

Abraham Part 4

Beholden To One Kingdom

Genesis 14

Memory Verses: Genesis 14:22-23

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

The world is filled with kingdoms. We don't necessarily call all of them kingdoms. Some we call sovereign nations or commonwealths or states. And at times these kingdoms will war with one another over land or resources or rule of government. This is and has been the pattern of the world almost since the world began.

Currently, we, as citizens of the United States, belong to the kingdom of America. We pay our tribute (taxes) to the USA. If called upon we will fight for the USA. In the Olympics or the World Cup we cheer on the USA! We are in a way beholden to the government of the United States. Other people around the world are beholden to their governments as well. In a narrow sense we all serve the kingdom of the country where we live. But in a broader sense, and from a biblical perspective, we all serve within the confines of the kingdom of this world.

You see in the grander scheme of humanity and eternity, there are really only two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ which is not of this world. In [John 18:36](#) Jesus makes this very clear.

So if I were to ask you, are you a two kingdom person or a one kingdom person what might you answer? I submit to you that you should be, for now, a two kingdom type of person. And here's the reason. A two kingdom person at least recognizes there is another kingdom not of this world. A one person kingdom only recognizes one kingdom and that is not good. You see, a lost person, a secular person who has no care for the kingdom of God lives solely to please himself in this world. He may not be beholden to the government of his country, but he is most certainly beholden to himself and worldly things. He is beholden to the kingdom of this world. A saved person, a Christian may say, well I only recognize the kingdom of God. That person may say to the governments of this world, "I don't have to pay taxes, or obey your laws, my king is God alone." And that person, though his heart may be in the right place, is also mistaken. The Bible also makes this point very clear in [Romans 13:1-2](#).

So believers must be two kingdom people! We are allegiant to God first, and subject to the government of this world second. And not just the government, but the people we must serve in the name of Christ. As Paul commends and as Jesus prayed for us in the garden, **we must be in the world for the sake of God's glory, but not of the world.** We

must be two kingdom people.

Of course there is a danger here. The problem with serving two masters is that eventually you will be beholden to one or the other. And in case you have already forgotten, God's kingdom always take precedence over this world. We are to serve this world's rulers only as one who is beholden to God first. You should never do anything, even if the rulers of this world tell you to, that goes against the word of God. This means we must ever put ourselves into a position that makes us beholden to the kingdom of this world! Never allow yourself to be caught in a situation where you would have to compromise your allegiance to God for this world!

Last week we saw Abraham and Lot. Abraham chose the road less traveled and it made all the difference. He chose to serve rather than be served. He chose to allow God to establish him rather than trying to establish himself. He let Lot choose the land for both of them knowing that God was sovereignly in charge. Abraham chose wisely while Lot chose poorly. Abraham chose the kingdom of God while Lot chose the kingdom of the world. This week we will see how those choices will put both men in a compromising position. This week we will see that... **though we are called to willingly serve in this world, we should never allow ourselves to be put in a situation where we must serve at the will of this world.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **The Kingdom of This World Cannot Save You.** Look with me at [Genesis 14:1-12](#). In the land of Canaan at this time you had small states led by kings which paid tribute to a much greater king. The leaders of the smaller states were called kings but they functioned much like governors to the true King, Chedorlaomer. But after 12 years of paying tribute to Chedorlaomer 5 of the nine states decided they had had enough and were going to secede. Chedorlaomer and the kings of the other three states went to war with the other 5 and won easily. Among the 5 rebel states was Sodom led by king Bera. After defeating Sodom, Chedorlaomer went to Sodom and plundered it. They didn't want to pay tribute so he took it. Apparently Chedorlaomer was a pretty fearsome king who could defeat anyone and take anything he wanted. Among the plunder he took from Sodom was Abraham's nephew, Lot and his possessions.

