

# The First War

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*Purpose: remind Christians that they are in a war and encourage them to trust God, who will teach them to fight and will bless those who obey Him.*

So far we have been learning from the life of Abram how one person can make a difference when they put their trust in God. In chapter 14, Abram finds himself in a war, which is the first war recorded in the bible! What can we learn from Abram's experience of battle?

## What actually happened?

*1 - And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations,*

These are the kings that came from the area of Babylon, where Abram had come from.

**Amraphel** – “sayer of darkness: fall of the sayer”, of Shinar - the ancient name for the territory later known as Babylonia or Chaldea

**Arioch** - “lion-like”, of Ellasar – a town in Babylonia

**Chedorlaomer** – “handful of sheaves”, of Elam - a province east of Babylon and northeast of the lower Tigris

**Tidal** – “great son”, of Goiim – “nations”

*2 - That they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).*

These are the kings that lived in the land of Canaan

**Bera** - “son of evil”, of Sodom – “burning”

**Birsha** - “with iniquity”, of Gomorrah – “Submersion”

**Shinab** - “splendor of the father”, of Admah “red earth”

**Shemeber** – “lofty flight”, of Zeboiim – “gazelles”

**Bela** – “destruction” – of Zoar – “insignificance”

4 kings from the area of Babylon are at war with 5 kings from the land of Canaan. It appears that Chedorlaomer reigned over them for 12 years and in the 13<sup>th</sup> year they rebelled. By the way, the 4 kings from Babylon are the descendants of Shem, while the 5 kings from Canaan are the descendants of Canaan (Ham's son).

This area has always been an ancient historic place of wars as it is the link between the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.

*10 - Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains.*

Lot is in trouble because he dwelt in Sodom and Gomorrah

*11 - Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.*

*12 - They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

When Abram finds out, he goes and rescues them all –

*13 - Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram.*

*14 - Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.*

*15 - He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.*

*16 - So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

This is the first recorded war in the bible. Here are a few things to consider:

1. As long as sin is in the world, there will be war
  - a. Solomon in his wisdom stated that there was a time for war -
    - i. *Ecclesiastes 3:8 - A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.*
  - b. Jesus said that wars were going to happen –
    - i. *Matthew 24:6 -And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*
  - c. James gives us the source of all wars –
    - i. *James 4:1 - Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*
2. Chedorlaomer was fighting for personal gain, territory, power, and control. His motives were unrighteous.
3. Abram was fighting to rescue his nephew and all that were with him. His motives were righteous.
4. Abram had to learn how to fight. He trained his people for battle, devised a strategy, and defeated the enemy. This shows his power and influence as well as the fact that God was with him.
5. Abram now has influence in the land that God has promised him. This one man is beginning to make a difference.

**The most significant thing is what happened after the war was over:**

1. The king of Sodom went out to meet him
2. There was a time of worship with a man named Melchizedek:

- a. He was the priest of God – before the Mosaic Law, so his history and genealogy did not make him a priest like the order of Aaron. Jesus' priesthood was the same.
  - b. He was the king of Salem (which means peace)
  - c. He blessed Abram – which means that he was greater than Abram
  - d. Abram gave him a tithe of the spoils of the war –
    - i. as a gift to God
    - ii. for the service of the priest
3. There was a dialogue with the king of Sodom
- a. The king offered the goods of war to Abram
  - b. Abram would not take anything:
    - i. He did not want to ruin his testimony of God's blessing
    - ii. He was also looking to God to provide for him instead of the riches of Sodom

**Conclusion:**

As long as we are in this life, we will have to fight battles, because we are in a war:

- Our war is a righteous war
- We fight for the lives of our families
- We battle for the souls of men
- Put your trust in Jesus – He will teach you to fight
- Put your trust in Jesus – He will bless you if you obey Him
- You can be the one person who makes a difference!