GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS · STUDY NOTES

Study 10: Lot, the kings and Melchizedek

For personal study or groups

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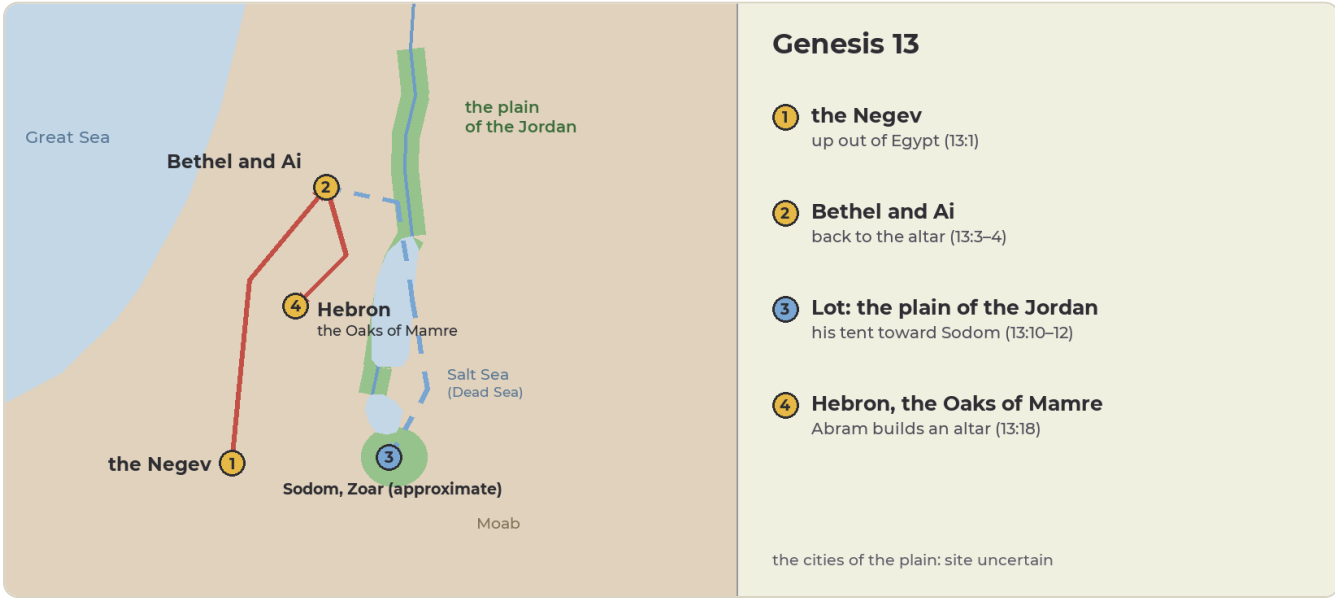
How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

📖 **Before you start: read Genesis 13:1–14:24.** Read it in your own Bible, all the way through, before the videos. Then in this study we go through it together, a few verses at a time. (About 5 minutes.)

PART 1

Lot chooses by sight

Genesis 13:1–18



Genesis 13: Abram comes up from Egypt into the Negev, goes back to Bethel and Ai, and settles at Hebron, by the Oaks of Mamre; Lot chooses the plain of the Jordan and pitches his tent toward Sodom (the cities of the plain: site uncertain).

1. Back to the altar. Abram came back from Egypt "extremely wealthy": in Hebrew the word is "heavy", the same word as the "severe" famine (12:10). God had blessed him even after his failure. And Abram went straight back "to the site where he had built the altar. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD." When we have failed, we should not stay away from God, but come back to Him: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

1 **Read Genesis 13:1–4**

Where did Abram go when he came back from Egypt? What did he do there?

2. When blessing brings trouble. Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not support them both, and their herdsmen quarrelled. "At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in the land": the neighbours were watching. "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

3. Abram the peacemaker. "Please let there be no contention between you and me… After all, we are kinsmen." The older man, to whom God had promised the land, gave his nephew the first choice. Unlike Abram in Egypt, he did not grasp, because he trusted God. "If it is possible on your part, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

2 **Read Genesis 13:5–9**

Why did Abram and Lot have to part? What did Abram offer Lot?

4. Lot chooses by sight. Lot "looked out and saw" that the plain of the Jordan was "well watered like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt", and "chose… for himself". But Moses adds: "(This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)" and "the men of Sodom were wicked, sinning greatly against the LORD." Peter calls Lot "a righteous man" (2 Peter 2:7); yet he chose by what he saw, not by what would please God. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

3 **Read Genesis 13:10–13**

What did Lot see? What does Moses tell us about Sodom?



