

Finishing Well

Lesson #6

The Valley Of Siddim

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The Bible references 7 great valleys: Siddim, Eschol, Kidron, Elah, Achor, Gehenna and Jezreel. *Broad valleys or plains, more suitable for warfare, were often the scenes of battles in the OT. Genesis 14 records a formidable battle in the Valley of Siddim. This battle was fought by the confederate armies of Mesopotamia against the confederate armies of Canaan. Sodom & Gomorrah were located in The Valley of Siddim which represents sin and wickedness. It is the valley where sin abounded. God would ultimately destroy them with fire and brimstone.

Beginning in Gen. 14, we see in seed form what Dr. Charles Dyer called, "The Tale of Two Cities."

Background Info

Babylon = Dwelling Place of Demons Rev. 18:2 Mentioned 260x in Bible

- Satan has set up his dark agenda for the earth.
- He will raise up a throne for his Anti-Christ in the last days.
- Babylon is the result of apostasy against God's plan of salvation, the first international, political and religious ecumenical movement in the history of man, and one which has never ceased to exist in one form or another.

There seems to be two aspects or faces of Babylon.

- One is religious and is in existence today. One is political and commercial.
- Babylon embodies one great Satanic system.

What does Babylon represent in Scripture? It is clear that Babylon is the name for a great system of a counterfeit or pseudo religion. It is rooted in the satanic principle of offering a poor substitute for God's perfect plan. It is a combination of human rebellion and demonic activity. The "spirit of Babylon" motivates human organization and building with man at the head. It represents man's efforts to replace God with himself!

Babylon is man exalting himself to God, and even above God.

It is the root behind all the world religions trying to reach heaven by human effort.

We are like the people of Israel who adopted the "practices of the land round about" and could not see their problem.

To understand Babylon, we need to return to the time just after the Great Flood.

- The 8 survivors of the flood eventually multiplied into a sizeable population in Mesopotamia [modern Iraq].
- Nimrod, the first king of Babylon, was a rebel from beginning to end.

Note: In Gen. 10:8-10 & I Chron. 1:10> God interrupts the genealogy list to expand on Nimrod.

- He had within him the nature and character that would exist in the Gentile nations throughout history and especially in the final form in the Tribulation—tyranny and apostasy.
- Noah's descendants degenerated into idol worshipers who in defiance of God built a tower to the false gods of the heavens.

The First Sin of Babylon -The first corporate sin that manifested itself after the Flood took place on the plains of Shinar, the sight of Babylon.

Babel [Babylon] = where Satan regrouped after God sent the worldwide judgment of the Flood. It was an attempt at a man-made world unity by means of force.

- God judged this rebellion, confused their language and separated them into different language groups.
- Tower of Babel project came to an end and the various groups of people split into 70 different ways. Through their migrations, they spread the seed of all the nations as well as the seeds of all the false religions of the world.

After we are introduced to Babylon in Genesis 10- 11, Babylon disappears briefly from Scripture, but appears again in Genesis 14 where we are introduced to the first war recorded in Scripture. On the surface, this war is merely an international power struggle to ensure economic supremacy by the control of a crucial trade route.

Behind it all is a foreshadowing of the *Greatest Rescue Mission Of All Time*.

Two things are particularly significant here:

1. Sodom and Gomorrah were located in the land of Canaan probably at a spot that is now under the southern end of the Dead Sea. But where is this? It is a part of the land God had promised to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant in Gen. 12:1, recorded for us, significantly so, right after the account of the tower of Babel. [Gen. 11]
2. In the beginning of Gen. 14, the kings are described for us. Dr. Charles Dyer points out that historically, the leader of these kings that came in against the land, a land that God had promised to Abraham, was a man by the name of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam.

But note who Moses lists first. Amraphel, king of Shinar which is the land Babylon.

