

Genesis 14: An Exciting History Lesson ! - OR

(Would you believe a true account with some very probing questions and a tiny bit of interesting info)

14 And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of ^[a]Goiim,² that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³All these ^[b]came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). ⁴Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and ^[c]defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in ^[d]Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and ^[e]conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim, ⁹against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of ^[f]Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.

¹⁰Now the valley of Siddim was full of **tar pits**; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell ^[g]into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country. ¹¹Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.

¹² They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

At first, Lot did not live IN Sodom but close to it.

Genesis 13:12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents **near** Sodom.

But later we are told he lived **IN** Sodom.

Genesis 14 ¹² They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living **in Sodom**.

Did Lot enjoy living in Sodom? Not so much. . .

2 Peter 2:7-7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)

Lot did not enjoy living in Sodom, so why did he move there? Was this wise?

The wars of nations make great figure in history, but we should not have had the record of this war if Abram and Lot had not been concerned. Out of covetousness, Lot had settled in fruitful, but wicked Sodom. Its inhabitants were the most ripe for vengeance of all the descendants of Canaan. The invaders were from Chaldea and Persia, then only small kingdoms. They took Lot among the rest, and his goods. Though he was righteous, and Abram's brother's son, yet he was with the rest in this trouble. Neither our own piety, nor our relation to the favorites of Heaven, will be our security when God's judgments are abroad. Many an honest man fares the worse for his wicked neighbors: it is our wisdom to separate, or at least to distinguish ourselves from them,

2 Corinthians 6:17.

Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

So near a relation of Abram should have been a companion and a disciple of Abram. If he chose to dwell in Sodom, he must thank himself if he share in Sodom's losses. When we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourselves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that the choice made by our lusts, should end to our comfort. They took Lot's goods; it is just with God to deprive us of enjoyments, by which we suffer ourselves to be deprived of the enjoyment of him. (Matthew Henry)

“Those believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it.” (Spurgeon)

How would the conscience of that young man now upbraid him for his selfish folly and ingratitude in withdrawing from his kind and pious relative! Whenever we go out of the path of duty, we put ourselves away from God's protection, and cannot expect that the choice we make will be for our lasting good. (commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, 1871)

INTERESTING! - Noah lived 350 years after the flood. So what?

Genesis 11:10 records that Shem was **100 years** old at the birth of Arphaxad, **two years** after the flood; and that he lived for another **500 years** after this, making his age at death **600 years**.

Abraham was born 290 years after the flood.

Noah's life overlapped Abraham's life by 60 years! Shem's life overlapped Abraham's life 210 years!

In fact, Shem died only 25 yrs before Abraham died. Abraham, and even Isaac, his son, could have heard about the flood straight from the horse's mouth, before Abram departed from Ur!

For that matter, the entire world had Noah and his family as constant reminders, as monuments or living testimonies, for many years, to the fact that the flood had actually occurred---that is, if they chose to believe the words of these old men and women. After a few hundred years, some probably already figure the flood was just a fable, a myth, made up and propagated by these old codgers and codger-esses. (Although Noah was their great-great-great-great grandparent, he was just an old man, after all, rambling on about the good old days when it flooded, so why pay attention to him?)

Just as the secular world would like to say it is just a myth. Would they believe if someone who was actually in the flood and made the ark stood up and told them? Did the evil nations of Abraham's day believe Noah and follow God? Reminds me of the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where the question is posed, as to whether someone would believe, even if someone came back from the dead—and the answer- No, **they would not believe**, even if someone who really, really knew, told them! If someone does not want to believe, they will not believe, even if irrefutable evidence is laid before them.

INTERESTING PART B:

Asphalt (bitumen) occurs naturally in the region, so much so that the Romans called the Dead Sea the Asphalt Lake. Josephus, the famous first-century Jewish-Roman historian, wrote "in many places it (*the sea*) sends up black lumps of asphalt: these as they float are in shape and size like headless bulls". These lumps of asphalt would be gathered from the surface of the sea and used for boat repairs, embalming and medicinal purposes. The substance also features in the biblical story of Lot. Genesis 14 tells of a battle between four kings and five kings from around the Dead Sea. Verse ten describes the end of two of these kings, "Now the Valley of Sidim (*at the southern end of the Dead Sea*) was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there; but those who survived fled to the hill country." Gen. 14:10.

Now, bitumen was used for the construction of buildings and water-proofing of reed boats (Wikipedia). Is any of this ringing a bell? Does this sound remotely familiar? The Ark?, Babel?, Moses' little boat?

Questions to Consider:

- 1- Is there anything we can learn from Lot's example, where he chose to live in Sodom?
- 2- How can we be "in the world, but not of it"?
- 3- Do you have friends, relatives or acquaintances who seem determined to DIS-believe?
- 4- Do you know an unbeliever whose mind and heart was changed upon hearing evidence/truth?
- 5- Bonus (slightly irrelevant and speculative question) Why did they use pitch to build the Tower of Babel? (to be sure, we aren't really told a reason, but remember Noah was still a relevant story/person)