Lot's steps towards Sodom: "Lot looked out and saw" (13:10); "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (13:12); "Lot was living in Sodom" (14:12); "sitting in the gateway of the city" (19:1). One step at a time.

5. The road east. Many teachers have noticed that in Genesis, going east is often a sad direction: out of Eden (3:24), Cain "east of Eden" (4:16), the builders of Babel (11:2), and now Lot (13:11). The Bible does not say in so many words that "east" means "away from God", so we hold it gently.

6. "Now lift up your eyes." Lot lifted up his eyes and chose for himself. Then God told Abram to lift up his eyes, and gave: "all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever", and offspring "like the dust of the earth". "A man's heart plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9): through Lot's own choice, God kept Abram in the land of the promise. Kevin DeYoung: "You never risk forfeiting the blessing of God by doing the right thing."

4 **Read Genesis 13:14–18**

What did God tell Abram to do after Lot had gone? What did He promise him? What did Abram build at Hebron?

7. Heir of the world. Abram never owned the land in his lifetime. But God's promise was bigger: Abraham was to be "heir of the world" (Romans 4:13), and "the meek… will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). That inheritance belongs to all who belong to Christ (Galatians 3:29).

8. The greater Peacemaker. Abram gave up his right to make peace with his nephew. Christ gave up far more to make peace between us and God: "though He was rich, yet for your sake

He became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9), "making peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20).

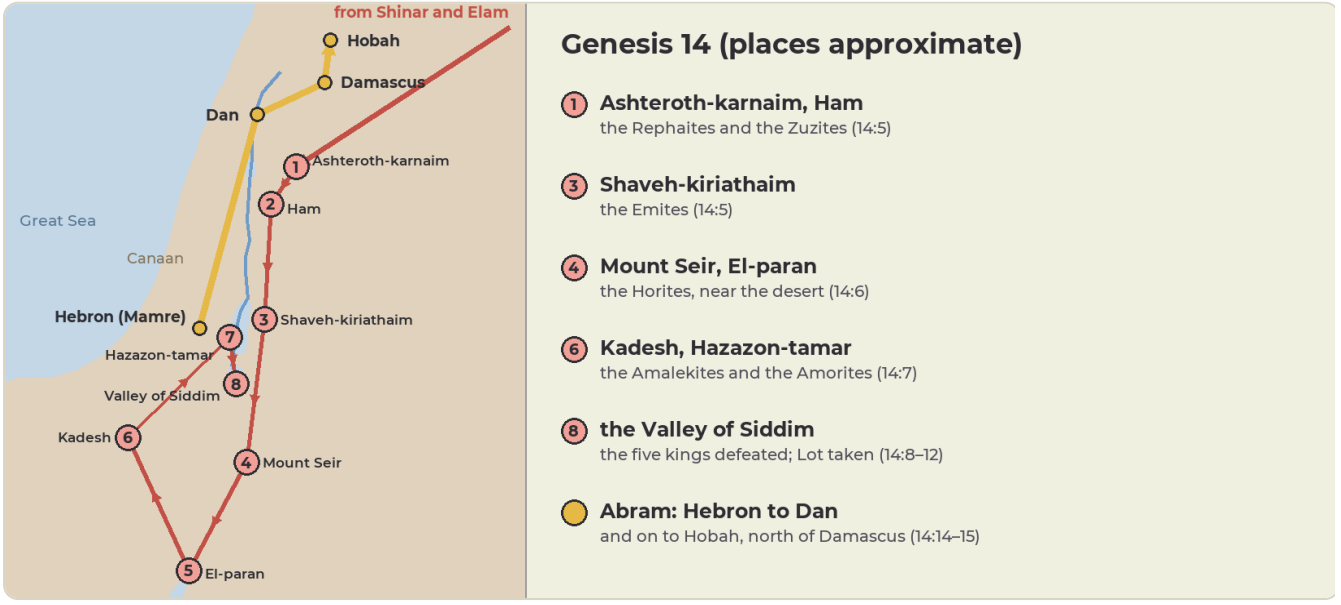
5 **Read 2 Corinthians 8:9**

What did the Lord Jesus give up? Why?

