

Genesis 14

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Date: 22 March 2026

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[0:00] Right now, it feels like every time we open up the news app or the breaking news notification! We're just wondering, okay, what's happened now? Do you feel that? Okay, who's at war now?

What's happened to the oil prices now? What outbreak are we dealing with now? What's the tragedy now? And everything is just so turbulent. It's scary, isn't it? Like we're on the brink of World War Three and we just don't know what's coming next. And it's not just the world stage either. You might be here tonight and the things in your life are just stacking up against you. Life feels turbulent, unpredictable. You're scared about what Monday is going to bring.

And it feels like you're just on sinking sand and everything just feels uncertain. And in a world like that and a life like that, as we sit here tonight, all of this, this gospel, this faith, this church, this Christian life, it can all just feel so small and vulnerable, can't it?

Like this world is a storm and we're just getting swept up in the chaos. And we all just want solid ground, don't we? Just something certain and stable in this world.

[1:37] Well, that is what Genesis 14 is all about tonight. In this chapter, God is showing us in a turbulent, unpredictable, scary world, that there is one unchanging, certain thing that you can stand on.

One thing that you can rest on in this turbulent world, it is the promises of God. We pick up the story of Abraham, a man with the promises of God, the promise of salvation, the promise that God will be his God and God will bless him.

But that man and that promise is now facing a turbulent world. In fact, it's a world not too far from ours. It's a world at war.

And a question looms, in this storm, what will happen to the promises? How will God's plan hold up to a chaotic world stage?

Or to phrase it for us today, in this turbulent, scary world, what will happen to God's church? Well, let's see what God has to say.

[2:52] And to begin, we are confronted with that very reality of the world and the Christian life and God's promises. This chapter begins with the reality that God's promises exist in a turbulent world.

That's my first point I want us to see today. God's promises exist in a turbulent world. So, we begin this chapter, we are just thrown into the middle of a multinational war in verses 1 and 2.

So, do you see that? There are four kings over in the east. Try and follow these names. So, there is the king of Shinar, the king of Elessar, Chedaleoma, king of Elam, and the king of Goim.

So, four kings. And all these places that are named, these are all east of Canaan. So, what will become the Babylon area? It's modern-day Iraq, right?

Four kings, four nations over there. And these four kings are teaming up to fight against a team of five kings in Canaan.

[3:58] So, verse 2, there's the king of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admar, Zeboim, and Bela. Okay? So, basically, four versus five.

East versus west. And why are they fighting? Verse 4. Twelve years, the five kings had served Chedaleoma, but in the thirteenth year, they rebelled.

So, these five kings in Canaan had been many under-kings serving a mega-king, Chedaleoma, one of the four. But these five kings, they had enough.

They rebelled. And now, Chedaleoma, he's coming across with his squad, all four of them, to sort the five out. Right? And so, a huge war has erupted.

And I realize, as you read all of these names and places, you must be thinking, what on earth is going on here? All these names, this history, these events, it all just seems incomprehensible, doesn't it?

[5:08] But I had a lightbulb moment this week. All this ancient politics that we're reading here, it's easier to understand than you think. All this we're reading today, it's actually just the plot of A Bug's Life, right?

Have you seen Pixar's A Bug's Life? It's a great film. It was actually, I think, the first film I saw in the cinema, in fact, if my memory serves me correct. And it's basically about a colony of ants, and they have their own little kingdom.

They have a queen. But they are also ruled by a gang of evil grasshoppers. Who say, the grasshoppers say, you can still have your little colony.

You can have your queen and your kingdom there. But we're going to come every summer, and you have to collect a load of food for us. And we're really in charge.

But then, the ants can't stand that. And so, they rebel, and there's a big battle between the ants and the grasshoppers. Well, Genesis 14, it's A Bug's Life, right?

[6:14] The four grasshopper kings in the east, and the five ant kings in Canaan. And so, who knew A Bug's Life? It's actually about ancient Near East covenants, right?

But unlike A Bug's Life, the ants lose here. So, verse 10, the four kings, the grasshoppers come in, and even though it's four verses five, the four just wipe them out.

And verse 11, they raid the city, Sodom and Gomorrah, and they take everything. Money, people, animals, everything. And all this, it may just seem an irrelevant story, an irrelevant part to the story of the Bible, and irrelevant to God's promises, until we remember who is in Sodom.

Verse 12, And this matters because Lot is an heir of the promise.

