

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

We have been following Abraham as he seeks to walk in the will of God.

We have seen him –

- Responding to the will of God. {Chapter 12.}
- Muddling his way in the will of God. {Chapter 12}
- Solving relational difficulties in the will of God. {Chapter 13}

In **Chapter 14** we see him waging warfare in the will of God.

Then this: Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim went off to war to fight Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar. This second group of kings, the attacked, came together at the Valley of Siddim, that is, the Salt Sea. They had been under the thumb of Kedorlaomer for twelve years. In the thirteenth year, they revolted. In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him set out and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El Paran on the far edge of the desert. On their way back they stopped at En Mishpat, that is, Kadesh, and conquered the whole region of the Amalekites as well as that of the Amorites who lived in Hazazon Tamar. That's when the king of Sodom marched out with the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar. They drew up in battle formation against their enemies in the Valley of Siddim-- against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. The Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into the tar pits, but the rest escaped into the mountains. The four kings captured all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, all their food and equipment, and went on their way. They captured Lot, Abram's nephew who was living in Sodom at the time, taking everything he owned with them. A fugitive came and reported to Abram the Hebrew. Abram was living at the Oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and Aner. They were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken prisoner, he lined up his servants, all of them born in his household--there were 318 of them--and

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

chased after the captors all the way to Dan. Abram and his men split into small groups and attacked by night. They chased them as far as Hobah, just north of Damascus. They recovered all the plunder along with nephew Lot and his possessions, including the women and the people. After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and his allied kings, the king of Sodom came out to greet him in the Valley of Shaveh, the King's Valley. Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine--he was priest of The High God--and blessed him: Blessed be Abram by The High God, Creator of Heaven and Earth. And blessed be The High God, who handed your enemies over to you. Abram gave him a tenth of all the recovered plunder. The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me back the people but keep all the plunder for yourself."

But Abram told the king of Sodom, "I swear to GOD, The High God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, this solemn oath, that I'll take nothing from you, not so much as a thread or a shoestring. I'm not going to have you go around saying, 'I made Abram rich.'

Nothing for me other than what the young men ate and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; they're to get their share of the plunder."

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

I've broken down this chapter as follows:

1. **Verses 1-10.** The reality of war.
2. **Verses 11-12.** The victims of war.
3. **Verse 13.** The Scope of war.
4. **Verse 14.** The preparations of war.
5. **Verse 15.** The strategy of war.
6. **Verse 16.** The spoils of war.
7. **Verses 17-24.** The aftermath of war.

THE REALITY OF WAR-- Vs.1-10.

This portion of the Scripture is filled with strange sounding names and strange sounding places.

It was a dark time in earth's early history. International conflict was brewing with Canaan as its epicenter.

Abraham and his family found themselves right in the midst of it.

This was the place that God had called them to and it turns out to be the centre of conflict and war. While he might have hoped, and even prayed that it wouldn't touch him, it wasn't to be. It did touch him and his family

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

and suddenly he's involved in warfare 'up to his ears,' whether he wanted it or not.

The same is true for you and me.

Those called to follow in Abraham's faithful footsteps. Great spiritual warfare swirls and rages around us. The Bible clearly teaches that we too are the centre of conflict on a vast scale while we live out our days on this planet.

The text of **Genesis 14** involves physical warfare of course, but that only symbolizes the infinitely larger conflict that has gripped our world since the beginning of time.

Paul spoke about this warfare in dramatic words in **Ephesians 6:12.**

"For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies---the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world." {TLB}

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

This spiritual warfare smolders and flames all around us, a bitter battle to the end and you and I, as believers, are involved in it 'up to our ears,' whether we like it or not.

This isn't some weird Pentecostal doctrine; it's the orthodox Biblical position.

