

Abram and Melchizedek



In the last segment we left Abram having defeated the Mesopotamian kings, and returning the people and their goods to their proper places. In this segment we'd like to direct our attention to Abram's response to the king of Sodom concerning the spoils of war. We begin our reading with the defeat of the kings, and the subsequent actions of Abram.

“And he [Abram] divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Ho-bah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and

take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their portion” (Genesis 14:15–24).

In the case of conflict Abram had with Amraphel and Chedorlaomer there would have been two types of spoils: 1) Those possessions that belonged to the kings that had been defeated, and 2) The people and the possessions that had been taken by the kings. Concerning the former, Abram gave a “tenth” of all to Melchizedek king of Salem who affirmed, concerning Abram that God had, “delivered thine enemies into thy hand,” as Abram also affirmed, saying, “I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.” Concerning the latter, Abram said, to the king of Sodom, “I will not take thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine”, “only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me.”

The Conflict Resolution, concerning the warring kings had an absolute resolution: defeat. However, once Abram returned to those deeply affect, it was not his intend to benefit from his engagement. But there was another factor that Abram took into consideration, i.e., the removal of a potential future conflict, saying, “I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.” Jehovah said unto Abram, “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

During the New Testament era the apostle Paul, who had, as he put it the “right” to support from the church in Corinth viewed the receiving of their support as a detriment to his work, saying, “If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:12). In this case, although the Lord did “ordain that they that proclaim the

gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14), the apostle Paul would not jeopardize the work over his right to their financial support, rather, the apostle Paul said, “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you” (2 Corinthians 11:8). In both of these cases, i.e., Abram and Paul, they would not put themselves in a situation that would lend itself to a future Conflict. In some cases the Resolution to a Conflict is better engaged before a Conflict can ensue.

We encourage you to take knowledge of the circumstances within which you find yourself, and think beyond the immediate to the future the fruits of your daily actions will produce. Although the fruit of your actions may appear to be a far off, as one awaiting the bud to break the surface of the ground, the time will soon come when that one seed will produce a hundred fold. Make sure you’re planting the right seed.