

October 5, 2025

"A Tale of Two Cities" – Bobby Warrenburg

#### Genesis 14

At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goyim, <sup>2</sup> these kings went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). <sup>3</sup> All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea Valley). <sup>4</sup> For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

<sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emmites in Shaveh Kiriathaim <sup>6</sup> and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. <sup>7</sup> Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.

<sup>8</sup> Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboyim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim <sup>9</sup> against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. <sup>10</sup> Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. <sup>11</sup> The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. <sup>12</sup> They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

<sup>13</sup> A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. <sup>14</sup> When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

<sup>17</sup> After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

<sup>18</sup> Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, <sup>19</sup> and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

<sup>20</sup> And praise be to God Most High,  
who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

<sup>21</sup> The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

<sup>22</sup> But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup> that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' <sup>24</sup> I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

Intro question: When you were younger, what did you imagine heaven would be like? How has your understanding changed over the years?

1. What stands out to you as strange or confusing in this passage? What questions does it raise for you?
2. Look at verses 17-20. What specific details does the text give us about each king (their names, cities, what they bring, what they say)? Make a list of the contrasts. Why do you think the author takes such care to show us these two kings side-by-side? What is the text trying to help us see?
3. Reread verses 21-24. How does Abraham respond differently to each king? What do you think accounts for the change in Abraham from his earlier encounter with Pharaoh in Genesis 12?
4. The sermon described heaven and earth not as separate realms, but as meant to be united. How does this challenge or confirm your understanding of God's purposes? Where do you see Jesus trying to bring heaven and earth together in the Gospels?
5. Augustine said the two cities are distinguished by "two loves"—love of self vs. love of God. How would you describe the practical differences between these two loves in everyday life? What does each "love" produce?
6. The sermon mentioned that "both kingdoms are going to be expressed physically... in this earth." What does this mean? How is this different from thinking of one kingdom as "spiritual" and the other as "physical"?
7. The Bethel community story showed a "kingdom of God" vision in the midst of Nazi Germany. What made that community so radically different from the surrounding culture? What sustained it?
8. The King of Sodom comes with demands: "Give me." The King of Salem comes with blessing and abundance. Which pattern do you see more active in your own heart right now? Where do you notice yourself operating from scarcity vs. abundance?
9. The sermon asked: "What pattern is taking up residence in your heart?" Take a moment of honest reflection:
  1. In your family relationships, which kingdom's pattern is growing?
  2. In your work or career, which values are guiding your decisions?
  3. In your use of money and possessions, what "loves" are being expressed?

10. Abraham was transformed by his encounter with Melchizedek. When have you experienced an encounter with God's kingdom (through Scripture, community, worship, etc.) that shifted something in you? What changed?

11. The sermon gave examples of kingdom living:

- Supporting a vandalized church
- Hosting refugee families
- Throwing parties for struggling friends
- Adjusting family patterns toward unity and service

What would "seeds of the kingdom" look like in your specific context right now? Be as concrete as possible.

12. Where is God inviting you to be a "fairy tale landscape of grace" or an "oasis of peace"?

What would one small step in that direction look like this week?

13. How does understanding communion as Jesus offering himself—bread and wine like Melchizedek, but his own body and blood—change how you approach the Lord's table?