).

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** If you want to **Increase Your Faith...** Jesus should be the only One you worship! Recognize who He is and what He has done for you! **Commune with Him daily** and **Offer your best**, for He is the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace in your life!

**III. BY WITHSTANDING (21-24)** – Abram refused to honor Bera, the king of Sodom. Bera didn’t offer the *Bread or Wine of Righteous Communion*, but instead he **OFFERED A DEAL!** –

You may recall that **Sodom** was a wicked city (**Gen. 13:13; Ezek. 16:49–50**). – **Bera** represents the dominion of this world system with its **APPEAL** to the flesh, **which Abram rightly resisted!**

I wonder if Bera’s NAME and TITLE had anything to do with Abram’s choice. – **BERA** means...

**“GIFT,”** suggesting that the world bargains for your allegiance, and **SODOM** means **“BURNING,”** so be careful how you choose!

**A. Bera Only Wanted the Persons! (21)** – His offer was *“take the goods for your personal enjoyment.”* You fought hard...you deserve it, Abe! Relax, enjoy the spoil...I’ll take these burdensome people off your hands. **What he really wanted was to re-build his kingdom!**

- His request reminds me of the temptation of Jesus Christ when he was in the wilderness **(Matt 4:1-10)**. But how did Jesus respond? **BY WITHSTANDING!** *“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”* **(Matt 4:10)**
- Withstanding Satan, the World and our Own Fleshly Desires will strengthen and Increase your Faith exponentially!

**B. Abram only Wanted to Honor God! (22-24)** – His choice was clearly stated: *“I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High... that I will take nothing...”* **Faith is Determined!**

- This is how you do it folks...have nothing do with the unfruitful works of darkness! **(Eph 6:13)** *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand!*

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** The act of withstanding is a position of defense! A mind that is set on integrity and uprightness of heart. So many of us give in to the Tempting’s and Allurements of Satan and this World! **We must be ready (2 Cor 10:6)** *...and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled!* If you want to **Increase Your Faith... Resist the Devil and He will flee from you!** (James 4:8).