PART 2

The king of Salem

Genesis 14:1–24; Hebrews 7:1–7



Genesis 14 (places approximate): the four kings from Shinar and Elam march south, east of the Jordan (Ashteroth-karnaim, Ham, Shaveh-kiriathaim, Mount Seir, El-paran), turn back to Kadesh and Hazazon-tamar, and defeat the five kings in the Valley of Siddim; Abram pursues them from Hebron to Dan, and on to Hobah, north of Damascus.

1. Four kings against five. The first war of kings in the Bible. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and his allies from the east (Amraphel was king of Shinar, the land of Babel) came to crush the five little kings of the plain of the Jordan, who had rebelled. The place Lot had chosen because it looked like a garden became a battlefield.

6 **Read Genesis 14:1–12**

Who won the battle in the Valley of Siddim? What happened to Lot, and why?

2. Lot carried away. "They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since Lot was living in Sodom." He had pitched his tent toward Sodom; now he lived in it, and shared in its disaster.

3. Abram to the rescue. "Abram the Hebrew" (the first time anyone is called a Hebrew) did not abandon the nephew who had chosen for himself. With 318 trained men born in his household, he pursued an army that had beaten giants (Deuteronomy 2:10), attacked by night, and "retrieved all the goods, as well as his relative Lot". Faith trusts God completely, and also acts. And all the captives of Sodom were rescued too: "you will be a blessing" (12:2).

7 **Read Genesis 14:13–16**

How did Abram rescue Lot? What did he bring back?

4. A picture of the Rescuer. Many teachers have seen the same shape in Gideon (Judges 7) and David (1 Samuel 30:19): a deliverer, a small band, a great enemy, captives set free. We hold it gently. Christ came to set free "those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Hebrews 2:15).

5. Melchizedek, king and priest. "Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine—since he was priest of God Most High". Salem was most likely Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2). He was king and priest in one person, the only priest of the true God in Genesis. His bread and wine were a king's gift to weary men; the Bible does not make them a picture of the Lord's Supper. He blessed Abram, and blessed God, "who has delivered your enemies into your hand"; and Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

8 **Read Genesis 14:17–20**

What did Melchizedek bring? What did he say? What did Abram give him?



Two kings, two ways: Melchizedek, king of Salem, brings bread and wine, blesses Abram, speaks of God Most High, gives; the king of Sodom brings nothing, says "Give me", never mentions God, bargains.

6. "Not even a thread." The king of Sodom said, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself." Abram had sworn to "the LORD God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth" to take nothing, "lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" He wanted all the glory to go to God, and he was fair to his allies. Spurgeon: "It is easier to fight Chedorlaomer, than to resist the King of Sodom." And God's answer came in the next chapter: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward" (15:1).

9 **Read Genesis 14:21–24**

What did the king of Sodom offer? Why did Abram refuse it?

7. "Like the Son of God." A thousand years later, David wrote of the Messiah: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). The Lord Jesus came from Judah, not from the priestly tribe of Levi; He is a priest "in the order of Melchizedek". Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness", and "king of Salem" means "king of peace". Genesis records no family,

birth or death for him: so he is "like the Son of God", a picture of Him. Melchizedek was like the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God.