He may have wandered from God. He's made some bad choices living in Sodom, but he's still one of God's people. He's a believer. It's a bit like a Christian, the Christian who moved to Dubai for the sun and the low taxes, but thought nothing of church, and is now just caught up in the middle of a war.

[7:51] But in fact, this is even worse. Lot is the only heir Abraham has in the world right now. And now, he's being carried off by the grasshopper army.

Once again, it looks like God's plan and his purposes and his promises, that they're all under threat. This looks like the end of the line for salvation.

Before, it was Abraham and his bad choices that threatened it. But now, the threat is from the outside. God's promises are getting swept up in the turbulence of the world and the chaos of this war.

God has promised to fix this world and bless his people, but it looks like this world is just too chaotic for that to happen. And so, a question looms at this point.

What will happen to the promises? How on earth can God's plan stand up against a global superpower, four global superpowers?

[8:59] And this is the reality of the church in the world. God's promises, his saving work in this world, in your life, all of that doesn't exist in a separate, sealed-off part of the world.

As if, as soon as God calls you, you are now shielded from the chaos and the turbulence of the nations. You know, when God calls you, his promises belong to you.

You belong to him. But we still exist in a turbulent, shifting world. In fact, we feel that now. The war in Iran, it's creating that turbulence across the world.

And we feel our lives shake. Like Lot, our lives inevitably get swept up in all of this. Because economically, we feel it. Oil prices up, petrol prices up, living costs up.

And we struggle with bills. Churches struggle to stay afloat. Life begins just to feel rocky and low.

[10:07] And we wonder if World War III is actually around the corner. And it impacts our faith, doesn't it? Just in all of this misery, in all this turbulence, we begin to doubt God's goodness.

Or doubt his care, or doubt his control. As you look to the week ahead, you might be feeling just that. It's like you're in the middle of a storm, and you're dreading that meeting, dreading that phone call, that person.

And it shakes you. As if it's so unpredictable ahead. And it's as if the chaos is the real driving force of the events of your life.

And like Lot, it feels like we're just being shipped off to the enemy, and we can't do anything about it. And that isn't even to mention the spiritual war we're in.

The increasing winds of secularism blowing in this nation. The growing influence of Islam. And here we are, the small UK church sat in the middle of it all, and it can feel very unsettling, like the church is just going to be blown over.

[11:24] And this is the reality that God presents us with here. God's promises, they do exist in a very turbulent world. And that can feel like God can't make any impact in this world.

Like his promises and plan and purposes for my life, they're just useless. Maybe that's how Lot felt in that moment. But if you think that, we need to keep reading.

Because the story doesn't end there. As we focus on Abraham, we see, yes, God's promises exist in a turbulent world. But God's promises can never be shaken.

That's my second point today. God's promises can never be shaken. While Lot is being shipped off, something happens, verse 13. Someone from Sodom escapes and runs to Abraham, who's in Mamre.

That's in the middle of Canaan. So Abraham's been missing this whole war at this point. He's kind of in a safe zone. And when Abraham hears the news about his nephew Lot, what does he do?

[12:35] Verse 14. Abraham hears and he goes straight after Lot.

He doesn't say, well, our Lot made a bad choice there. He shouldn't have moved to Sodom. He got himself into this spiritual mess. Now he's just got to live with the consequences.

He's on his own. No, Abraham doesn't say that. He knows that that man belongs to God, so he goes after him. It's an amazing example, isn't it?

Never giving up on those who are wandering. And it's the same attitude Christ had with us, isn't it? He came to seek and save the lost.

We're seeing that here. That's Abraham. And notice what Abraham has in his house. Did you see? Trained men. Trained men. 318 of them.

[13:39] He has a small army. The blessings are really starting to emerge for Abraham. God is really doing something here. Abraham started with nothing in the middle of nowhere in Canaan.

And Abraham now is basically a king with a small empire and an army. But as he goes after Lot, who's now been captured by the four armies, we need to realize Abraham's just one king and one army up against four.

It seems just like a pointless suicide mission, doesn't it? But what happens? Verse 15. One army beats four.

That same four. That same four that beat five. Now, those four armies are now crushed under Abraham's feet. Squashed grasshoppers across the land of Canaan.

And then verse 16. Then he brought back all the possessions and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions and the women and the people.

[15:01] Abraham wins. Lot is restored. That the promises are untouched. The turbulence of war shook the land of Canaan.

