

The Book of Genesis

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The Battle of the Kings

- I. The Kings (Genesis 14:1-2)
- A. There were four kings from the north.
 - 1. Amraphel was king of Shinar, where Babel was located (Gen. 10).
 - 2. Arioch was king of Ellasar, near (possibly part of) Shinar.
 - 3. Chedorlaomer was king of Elam, east of Shinar across the Tigris River.
 - 4. Tidal was king of Goiim (Gaim), meaning ‘nations.’
 - B. There were five kings from the south.
 - 1. Bera was king of Sodom.
 - 2. Birsha was king of Gomorrah.
 - 3. Shinab was king of Admah.
 - 4. Shemeber was king of Zeboiim.
 - 5. The fifth king is not named, but ruled over Bela (or, Zoar).
 - C. These southern cities were located in the area around the Dead Sea.
 - 1. It seems that Sodom was the greatest of these cities and its king was the leader of the confederation.
 - 2. Zoar means “little” – describing both the size and prominence of the city.
 - D. Thus, four kings from the region of Babylon would go to war with five kings from the south of Canaan.
- II. The Background (Genesis 14:3-7)
- A. The battle would take place in the valley of Siddim, which is where the Salt Sea was located (later to be known as the Dead Sea).
 - B. Chedorlaomer had previously ventured into this region and conquered these cities.
 - C. For twelve years they had been under his rule as vassals and servants.
 - D. In the thirteenth year, they rebelled, causing him to join forces with his allies and to lead another expedition to this area.
 - E. In their journey south, they conquered many peoples...
 - 1. The people of Rephaim were Canaanites of giant stature (cf. Deut. 3:11).
 - 2. The Zuzims were also giants (cf. Deut. 2:20).
 - 3. The Emims lived among the Moabites but were also giants (cf. Deut. 2:10-11).
 - 4. The Horites (“dwellers in caves”) had inhabited Mt. Seir, south of the Sea.
 - 5. The Amalekites (or at least the land that would later be their territory)
 - 6. The Amorites lived on the west side of the Dead Sea.
 - F. Finally, at the end of this military expedition, the rebellious cities would be attacked.
- III. The Battle (Genesis 14:8-12)
- A. The two forces met in battle and the southern kings were forced to flee.
 - B. As they ran, they were hindered by the many asphalt pits in the region and soon defeated.
 - C. Some were able to escape and fled into the mountains.
 - D. Thus, the northern kings spoiled the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and began their journey home.
 - E. In the process, Lot and his household were taken captive.

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- IV. The Response (Genesis 14:13-16)
- A. One who had escaped brought word to Abram about the battle and the capture of his nephew.
 - B. Abram had 318 battle-trained servants whom he organized and led in pursuit of the northern kings.
 - C. When he caught up with them in Dan, Abram divided his forces and attacked by night.
 - D. The kings fled and Abram pursued them unto the area near Damascus.
 - E. He rescued Lot, his household, his material good, and all the things that had been taken from Sodom.
- V. The Conference (Genesis 14:17-24)
- A. As Abram returned, the king of Sodom came out to meet him.
 - 1. This valley was near Jerusalem.
 - 2. It is where Absalom would later build a monument for himself (2 Sam. 18:18).
 - B. Here, Abram met Melchizedek – the priest of God and king of Salem – and received a blessing from him.
 - C. He also gave a tenth of the spoil to Melchizedek.
 - D. The king of Sodom asked Abram to return the people to him and he could keep the spoils as payment.
 - E. Abram refused, not wanting the wicked king of Sodom to have any claim in Abram's wealth – which came as a blessing from God.