

February 23rd

WAR AND PEACE FOR BELIEVERS

When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.” GENESIS 14:14-16

“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times...”. This quote by Charles Dickens in “*A Tale of Two Cities*” sums up human life today and also shows what life was like for Abram. God had called Abram and given him three grand promises...and he also was separated from his nephew Lot...and still had no children. How does he respond in these moments? On Friday we looked at his compassion for Lot, and today we see God’s care for him. God’s promises to Abram were definitely glorious and grand. But we see early that he struggled to trust God fully in every situation. But here in this chapter we also see that while trusting God, Abram also works to protect himself and his family. What can we learn from this as we are shepherds of the families that God has given us?

Last Friday, I mentioned that this text in Genesis 14 is the first description of war in the Bible. What can be overlooked is how Abram was prepared for the conflict. Moses describes this in verse fourteen as “he led forth his *trained* men.” The number of men is also significant: 318. We have already seen from Genesis 13 that Abram was growing richer year by year. He needed a force to protect him from foreign invasion. He was ready to defend his people. But Abram wasn’t just ready to defend his family, he also was *strategic* in how he defended them. He divided his forces. He advanced the fight by night. He pursued the enemies. And God gave him the victory.

This isn’t a devotional meant to weigh the arguments for and against war. Instead, this is about men being God’s shepherds for their families. God calls us as men to protect. To shield. And when we work to protect and defend, we act how God acts toward us. There’s a reason that Psalm 23 is the most quoted passage in the Bible. God is our shepherd...His rod and staff comfort us, because he protects us with these tools. How do we know this? Because God also confirms that He is the One that gives the victory. Genesis 14:19-20 states, “And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” Trusting in God’s protection also means trusting in His means to protect. The means are you men. God gives you to wisely shepherd your family as you work to wisely protect them.

Spend time thanking God for His protecting you. Ask Him for wisdom on what it means to protect your family.

For Further Reading: Deuteronomy 20:1-20