

Abram and the 21st Century Christian

Genesis 14 contains a story about Abraham (although he's still called Abram here) that is absolutely fascinating, and the Church age Christian would do well to apply his example to his or her spiritual life.

Now earlier in the chapter (v11), his family member Lot, who had moved into Sodom, was kidnapped, and when Abram heard about it (v14)“**...he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.**”

Now Lot had shown some immaturity earlier (chapter 13v5-13) by not only choosing the best land for himself, but also for becoming very desensitized to the sins going on in the city of Sodom. He went from living out in “the suburbs”, to taking up residence in a downtown house and becoming a “respected” member of the community. There's definitely a warning here to be careful with making comfort based decisions as they could lead to your spiritual downfall. Pray about everything! Make sure you're getting the Lord's input by praying to Him constantly and reading His word. In spite of all this, Abram dropped everything immediately and hurried to help him. 1 Timothy 6:18 charges us to **“be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;”** and Abram's example of this is a good one. We should be just a quick to help a brother that has fallen into trouble, especially when it comes to spiritual things (note that the confederated kings attacked the city of Sodom. If Lot had not been living “downtown”, he presumably wouldn't have been captured).

Back to verse 14 though, it says that Abram **“armed his trained servants.”** This means that Abram, a nomad, not only kept enough weapons on hand to equip a small army, (this would have been the size of about two U.S. Army infantry companies, or a cavalry squadron) but he had implemented some sort of training regimen to train them up **“for such a time as this.”** 1 Peter 3:15 says that we're to **“...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”** Are you like Abram in your Christian life when it comes to preaching the word? I feel like I'm NOTHING like him, but I want to be!

It goes on to say that they were **“born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen.”** That's a lot of folks! Abram surely had a well earned reputation as a great leader. These guys had known Abram all their lives, and no doubt looked up to him in many ways, and when he said “let's go”, they were ready.

In the U.S. Army, a commander is often referred to as “the old man”, and when a Soldier says “I'd follow the old man anywhere”, that's just about the highest compliment that can be paid to an officer. Abram's servants seemed to have just this sort of attitude about him.

“And he divided himself against them,” Very interesting! There was a Prussian general named Carl von Clausewitz who wrote a book about 200 years ago called On

War which is still studied in war colleges around the world. In it, he says never to “divide your force in the face of an enemy.” Sun Tzu, a Chinese warlord who lived around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah said basically the same thing in a book called The Art of War. Well, I suppose they’re right if you’re a lost amateur! But not only did Abram know what he was doing, he had the Lord on his side. Trust the Lord, and trust His old AV1611 and don’t worry too much about what the “professionals” are saying.

“...**he and his servants, by night, and smote them,**” clearly Abram was a “battlefield commander.” He led from the front and shared in all the dangers and hardships of the lowest ranking man, just like “the Captain” of our salvation the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was “**in all points tempted like as we are**” and suffered God’s wrath upon sin for us. We can trust Him to lead us well! He won’t let us down! Xerxes the Persian was known to sit on a hilltop in a shaded chair with his rock band and dancing girls and a huge picnic laid out for him while watching his men toil on the battlefield below. The Lord Jesus Christ is NOTHING like that man, and neither was Abram. The fact that Abram launched his attack at night under the cover of darkness is amazing. Only in the late 20th and early 21st centuries have modern armies become truly comfortable fighting at night (and even then it’s because of night vision goggles. If you lose them, you’re toast!) Abram’s ability to maintain “command and control” over a force that has been split up in the dark in the face of the enemy would be the envy of any commander in any army since armies first took the field. Amazing!

Not only did Abram and the boys attack them, they “routed” them “**and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.**” Abram “got em on the run” and continued to chase them for around 150 miles according to the Ruckman Reference Bible. It wasn’t enough to drive them from the field, Abram wanted to absolutely annihilate them. What a way to deal with sin in your life! “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**” 1 John 1v9

Abram was quite a guy, and there’s a lot that the Lord has told us about him that we can learn from.