The forces of evil raged against God's plan. Global superpowers threatened God's promises. It all seemed impossible. But nothing shook the promises.

And why? Well, in verse 19, we meet a priest called Melchizedek. We're going to get to him properly in a bit.

But just look at verse 19. Melchizedek proclaims why all this is possible. It's because of who God is, verse 19. Blessed be Abraham by God most high, possessor of heaven and earth.

And blessed be God most high, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. Four armies lost against Abraham. Not because Abraham was better.

[16:06] But because God delivered them into his hands. God crushed them and gave them to Abraham. And why can God do that?

Verse 19. God is the possessor of heaven and earth. God owns heaven and earth. And the language possessor, it really means that.

It's the same word as buy or purchasing, owning something. Every square inch in heaven and on earth belongs to God.

It isn't neutral. It isn't up for grabs. It doesn't say, no, owner, come and get it. No, it says, belongs to God. And so, he does all that he pleases in heaven and on earth.

Some of you have bought houses recently. And when you buy it, it's yours, isn't it? Your name is on the deed. You have the right to that house.

[17:11] You are its possessor. And so, you can do as you like. You can paint it. You can hang pictures. You can change the carpets. You can redo the bathroom. You are the possessor. So, what happens in your house, it's down to you.

Well, what happens in heaven and on earth is down to God. He is the possessor. And so, think about what that includes.

Global superpowers. Multinational wars. Deals over trade routes. Oil prices. Share prices.

It is all under God's control. Think of the spiritual realm. Angels. Demons. The plans of the devil.

The spread of Islam. The spread of secularism. It is all under God's control. And think about your life. Tomorrow morning.

[18:13] That meeting. That phone call. Your body. Your soul. All the plans of your life. It is all under God's control.

Because. God most high. Is possessor of heaven and earth. God. Which means. His plans. And his purposes.

And his promises. Can never. Ever. Be shaken. We may exist. In a turbulent world. But when you belong to the Lord.

Nothing. Can shake. Or destroy. God's care for you. Nothing. Can shake. The plans. That he has for your life. Or the promise. That he has made you.

To bless you. God's promise. Is the one. Unshakeable. Unchanging reality. In this constantly shifting.

[19:11] And turbulent world. Picture the Atlantic Ocean. So. Over the past few decades. Companies have been laying. Fiber optic cables.

From England. All the way to America. Hundreds of miles of cable. Through the Atlantic Ocean. These huge. Super tough cables. And so.

Just think about it. That they are there. Lying there. Every day. Exactly where they should be. And the waters. Of the Atlantic Ocean. That they move all the time.

Don't they? That they're hard to predict. That there can be storms. And dangers. And it can be terrifying. To cross. But through that whole ocean. Is one.

Unchanging cable. Well that is like God's promises. Through the wars. And the storms. And the turbulence of this world.

[20:07] When everything seems to be collapsing around you. God's plans and purposes. They run throughout. Indestructible.

Unshakeable. Because he is the possessor of heaven and earth. Which means. Even if World War 3 actually does hit us.

It will never be the end of the church. If Islam keeps growing. It will never be the end of the gospel. Whatever the schemes of Satan are. Even with all his armies. It will never be the end of God's people. And whatever comes your way.

Whatever you dread to face this week. This year. Whatever it may be. When you belong to the Lord. It will never be the end of you. Because an indestructible.

[21:06] Unshakeable thread. Runs throughout your life. That is why. Even when Lot. Got swept up in this global war. It wasn't enough to separate God from Lot.

He brought Lot back. He protected him the whole time. And so God's care for you. Can never end. His purpose for your life.

To bless you. And love you. And work all things for your good. And bring you home to glory. Those purposes can never fail. Because who is your God?

He is the possessor of heaven and earth. And so if you're here tonight. And this world just feels turbulent. And scary.

And you're just needing some solid ground. There is only one place to find that. It's the promises of God. It's finding blessing with God.

[22:05] God. But if you want that. Just like Lot. You need to be connected with Abraham. Lot was only rescued.

Because he shared the blessing with Abraham. God has promised the blessing. It's going to come through Abraham's offspring. The line of Abraham is the line running throughout that ocean.

And so to have any security in this world. You need to be connected to this line. But as we will see. It's not specifically Abraham you need to be connected to.

After this great battle is over. We encounter someone unique. And we see actually. Blessing is found with someone greater than Abraham.