It is here in [verse 12](#) we see the most important account in this whole battle where our premise is concerned. Lot. Why is Lot taken away with the plunder of Sodom? When we last heard from him in Chapter 13 he was living outside Sodom. In order for him to have been counted as part of the plunder of Sodom he must have at some point moved within the city walls. Many people often think that Lot was lured to Sodom by sin. And yes, I'm sure that played a big part of it. Sin is very luring and temptation exists around every corner. But as I said last week, it wasn't sin that Lot was

concerned with when he chose the Jordan valley. Rather it was comfort and amenities. Wealth and civilization, gatherings and shopping were the things that seemed pleasing to Lot's eyes. It is not hard to understand here why Lot was counted with the plunder of Sodom. With so much war happening around him Lot most likely moved within the city walls for safety. He had once again compromised wisdom and morality for a little bit of comfort. He just wanted to be safe. Bera thought that he would find safety in the majority. 5 vs 4 should win right? But there is no safety for him in the kingdoms of this world. Lot thought he would find safety in the kingdom of this world, but he too was misled. The kingdoms of this world cannot save you. **There is a phrase made famous by Benjamin Franklin that says, "those who would compromise freedom for safety, deserve neither freedom or safety."** I would submit that... **those who compromise holiness for safety are neither holy or safe.** You will never find salvation in the kingdom of this world. **Psalm 20:7** is one of my favorite verses. Our trust is in the Lord. When you begin to trust this world for your safety you are shifting your allegiance from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of this world. You are no longer living in this world but trusting in God. Now you are living in this world and trusting in this world. You've compromised your holiness for safety and you've found neither. Bera thought he would be saved within the kingdom of this world and he was conquered. Lot thought he would be saved within the walls of the kingdom of this world and he was taken into captivity. There is no salvation in the kingdom of this world and the ways of this world. The only true safety is found when you put your faith and trust in the sovereignty of God. As many have said before... **the safest place you can be is in the middle of God's will**. The only salvation in this world is found in the kingdom of God. **Though we are called to willingly serve in this world, we should never allow ourselves to be put in a situation where we must serve at the will of this world.**

The next thing we need to see is that... **The Kingdom of This World Can Help You**. Look with me at **Genesis 14:13-16**. Lot has compromised himself and trusted in the salvation of the kingdom of this world. He didn't just live in this world, but became dependent on this world—beholden to it. And it got him in to trouble. But Abraham, though a part of the kingdom of this world, has remained independent of this world and beholden to the God alone. But does this mean that Abraham is going to rescue Lot by himself? I believe if that's what God told him to do he would have. But he didn't have to do it. Why? Abraham has allies. **There's a difference between having allegiances and allies. An allegiance says you must. An ally says you should. An allegiance says you owe me. An ally asks could you help? An allegiance is a duty. An ally is a service. An allegiance makes you a dependent servant. An ally**

is an independent friend. Mamre was an ally.

And he was an Amorite. Most likely a pagan man who did not worship the God of Abraham. But he respected Abraham, as well did his brothers. When something happened to Lot, these men came bearing the news. These men represented an allegiance to the kingdom of this world and yet were being used by God to build his kingdom through Abraham. **God often uses the kingdom of this world to help build his kingdom through us.** What do I mean. I mean this. Don't be dependent on the kingdom of this world, but when the world comes to you to help you build God's kingdom, let them.

So Abraham, with the help of his Amorite allies, takes his army of 318 trained men and goes after Lot. Again, all this does is show that Abraham trusts in the kingdom of God. He is beholden to God. If Abraham was trusting in or beholden to the kingdom of this world he would have waited to build a bigger coalition of warriors. He would've made bargains and compromises to assure victory in battle. Yet, he doesn't do that. He takes 318 men and goes to take down an army that just destroyed 5 other kingdoms. This victory belongs to the Lord.

And get this. Abraham is not even a king. He doesn't have a kingdom. He is just a pilgrim wanderer who has set up in Hebron. But because this nomad is building the kingdom of God and is beholden to God, he has no fear in chasing down the biggest baddest army in all of Canaan. And what happens? He defeats them and brings back Lot and the people and possessions of Sodom. Abraham accepted help from the kingdom of this world to build the kingdom of God. Just because we can't find salvation in this world, doesn't mean we can't let it help us. And in the end the battle will be won by the blessing of God.