Arthur Wallis states this position clearly,

"It is a fact of spiritual experience, to which every committed Christian will bear witness, that following Christ involves warfare. From the moment a person turns to God in true repentance and puts their life under Christ's authority they find themselves involved in a spiritual conflict that they scarcely knew existed before. To state that the Christian life means warfare is not to use a figure of speech, but to state a literal fact. That the sphere of spiritual conflict, the weapons, and the enemy are spiritual rather than material does not mean that the warfare is any less real. The backcloth to the whole drama of redemption is presented in Scripture as a war to the death between God and that angelic being who was once His chief executive officer until he rebelled and was ejected from heaven. Satan and the angels involved

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

in his rebellion constitute the hard core of enemy resistance.”

The warfare is real and not just imaginary or symbolic.

THE VICTIMS OF WAR -- Vs 12.

In the midst of this sweeping international conflict a familiar name L appears, “Lot.”

Abraham’s family becomes embroiled in the conflict. There’s probably not a family represented here who couldn’t point to at least one member of its ranks who hasn’t been, or isn’t being, dramatically affected by this conflict that we are in.

Its impact takes many forms;

- Sickness.
- Death.
- Divorce.
- Family alienation and breakdown.
- Children from Christian families forsaking the ways of God.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

- Mental and emotional torment.
- Financial reversals.

The victims in this war are people and families.

Abraham was a man of faith – but it didn't exempt him and his family from the conflict. His nephew Lot and his whole family were carried off into captivity.

Some people mistakenly think that if they can just have enough faith then you can avoid every trace of the enemy's strategies. Even Paul the Apostle didn't have that much faith!

THE SCOPE OF WAR – Vs 13.

When he initially heard of this conflict Abraham was removed from the vicinity of it.

He could have shrugged his shoulders and said, "It's not my business. What does this have to do with me? It really doesn't concern me and mine."

But it did.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

Suddenly what he thought was distant came very close to home.

None of us can remain neutral about this conflict. As believers we're automatically involved. There's no neutral ground – the scope of this conflict is global and involves all.

Each of us is either for the Lord against Satan, or working with Satan against the Lord

We're either gathering the spoils on behalf of the Kingdom of Christ or we are helping scatter all the resources that God has made available to us.

There aren't any conscientious objectors in this warfare. If you don't take the initiative against Satan, then he will seize it against you. This is one of those "Us or them" scenarios.

Some people 'shy' away from spiritual warfare because they have seen some people become fanatical in their endeavours in this area.

I've seen them too; people whose prayers seem little more than 'baying at the moon.'

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

They bind this, that, and the other thing in the name of Jesus, when they would be better off taking some responsibility for their circumstances and simply applying some spiritual discipline.

The answer to fanatical over involvement in spiritual warfare is not fanatical uninvolvedness.

You are in this 'up to your neck,' so you might as well learn how to negotiate this arena with effectiveness so you can be a deliverer like Abraham.

If you don't then you are going to need a deliverer like Abraham.

THE PREPARATIONS OF WAR -- Vs 14.

Abraham wasn't naïve. He knew that warfare was part of life. Knowing that he must be involved, he had already trained some members of his own household in preparation.

He had at least 318 members of his household trained and had sufficient arms for them as well.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

He had also entered into some strategic alliances {Vs 13}. These points could no doubt be amplified, but I'll resist the temptation.

Let me just mention a couple of pointers.

You don't launch into spiritual warfare unprepared.

It's not for the ignorant, the blindly foolish or the exuberant-without-wisdom.

You don't wander around the battlefield in a baseball cap, t-shirt and Bermuda shorts. {I would suggest you don't wander anywhere in Bermuda shorts.}

However you should be prepared to do battle.

Ephesians 6:11-17.

So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get,

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon.

Abraham armed his servants. He also made some strategic alliances {**Vs 13**}.

Warfare isn't a great activity for the independent spirited. The Lone Ranger might be good Hollywood material, but in reality the only thing that happens to 'Lone Rangers' is that they provide easy target practice for the adversary.

We need to be part of a company, a body of people, with whom, and besides whom, we can take our place in the battle.

People "born in the same household," who care for one another and who will stand with us when we are under fire.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

These alliances may be the difference between spiritual victory and spiritual defeat.