That's my third and final point tonight. Blessing is found with someone greater than Abraham. So. With the grasshoppers squashed. This is a great moment of victory for Abraham.

[23:13] A king with an army. Enemies under his feet. Bringing blessing to the nations. As he rescues all these captives. But then someone comes along. Out of nowhere really.

Look at verse 18. And Melchizedek king of Salem. Brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God most high. And he blessed Abraham and said. Blessed be Abraham by God most high.

Possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God most high. Who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. Now.

If you thought. All those names and kings were confusing. You must be thinking now. Well who on earth is this Melchizedek guy? Another king.

Where does he come from? He kind of just pops out of nowhere. Doesn't he? Well you're right to think that. In fact. This is the only time he appears in the Bible.

[24:12] His name means king of righteousness. And he's mentioned in two other places. Psalm 110. We sung that earlier. And Hebrews. So those are the only other two times he's mentioned.

But he only appears now. And then. We never see him again. So he's quite mysterious. And there are a few other things.

That make us think that this is all a bit. Odd. So do you see what he is? Verse 8. He's a priest of God. But that should make you think.

Hold on. I thought Abraham was the only follower of God at this point. How is there a priest? In fact. I thought Abraham was meant to be God's priest.

The world was meant to come to God through Abraham. And also. Look what Melchizedek does to Abraham. Verse 19. He blesses Abraham. But hold on.

[25:09] I thought the blessing was to come from Abraham. But now it's coming from Melchizedek. To Abraham. And look what Abraham does.

End of verse 20. Abraham gives a tenth. He tithes to Melchizedek. But hold on. I thought Abraham was meant to be the great king here.

But people should be tithing to him. He's got all these grasshoppers under his feet. But now he's tithing to another king. Another priest. What's going on here?

Well. We're seeing something very significant. We're seeing. Yes. God's promises are coming through Abraham.

But ultimately. God's promises and blessings. Are going to be found in someone. Greater than Abraham. The book of Hebrews. Speaks about this very moment.

[26:06] It says this about Melchizedek. He is without father or mother. Or genealogy. Having neither beginning of days. Nor end of life.

But resembling the son of God. He continues a priest forever. See how great this man was. To whom Abraham. The patriarch gave a tenth.

Of the spoils. This man appears. This man appears. Because God is giving us a picture. And a pointer. To the son of God.

Showing true blessing. And unshakable salvation. That's running throughout this turbulent world. It's going to come through someone greater than Abraham.

An offspring that's going to be greater than Abraham. Because we don't know where Melchizedek comes from. Or where he goes. Do we?

[27:05] And so Hebrew says. It's like he's a priest. Without beginning or end. We see Melchizedek. And we see real salvation.

And permanent forgiveness of sins. It's not actually going to be found in Abraham. It's going to come through. An eternal priest. One without beginning or end.

We see real blessing. Is going to come ultimately. Not from a sinner like Abraham. But from an eternal king of righteousness.

And victory over this. Over the evil of this world. Final victory for the people of God. Will come from a king. Even greater than Abraham in this moment.

An eternal king of peace. That even Abraham's going to bow down to. You see this victory. And you think victory and blessing.

[28:07] Is found with Abraham. No. It's going to come. Through someone greater. This. Is a foretaste of the son of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one in whom. We will find. Solid ground in this turbulent world. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Is the one. Indestructible. Unshakeable thread. Running throughout history. And when you're united to him. The blessing.

The care. The security. And the love of God. Never leaves you. Whatever you face. In this turbulent world. He will never lose you. Because.

Because. The son of God. Is now. The possessor of heaven and earth. The eternal high priest. The king. Enthroned in heaven. Who has been granted.

[29:04] All authority. In heaven and on earth. He owns this world. It's his. And so right now. As wars. Rage on.

As the economy. Bounces. All over the place. As you face. All sorts of trials. In the week ahead. You must know. All of that. Is in the hands.

Of the son of God. And he knows. Our trials. He knows his people. He knows. How to judge. The evil of this world. And he came.

To seek. And save. The lost. So this world. Is turbulent. God's promises. Exist. In a turbulent world. But God's promises.

Cannot be shaken. Because they are all found. In someone greater. Than Abraham. Real blessing. Is found. In the unshakable.

[30:00] Eternal priest. The eternal king. It's all found. In the son of God. He is the possessor. Of heaven and earth.

Let's pray. Amen.