The last thing we need to see here is that... **The Kingdom of This World Will Enslave You.** Look with me at **Genesis 14:17-24**. After Abraham returns with Lot and the possessions of Sodom, the king of Sodom, Bera, goes out to meet with Abraham to discuss the return of his property. But another king joins the party. This king seems to be unexpected. His name is Melchizedek, the king of Salem, or what at the time would have been Jerusalem. This king is very interesting indeed. First, he is not just a king but a priest as well. Secondly, he is a priest of the one true God--Abraham's God. This reminds us that Abraham is not the only follower of God in Canaan. God had already prepared the way for other followers in the land amongst other people groups. Melchizedek is a Canaanite who worships the one true God and is a priest of the one true God. Third, he blesses Abraham. Mel, as the priest of God, as spiritual insight and can see that God has chosen Abraham for a special calling. He reiterates to Abraham some of the blessings that God has already given to him. So what is Abraham's response to this? Abraham gives him a 10th of

everything he possesses. Wow! Abraham is rich, filthy stinking rich. He has land, cattle, sheep, servants, and army, gold and silver. And after meeting this priest for what seems like a couple of minutes, gives him a 10th of all of his possessions. Make it make sense. Well you have to understand something... Abe isn't giving it to Mel, he's giving it to the priest of the most high God, he's giving it to God! Tithing isn't a part of the law. Tithing is the natural response of gratitude for the blessings of God. Tithing is what you do when your allegiance is to the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of this world. How do we know this? Because of what happens immediately after.

Bera, the king of Sodom tells Abraham to give him a portion too. He asks for all the people back that was taken after the battle, but tells Abraham that he can keep all the riches. Abraham's response tells us a lot. He says that he will not keep anything that belongs to the king of Sodom. **Not even a sandal strap. Why? Because Abraham doesn't want to ever be beholden to the king of Sodom. He doesn't want to be beholden to the kingdoms of this world. Abraham lets it be known that he will take the blessings of God but not of wicked men. Bera's name means wicked by the way. He will give tribute to God but not to wicked men. And neither should we.** Let me illustrate what I mean here. Congress often has the worst approval rating of all political systems. Right now its at 15%. Only 15 percent of Americans think Congress is on the up and up. And do you know why this rating is always so low? Because no one trusts congress people. Senators, congressmen, they aren't loyal to the people they represent, rather they are loyal to the people who funded their campaigns. They are beholden to people through back door dealings and shady compromises. They are all gaming the stock market and getting rich off your tax dollars. Everything is quid pro quo. Nothing is because its the right thing to do. Every stinking one of them would change every moral stance they have if it would win them another election. This world seeks to enslave you to it's will. To make you beholden to it so that you can't be beholden to God. It wants you to be compromised!

Application

Abraham is letting us know that... **it is much better to stay independent from the kingdom of this world, as to not owe it anything, so you cannot be compromised!** The only one Abraham is beholden to is the kingdom of God! Otherwise you end up being a so called Christian with a 15% approval rating selling out for every scrap this world throws your way! **We are two kingdom people. We live in one and serve it but it cannot save us. The other supersedes the first and we are beholden to forever. God's kingdom trumps the kingdom of this world. Though we are in the world we are not of the world. We are independent with allies.**

We will bless the world and allow it to bless us. We will serve the world and we will allow the world to serve us. But we must never be put in a position where we have to serve the world. God is who we are beholden to! Though we are called to willingly serve in this world, we should never allow ourselves to be put in a situation where we must serve at the will of this world.

Conclusion

There is a lot of foreshadowing in this story here. Have you heard me mention it all points to Jesus? Genesis 3:15 points to Jesus. Noah and the Ark points to Jesus. And here we see a picture of the salvation of Christ. Of course Sodom represents wickedness and sinfulness. Lot is captured in Sodom. Captured in his sinfulness. We were there too. You and I, once were enslaved by our sin and we could not escape. We were on our way to hell. But then God, Abraham and his 318 men, came for us and brought us out of our captivity and saved us. This world enslaved us but God saved us through the blood of Jesus Christ. After the battle Melchizedek, representing Christ, is there waiting for us to bless us. And we worship him and pay tribute to him. We no longer pay tribute to Sodom, we now and forevermore are beholden to Christ. In a world of two kingdoms.. be beholden to the kingdom of God and his salvation alone.