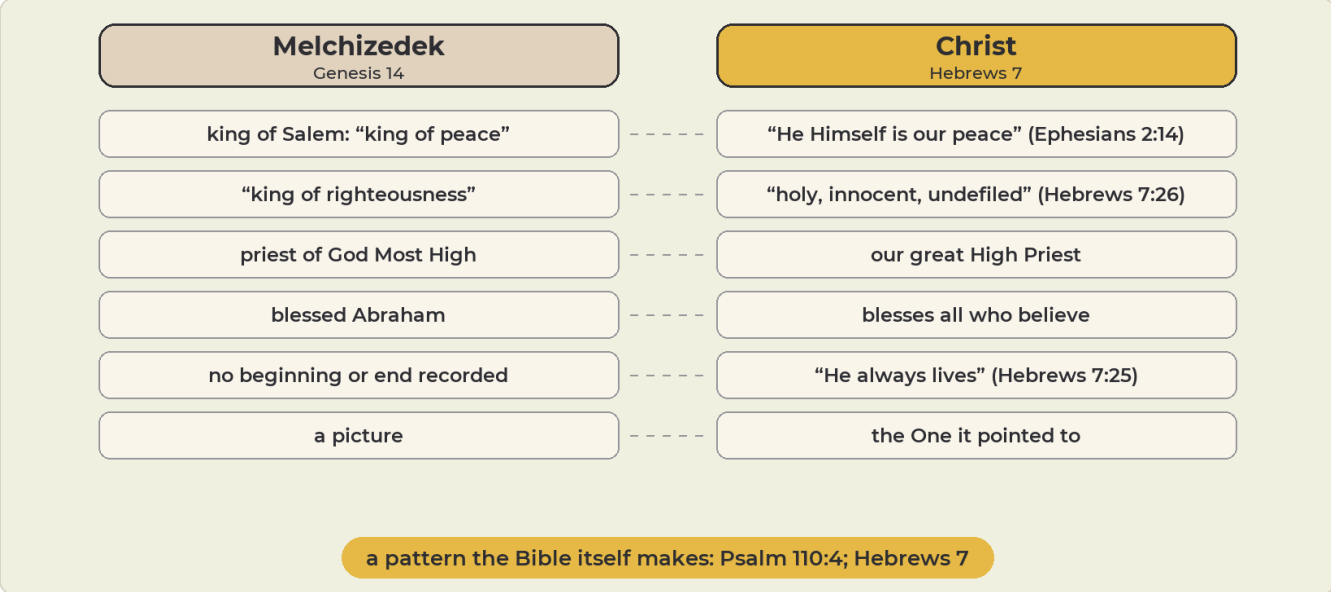
10 **Read Hebrews 7:1–3**

What do Melchizedek's name and title mean? Whom was he like?

8. Greater than Abraham. "Consider how great Melchizedek was": Abraham gave him a tenth, and received his blessing, and "the lesser is blessed by the greater."

11 **Read Hebrews 7:4–7**

What two things show that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham?



Melchizedek and Christ, a pattern the Bible itself makes (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7): king of peace, and "He Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14); "king of righteousness", and "holy, innocent, undefiled" (Hebrews 7:26); priest of God Most High, and our great High Priest; blessed Abraham, and blesses all who believe; no beginning or end recorded, and "He always lives" (Hebrews 7:25). A picture, and the One it pointed to.

9. A Priest who always lives. "Because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:24–25).

12 **Read Hebrews 7:24–25**

Why does Jesus have a permanent priesthood? Whom is He able to save?

Study 10 in summary

Back at the altar, Abram gave up his right for the sake of peace, and left the choice with God. Lot chose by sight, for himself, and moved step by step towards Sodom; God gave Abram all the land. When the kings of the east carried Lot away, Abram rescued him, and all the captives with him. Then he met two kings: Melchizedek, king and priest, who blessed him in the name of God Most High, and the king of Sodom, who said "Give me". Abram took nothing from the world, so that God alone would have the glory. And Melchizedek, as Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7 teach, points us to our Lord Jesus Christ: the King of righteousness and peace, a Priest for ever, who "always lives to intercede" for all who draw near to God through Him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What did Lot look at when he chose the plain of the Jordan, and what did he not consider?

2. Why did Abram give Lot the first choice, and what did God promise him afterwards?

3. Why did Abram refuse the king of Sodom's offer?

4. According to Hebrews 7:25, why is Jesus able to save completely?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 10

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GENESIS · STUDY 10 · MEMORY VERSE

“and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.”

Genesis 14:20

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Genesis 13:1–4** *[1]So Abram went up out of Egypt into the Negev—he and his wife and all his possessions—and Lot was with him. [2]And Abram had become extremely wealthy in livestock and silver and gold. [3]From the Negev he journeyed from place to place toward Bethel, until he came to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been pitched, [4]to the site where he had built the altar. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.*

2 **Genesis 13:5–9** *[5]Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. [6]But the land was unable to support both of them while they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they were unable to coexist. [7]And there was discord between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in the land. [8]So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no contention between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen. After all, we are kinsmen. [9]Is not the whole land before you? Now separate yourself from me. If you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left."*

3 **Genesis 13:10–13** *[10]And Lot looked out and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan, all the way to Zoar, was well watered like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) [11]So Lot chose the whole plain of the Jordan for himself and set out toward the east. And Abram and Lot parted company. [12]Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot settled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom. [13]But the men of Sodom were wicked, sinning greatly against the LORD.*

4 **Genesis 13:14–18** *[14]After Lot had departed, the LORD said to Abram, "Now lift up your eyes from the place where you are, and look to the north and south and east and west, [15]for all the land that you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever. [16]I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if one could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. [17]Get up and walk around the land, through its length and breadth, for I will give it to you." [18]So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the Oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.*

