

## Thought for Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

**Read Genesis 14:1-24** As we read in these first nine verses of this chapter, several kings joined forces with several other kings to fight a battle. It reminded me of 2 Samuel 11:1, where it states; *'In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war...'* wouldn't it be so much better if it read *'In the spring, at the time when kings met together to celebrate.'* but no, it is time for war. Even Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:8 states *'There is a time for war.'* What does war accomplish? How much better to leave God to fight our battles, in fact Jesus has already won the war, so why do we continue to wage war, why do we continue to worry so much? It is all about power, about us wanting control over someone else. Verse 7 has that word; *'conquered!'* Which normally means that someone has lost something. If it is just a game of football or golf or something, that is not a big deal, but here we read of men, and most probably women, who died because one person wanted control over another person. Nothing changes does it? What we know from our reading is that Abram's nephew, Lot, was carried off, with his possessions, since he was living in Sodom. Sodom was not a good place to live if you wanted a reputation, but that could also be said of Nazareth where Jesus lived with his parents. You may remember in John 1:46, Nathanael asks the question; *'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?'* I think we know the answer to that question. In fact Jesus himself answered the rich young man in Mark 10:18; *'No-one is good except God alone.'* As we know that Jesus was God incarnate, then we know for sure that something good did come out of Nazareth. Of course it is very easy to tar everyone with the same brush. When Abram heard that Lot had been taken, I guess Abram did what the vast majority of people would have done, had they the ability. Abram got 318 trained men, I guess the S.A.S. of the period to go and get Lot and verse 16 explains the results of Abram's endeavours; *'He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.'* Job done, but it begs the question, do we put ourselves in danger as Lot had done. When Abram returns we find another king appears on the scene. This king is not mentioned in the first 9 verses, but is a king of very special significance. Verse 18 tells us *'He was priest of God Most High.'* This king was Melchizedek, king of Salem, or some say king of Jerusalem, *'and he blessed Abram.'* It is interesting to read the first three verses of Hebrews 7; *'This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means 'king of righteousness'; then also, 'king of Salem' means 'king of peace'. Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest for ever.'* Apart from a brief mention in Psalm 110:4, these are the only mentions of this king of Salem, Melchizedek. But Jesus is put in the same category, although we know Jesus died on the cross at Calvary, we know Jesus is; *'Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life,'* Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and we know that Jesus was and is the Son of God, Abram respond to Melchizedek by giving him a tenth of everything (*Genesis 14:20*), the tithe. The blessing Abram received from Melchizedek was, verses 19 & 20; *'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.'* Who Melchizedek was is unsure, but truly well respected, even all those years later, and for Jesus to be *'in the same order as'* without being God, says something of him as a priest, and a king. Genesis 14:17 tells us that it is only the king of Sodom who comes out with Melchizedek to meet Abram, and whereas Abram gives Melchizedek the tithe, in return for the priestly blessing, the king of Sodom asks for something from Abram but Abram says no, verse

22; *'With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, "I made Abram rich." I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me – to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share.'* The thoughts of Deuteronomy 20 appear to come from this passage, where Abram refuses to make allegiance with other kings, but recognising that Melchizedek is the priest of God and that all the glory should be given to God, the tithe, and in recognising that the Lord God gives to those who do His will. When Abram went into battle it was only with those who had dedicated themselves to the Lord their God, just 318 trained men (verse 14). God blesses us when we do his will, or as the hymn writer says; *'When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His word, What a glory He sheds on our way! while we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey!'* Amazing as it may seem, Abram had no law, as the law hadn't been given to Moses yet, yet kept it, maybe the words of Genesis 26:5 best sum it up as the Lord is speaking to Isaac; *'Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.'* Sometimes we just need a gentle reminder, a gentle nudge to do the right thing, as that hymn said it is; *'When we walk with the Lord,'* We have a God who can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20) the problem is there are times when we endeavour to use human power., rather than trusting in God our creator. Abram trusted God and was blessed again and again. I am sure we miss out on some of His blessings because we don't walk hand in hand with our Lord and Saviour. Who do we turn to in our hour of need? Judas Iscariot turned to the High Priest to reveal who Jesus was. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and doing His will. amen

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice  
He wraps Himself in light and darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at His voice, and trembles at His voice

*How great is our God! Sing with me  
How great is our God! And all will see  
How great, how great is our God!*

And age to age He stands and time is in His hands  
Beginning and the End, Beginning and the End  
The Godhead, three in one, Father, Spirit, Son  
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, worthy of all praise  
My heart will sing: how great is our God!