The Evil Empire: 14:1-4 Group of 4

- Chedorlaomer king of Elam Persia/Iran
- Amraphel king of Shinar Babylon/Iraq
- Arioch king of Ellasar Lebanon ?
- Tidal king of nations Possibly an empire of small nations

These were all part of a coalition based on the Satanic empire of Nimrod, "mighty predator before the Lord" who founded Babylon, Nineveh and other great ancient cities.

He also built the Tower of Babel.

- This was a very oppressive regime based on star worship, magic and sorcery.
- Purpose: raid cities, seize their possessions, & take their peoples into captivity as slaves.

Archaeologist Nelson Glueck documented the destruction left by these kings:

"I found that every village in their path had been plundered and left in ruins, and the countryside was laid waste. The population had been wiped out or led away into captivity.

For hundreds of years thereafter, the entire area was like an abandoned cemetery, hideously unkempt, with all its monuments shattered and strewn in pieces on the ground."

[cited in Morris).

The 5 Foolish Kings Of The Valley Of Siddim [where sin abounds]

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|----------|---------------|----------|------------------|
| ➤ Bera | King of Sodom | Birsha | King of Gomorrah |
| ➤ Shinab | King of Admah | Shemeber | King of Zeboiim |
| ➤ Zoar | King of Bela | | |

³ All these were joined together in the valley of Siddim, which is the salt sea. [Dead Sea]

- The 5 foolish kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were "small fry" but were very wealthy heads of city-states involved in trade.
- They served Chedarlaomer for 12 years and rebelled against him in year 13. After 12 years as vassals of the four eastern kings, the five southern kings attempted to throw off their shackles. [wanted to be free from his dominion]

The eastern kings could not allow such rebellion to go unpunished.

The economic results of ignoring the insurrection would have been economically devastating.

The territory included the "Way of the Kings", which was a strategic commercial land bridge.

Whoever controlled this land bridge maintained a monopoly on international trade.

When a city came under the threat of attack, it could choose to pay a "ransom" to the invaders and be spared going to war. Or the city could choose to refuse the ransom and meet the invaders on the battlefield. But if the war was lost, the king and people of the city lost everything and became slaves to the conquerors. History tells that the stakes were so high that it was common to decide to avoid war and pay the ransom.

In spite of the overwhelming odds, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, with their allies, decided that possible defeat was better than guaranteed slavery.

So they dug in for all-out battle in the valley of Siddim.

- The 4 Kings of the Evil Empire destroyed 7 cities BEFORE they had the war with the 5 foolish kings of the valley of Siddim.
- After they destroyed the 7 cities, the 4 evil kings made war with the 5 foolish kings.

Gen. 14:10 And the valley of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

It was a treacherous place to fight, because "*the valley of Siddim was full of pits of asphalt*".

These open pits of asphalt would be covered over by the desert sand as the wind blew across them and they would appear like the surrounding ground. Anyone who was unfortunate enough to fall into one of these tar pits would be forever entombed.

Result: Sodom & Gomorrah were attacked, defeated and taken captive by a confederation of kings. They took the goods of Sodom & Gomorrah with LOT and other people.

Gen. 14:13a Then a survivor came and told Abram the Hebrew. [1st time used in Bible]

- means "the outsider, the person with no secure place in society."
- He came from the other side of the river.

Interesting Note: Joshua links leaving behind a life of idol worship and crossing over into worshipping the One True God of Israel.

"Put away the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". [Joshua 24:3-15]

Gen. 14:13b Now he [Abram] was residing by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and they were allies with Abram.

Abraham armed 318 of his trained servants born in his house and went after them.

Ps. 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD God delivers him out of them all.

Question: What does it take in the spiritual realm to have victory over the world?

1. His servants were born in his house.

I John 5:4 Whoever has been born of God overcomes the world.

- Jesus Christ is the Victor who has overcome every enemy. [Eph. 1:19-23]

2. His servants were armed. Had effective equipment.

Christian soldiers must wear the whole armor of God and use the spiritual weapons He has provided. [Eph. 6:10-18] Our weapons are spiritual, not of the flesh. [II Cor. 10:3-5]

Zech 4:6 "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty."