The enemy, knowing the power of agreement, has targeted this area to attack and undermine. Disunity in the church is one of the major hurdles to the victory to which we are destined.

As long as Satan keeps us divided he has an advantage. We allow the enemy to stir up controversy and fighting within the household. Instead of fighting among ourselves we must find our proper place in the family and in the battle.

THE STRATEGY OF WAR -- Vs 14-15.

Abraham had a strategy in mind. He went in pursuit of the enemy, 1stly to Dan {**vs. 14**}

This was a 'find-out-where-they-are' pursuit.

This illustrates another point in spiritual warfare.

You don't pursue your foe arbitrarily or aimlessly.

You find the point where the enemy is.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

You identify the 'hot-spots' of enemy activity.

Paul said, "**I don't fight like a man beating the air.**" {**1 Cor. 9:26**}

Abraham didn't run all over the countryside making loud warlike noises.

He located the enemy and then dealt with them.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us where to locate the enemy activity in and around our lives and circumstances.

We need to know where and how we are to confront them.

Once he had found them he attacked – "**by night.**"

It's often night when we engage in the battle. We needn't be afraid; we are children of the light. Wherever we go there's enough light for us to move in victory and triumph.

He pursued them to '**Hobah.**' The word "Hobah," means 'hiding place' in Hebrew.

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

Too many people fight until the pressure is off and never follow through to complete the deal.

Once you have the initiative you should keep it.

Pursue until the issue is dealt with completely.

Don't let it 'hide.' Keep after it until it's defeated totally. Listen to David on the subject of initiative in warfare;

Psalm 18:37-45

I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them; to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like mud in the streets. You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations; · people I did not know are subject to me. As soon as they hear me, they obey me; foreigners cringe before

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

me. They all lose heart: they come trembling from their strongholds.

Pursuing the will of God means pursuing each battle until the enemy has been vanquished.

THE SPOILS OF WAR -- Vs 16.

Abraham rescued Lot and all the others as well.

The spoils of this warfare are all about people; he precious souls of people.

2 Timothy 2:26

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. Who are taken Captive by him at his will."

The marginal rendering reads, "Taken alive."

This phrase is only used twice in the New Testament.

It is used in **Luke 5:10** as well.

Jesus was sending out His disciples and said to them, "You shall catch men." Literally it reads, "You shall catch men alive."

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

These are the only two possibilities; we're caught by Satan or we're caught by the Lord Jesus.

We have been delivered; it's now the purpose of God to make us deliverers.

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR – Vs 17-24.

Much could be said about Abraham's encounter with the two kings; the mysterious Melchizedek and the king of Sodom.

Let me emphasize a couple of simple points;

These two kings represent to you and I two other figures. The King of Sodom pictures the prince of this world – Satan.

Melchizedek represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

No sooner had Abraham gained the victory in this warfare, than he is approached by the king of Sodom.

It's a subtle approach, but the aim is the same.

The spoils of war never change, it's all about controlling people {Vs.21}

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

Spiritual warfare will culminate in victory when we war in the will of God.

But a victory at one point is not an eternal victory. The enemy is persistent and he will attempt another way to get the advantage if he's blocked.

Often after a high time of victory his approach finds us 'kicking back,' relishing the victory and with our guard down.

That is a time of grave spiritual danger.

While we are doing our victory lap, acknowledging the cheering crowds, the serpent slithers in from a totally different angle.

Abraham provides a perfect example of how to deal with this tactic.

1. It finds him in the King's valley {Vs.17}

He's not set up in some place of pride and conceit about what has transpired.

He's in a humble place. He knows that any victory achieved wasn't about what he did. It was about the one

WALKING IN ABRAHAM'S FOOTSTEPS PART FIVE.

2. Abraham had prepared in advance for Sodom's king. He had first met with Melchizedek. Abraham had been in the presence of God's king. He'd lifted up his hands to the Most High. {Vs 22}

Having honoured God's high priest, having worshipped, he was prepared and equipped for this more subtle approach.

If we follow his example then we too will be ready.