

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title: Sovereign & Savior

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Speaker: Peter Privitera

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Scriptures: Genesis 14

Genesis 14

Theme: Be aggressively righteous because God Most High is both Sovereign and Savior.

Introduction: In the early 1800s, The forces of the British East Indies Company tore through India, colonizing it for the purposes of trade. Nothing could stop them until they faced off with the Gurkhas of Nepal. Their resistance was so fierce, that Britain formed an alliance with the Gurkhas that remains to this day. Similarly, in Genesis 14, an invading coalition of four kings from the east tears southward through Palestine until they reach their ultimate goal: the five kings aligned with the king of Sodom. There is nothing like the Gurkhas to hinder them and they route the alliance of five kings, taking great amounts of spoil, including Abram's nephew, Lot. There were no fierce Gurkhas, but there was something better.

Here are 3 aspects of Abram's aggressive righteousness in our story from Gen 14:

1. Abram is righteous in relationship (1-16)

As soon as Abram hears that his nephew has been kidnapped, he musters his fighting men, along with his allies, and they take off in pursuit of Chedorlaomer and his forces. The scripture presents Abram as lacking hesitation in response, in pursuit, and in attack. They ambush, scatter, and decimate the invading forces, reclaiming every bit of spoil. Abram could have rationalized away his relational responsibility. After all, Lot willfully removed himself from adjacency to Abram and moved to Sodom, a place known for its wicked character. Instead, Abram's righteous commitments made instantly clear to him what he must do, even at great risk to himself. He trusted the Lord, and fulfilled his responsibility. The Lord, in his passion, has done the similarly, and more so, for us. We are now given the grace to do likewise.

2. Abram is righteous in worship (17-20)

News of Abram's victory spread fast, and was of great interest throughout the land. On his way home, dignitaries met him at a place called the "Valley of Kings." The king of Sodom, "went out" to meet Abram, but Melchizedek, "brought out" bread and wine. Melchizedek, the king of peace and righteousness, sought to refresh Abram and celebrate in a fitting way. He then blesses Abram. Abram's response is to worship the Lord in a most tangible way. He gives a tenth of all the spoil, that now belongs to him, to Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High.

3. Abram is righteous in discretion (21-24)

At the same time that Abram is giving to the Lord, he also refuses to take anything from the wicked king of Sodom. He wants no positive association with a man so opposed to God. This conclusion requires second level thinking from Abram. Wisdom required him to ask, "what will be the result if I take anything from the king of Sodom?" The righteous conclusion: Abram will not risk anyone thinking that his benefactor is the evil king. Everyone must know that all that he is and has is because of God Most High. In rebuking him, the king of Sodom is given an opportunity to repent. He does not do so.

Questions:

1. Our Lord is aggressively righteous – he does the will of his father – and that includes pursuing the enemy of our souls, breaking into our prisons of slavery, breaking our chains, and delivering us. How does this knowledge affect your war against sin? How does it motive righteousness?
2. Everything we have has come to us because of the success the Lord has given us (like Abram's ambush of Chedorlaomer). Abram tithed the spoils. Aside from the tithe, what does righteous worship look like in your life? Is there any lack of reverent gratitude you should address?
3. Abram refused to allow the wicked king to enrich him for the sake of God's glory. Can you give an example of that in your own life? Have you ever had to draw a clear line with someone in obvious rebellion to God? If so, how did it go?