Ps 34:19 The afflictions of the righteous are many, but the LORD rescues him from them all.

The Word of God and prayer are our two most effective weapons [Acts 6:4. Use them by faith.

3. They were trained [v. 14].

William Gurnall: God Himself underwrites your battle and has appointed His own Son "the captain of your salvation."

The Captain of your salvation wants to train you and "make you complete." [Heb. 13:20-21]

The Greek word means "to equip an army." If I fail in the battle, it is not the fault of the equipment or the strategy of our Captain. Something is wrong with the soldier.

4. They believed in their leader.

If God's people expect to defeat their enemies, they must trust the Lord and obey His orders.

5. They were single-minded. Their goal was not personal revenge or private gain

[Gen. 14:22-23], but victory over the enemy so that the captives might be freed.

A double-minded soldier is destined for defeat.

James 1:2-8 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

II Tim. 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

When Abram was told Israel would suffer in Egyptian bondage before glory, it provides the general pattern for Christ's crucifixion [Luke 24:26; I Peter 1:11] and Christians [Heb. 2:10] when they must suffer first then enter glory.

Spurgeon: There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below. You must be ready to suffer in this world the afflictions of the chosen ones, for they are part of the inheritance. But remember, Christ is co-heir with you in this.

Isa. 63:9 In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.

Abraham's 318 trained men attacked at night and chased Chedorlaomer's huge imperial army northward for nearly 300 miles!

- Abraham liberated all of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
- Abraham's God was greater than those of the Persians and Babylonians and of Nimrod's occultic practices.
- A supernatural victory resulted in him bringing back the goods, the people and the prodigal, Lot.

A Spiritual Battle: The King Of Sodom & The King Of Salem

After Abram's supernatural defeat of the evil kings, he encounters 2 other kings.

Before the battle, the kings of the plain had no value for Abram, but now he is suddenly of great importance to them, because of what he had with him.

The Reception: Gen. 14:17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

Valley of Shaveh: a plain or valley subsequently termed "the king's vale," near to Salem.

- Salem will later be known as Jerusalem.

According to Josephus, the valley of Shaveh was about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from Jerusalem

Abram's temptation: There is an expression in modern Hebrew, "to reach the Valley of Shaveh", meaning "to reach a compromise", referring to this valley. The Hebrew makes it apparent that it is in this valley, that Abram was tempted to compromise his principles, his integrity - his faith. One can hardly fathom the temptation the triumphal return of Abram presented to him.

Consider: "There are few temptations as powerful, yet subtle, as praise!"

Prov 27:21 The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, but each man is tested by the praise accorded him. [NASB]

The Reception: Gen. 14:18-20 And Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰ And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Gen. 14:18 Melchizedek was "priest of El Elyon" = "the Most High God", Lord of Heaven & Earth.

Ps 110:4 "The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Abram's Response Gen. 14:20b And he gave him tithes of all. Tenth = Ma`aser = A tithe

Question: Did Abram give a tithe of all his possessions?

- Abram was not at home, with his possessions.
- He was on his way back home, with the possessions of the king of Sodom and his allies.

Hebrews 7:4 informs us of the content of Abram's tithe: Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

Abram's response was a testimony to his faith in the one God he worshiped.

His tithe was tangible evidence that it was God Who deserved the glory.

Imagine this scene. Abram is met by the king of Sodom, who, no doubt, heaps praises upon him. The king of Salem arrives who urges Abram to give the glory to God.

"Then the king of Sodom stands wide-eyed and open-mouthed as Abram gives a tenth of the best spoils of Sodom to Melchizedek."

What a witness to the glory of God and the sinfulness of Sodom!

The king of Sodom knew well that "to the victor belongs the spoils." In addition, he had already witnessed a tenth of the goods being given to the king of Salem [Jerusalem].

The best bargain this pagan could hope to strike was to get back the people and to surrender the possessions to Abram:

The king of Sodom's request: Gen. 14:21 Give me the people but keep the goods for yourself.

