

the Purpose *and* Promises of God

God's Purpose and Our Choices

Summary

As Abram and Sarai continue in their walk with God they again find themselves in a difficult situation. A crisis takes place that impacts their nephew Lot. Abram responded to the crisis by getting involved and rescuing Lot. In the aftermath Abram is then confronted with a choice. Two kings interact with him. His reaction to one is to receive a blessing and his reaction to the other is to reject compromise. God's purpose for his life is a driving value in the choice he made.

Outline

Introduction

We make tens of thousands of decisions every day. Most of them are small but some have huge weight to them. All of them contribute to our journey of aligning to God's purpose for us in this world. A key question for Abram and for us is, "What kind of person will I be in this given situation?" Will we be God's man or woman, or will we be about our own kingdom? We will trace out the passage in three segments: Crisis ☐ Response ☐ Decision.

1. Crisis [v1-12]

Regional warfare takes place around Abram but he stays out of it until his nephew Lot becomes collateral damage. While this background has historical value its main purpose is to explain the implications for Abram that become apparent later in the chapter. Specific groups are labeled below...

Group 1 (dominant): Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim

Group 2: Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar)

Group 3: the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness

Group 4: Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar

2. Response [v13-16]

Abram responded to the regional warfare by getting involved out of care for his nephew Lot. His tactic proves sufficient in defeating the dominant Group 1 but it is clear from verse 20 that ultimately this victory comes from Yahweh who promised to take care of Abram.

3. Decision [v17-24]

In the post war conversation Abram meets with the king of Salam (Melchizedek) and the king of Sodom. In this conversation Abram is confronted with a choice: What kind of man will he be?

Thoughts for my Personal Journey...

We see that the grid Abram walked through is no different than a regular grid for our lives as well. Crises emerge, we respond in various ways, and we are left with a choice: In this situation, will I seek to align my life to God's purposes or my own? Will I be God's man or woman, or will I be my own person building my own kingdom?

1. The battles described in verses 1-12 are meant to give a significant back story to the choices that Abram makes later in the chapter. What do these verses help you understand about verses 13-24?
2. Describe a crisis (small or great) in your life right now. How are you currently managing it? How is God using it to help you understand him and his purpose for your life?
3. Verses 17-24 are the climax and main point of the passage. In these verses Abram is confronted with a decision: What kind of man will I be right now in this moment? Brainstorm what thoughts Abram may have been having as he interacts with these two kings. What would have been going through your mind had you been in Abram's shoes?
4. Read Hebrews 6.19-7.28. How does Melchizedek point to Jesus? What about Jesus is greater than Melchizedek? How does Jesus as our great High Priest benefit us as his people?
5. Abram decides to receive God's blessing through Melchizedek and to reject the offer from the king of Sodom. That grid fits our daily lives as well: What will we receive from God and what do we need to reject from the world? Share a past or present situation in your life where you had to make a choice to reject something in order to honor God and align to his will for your life. What lessons did you learn?
6. How can those around you pray for you in your daily pursuit to experience God's blessings and to reject the offers of the world that dishonor him?