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ABRAHAM – PART 13

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Abram's encounters described in chapter 14 of genesis stand rather unique. It involved Lot's choosing of Sodom for his residence. But first, let us understand the political geographic "lay of the land" in those times (1900-2000 B.C.).

The "kings" of those times were more like powerful warlords who ruled over cities. They were not highly structured countries like those developed over the centuries. The armies that each commanded ranged in size from several hundred to perhaps two or three thousand for each "king" or warlord. If they wished to invade and conquer territories, they would form alliances with other such warlords to increase their numbers. Upon victory, they would divide the spoils (goods captured) among themselves.

Likewise, if an area was being invaded, the "kings" or warlords of the clans would also form alliances for their common defense.

As Abram dwelled in Hebron (Mamre) such an invasion occurred. Basically, it was four Babylonian kings invading the clans (kings) located in Canaan around the Plain of Jordan. These invading kings were from the Mesopotamian area, present day Iraq and Iran (later known better as Babylon and Persia). They specifically were King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of various "nations" (city-states). King Chedorlaomer of Shinar (Babylon) was the powerful one and had previously conquered the Kings of Canaan's Plain of Jordan, a fertile basin of the Jordan river.

For twelve years these Canaanite "kings" had been paying tribute in service to this Shinar King. These were the kings of the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar (Bela). In the thirteenth year, these five cities rebelled against King Chedorlaomer who then formed alliances with Arioch, Amraphel, and Tidal to suppress the rebellion and keep them in subservience.

This scene sets up tomorrow's lesson concerning Abram, Lot, and more, all of which involved Abram due to his disobedience in taking his kinfolk from Haran with him.

Stay tuned.