He offers the goods in pretended generosity. This was a test for Abram. All that the world had was now offered to him. Would he take it? This was Abram's 2nd battle, and it was more serious than the first. The king of Sodom might picture to us Satan, the god of this world, who offers to us the things of this world. Satan often comes to us when we have had a victory, when the danger of self-confidence is highest.

How tempting this offer must have been to Abram!

Abram's words must have been an even greater shock to the king of Sodom than his act of sharing the spoils with Melchizedek: Abram refused the king of Sodom's offer:

Gen. 14:22-23 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: [I will not be indebted to you.]

Dan. 5:17 Then Daniel replied and said before the king, "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him.

Gen. 14:24 But when it came to the young men, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, for them Abram asked that they be allowed to take the portion that was due them, in payment for their services.

- Abram didn't want anything for himself yet wanted others to be compensated.

Beginning in Gen. 14, we see in seed form what Dr. Charles Dyer called, "The Tale of Two Cities." Historically, we can summarize Babylon's early history in Genesis with the following:

1. We have the rise of the city of the ungodly, Shinar or Babylon which had its beginnings not only in rebellion against God, but in an attempt to be like God.
2. We see this city intruding on the land which God had promised to Abraham through whom the Messiah would come.
3. Suddenly brought into this narrative is the city of Salem, later to become Jerusalem, with a king who is a type of Christ, whose name means king of righteousness, and who meets Abraham and gives him a blessing.
4. Right after this, we have God Himself appearing to Abraham to reinforce His covenant with Abraham with specific boundaries given in connection with the land of promise and victory over the inhabitants of the land [Gen. 15:1, 18-21].

Gen. 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Genesis 14 provides us with a beautiful foreshadowing of the Greatest Rescue Mission Of All Time - the salvation of God accomplished through the cross of Christ.

Lot chose to go his own way. He sought his own interests over Abram's and over God's.

As a result of his self-seeking, he had to face the consequences of his sin.

Rather experiencing peace and prosperity he suffered loss, shame and slavery.

At the point where Lot was able to do nothing to free himself from bondage, Abram, at great personal risk, won the victory and won his release.

- Saving Lot was the sole reason for Abram's daring rescue.
- In spite of Lot's disregard for Abram, Abram rescued him from the consequences of his own sin.

Abram's actions point to a greater One. As the knowledge of our plight rises to heaven, Jesus does not sit still. He springs into action to save and redeem. It was a risk. It was painful.

Jesus not only could have died; He did die. As far as Abram went, Jesus went further still.

We have the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, the Mighty One on our side.

The Power Of God To Recover What Satan Had Taken

Rom 5:6 While we were still helpless [powerless to provide for our salvation], at the right time Christ died [as a substitute] for the ungodly. [Amplified]

Rom. 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [NASB]

Gal 1:4 Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver [rescue] us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: [KJV]

Col 1:13-14 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

God's Rescue Mission Has Succeeded!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Rom. 10:9-10, 13 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Prophetic Type Of Coming Events

1. Confederacy of people in the land of Canaan who are wicked and sinners before the Lord.
 - Represents the apostate nation of Israel, led by Antichrist.
2. A great confederacy from the east sweeps down from the north and defeats the 5 kings.
 - Pictures the Assyrian of the Old Testament prophets.
 - It is the overflowing scourge that God has prepared to punish the rebellious nation.
3. Abram represents the Lord as a Warrior, along with the faithful of Israel.
4. Abram's allies represent those nations who favor the Jews in the tribulation.
 - The Lord will appear with the armies of heaven and destroy that confederacy and will later employ the faithful among Israel to judge what remains of their enemies.
5. Lot represents the nation of Israel, trodden down by the Gentiles because of Israel's history of unfaithfulness, but rescued by the Lord when He appears.
6. After the judgment is complete, Christ will come forth in blessing to the earth, pictured by Melchizedek.
7. The whole world will give Christ His rightful place, just as Abram gave Melchizedek tithes of all the spoil of Sodom.
8. The Lord will then divide the spoils with those who have been His allies, just as Abram did with the young men that came with him.