5 **2 Corinthians 8:9** *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*

6 **Genesis 14:1–12** *1In those days Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim 2went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3The latter five came as allies to the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4For twelve years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5In the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6and the Horites in the area of Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is near the desert. 7Then they turned back to invade En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. 8Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and arrayed themselves for battle in the Valley of Siddim 9against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some men fell into the pits, but the survivors fled to the hill country. 11The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, and they went on their way. 12They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since Lot was living in Sodom.*

7 **Genesis 14:13–16** *13Then an escapee came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the Oaks of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were bound by treaty to Abram. 14And when Abram heard that his relative had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men born in his household, and they set out in pursuit as far as Dan. 15During the night, Abram divided his forces and routed Chedorlaomer's army, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16He retrieved all the goods, as well as his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the rest of the people.*

8 **Genesis 14:17–20** *17After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine—since he was priest of God Most High— 19and he blessed Abram and said: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 20and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.*

9 **Genesis 14:21–24** *21The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the goods for yourself." 22But Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23that I will not accept even a thread, or a strap of a sandal, or anything that belongs to you, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' 24I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share for the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. They may take their portion."*

10 **Hebrews 7:1–3** *[1]This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, [2]and Abraham apportioned to him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness." Then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." [3]Without father or mother or genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God, he remains a priest for all time.*

11 **Hebrews 7:4–7** *[4]Consider how great Melchizedek was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder. [5]Now the law commands the sons of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their brothers—though they too are descended from Abraham. [6]But Melchizedek, who did not trace his descent from Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. [7]And indisputably, the lesser is blessed by the greater.*

12 **Hebrews 7:24–25** *[24]But because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. [25]Therefore He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 10: Lot, the kings and Melchizedek

> **Memory verse:** “and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.” (Genesis 14:20). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See from Genesis 13 two ways of choosing: Lot chose by sight, for himself, and moved step by step towards Sodom; Abram, back at the altar, gave up his right for the sake of peace and left the choice with God, and God gave him all the land. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).
- See from Genesis 14 Abram rescue Lot, and meet two kings: Melchizedek, who blessed him in the name of God Most High, and the king of Sodom, who said "Give me"; and Abram take nothing from the world, so that God alone would have the glory.
- See in Melchizedek, as Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7 teach, a picture of the Lord Jesus: the King of righteousness and peace, and a Priest for ever, "able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him" (Hebrews 7:25).

Suggested timing (about 80 minutes, or two meetings)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer. Ask the group to read Genesis 13 and 14 before the meeting.
- **35 min** Part 1 video (18 min); Genesis 13:1–18, with 2 Corinthians 5:7 and 2 Corinthians 8:9.
- **30 min** Part 2 video (22 min); Genesis 14:1–24, with Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:1–7, 24–25.
- **10 min** Reflection questions. Close in prayer, thanking God for our great High Priest, who always lives to intercede for us.

For most groups, take one part each week. If you do, read the passage for that part aloud together before the video.

Tips

- Use the map (Part 1) to show where Lot went, down to the plain of the Jordan; Sodom's site is uncertain.
- **Lot:** the study is careful not to be harsh. Peter calls him "a righteous man" (2 Peter 2:7). The lesson is not "Lot was a bad man", but how a believer can drift, one step at a time (the "Lot's steps" picture). Members may think of their own choices of home, work or study; let them, gently.
- **Abram the peacemaker:** some may be living with a family quarrel or a church disagreement. Romans 12:18 says "If it is possible on your part": sometimes peace is not in our power. Do not press anyone to share.
- **The road east** (Part 1) and **a picture of the Rescuer** (Part 2) are offered gently, as things "many teachers have noticed". Present them in the same way, and do not build doctrine on them.
- **The list of kings** (Genesis 14) is hard to follow: use the map; no one needs to remember the names.
- **Melchizedek:** some Christians think he was the Son of God Himself, appearing before His birth. The study gives what Hebrews says, "like the Son of God", without arguing. If the question comes up, point to that phrase, and keep the focus on Christ, the Priest he pointed to.
- **The bread and wine:** the study takes them as a king's gift to weary men, not as a picture of the Lord's Supper, since the Bible does not make that link.
- **The tenth and the land:** the study does not teach tithing from this passage, and it teaches the land promise as "the whole earth, made new" (Romans 4:13; Matthew 5:5). Keep to the Bible.