

Haran. The city was on the busy caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia, and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egyptian cities in the West and South. It was a natural stopping place for Terah and Abraham on their trek to Palestine.

Interestingly, Haran, like Ur, was a center of the moon god cult. Whether Terah was a worshiper of the moon god Sin and refused to break with his idolatry is an open question. At any rate, when Terah died at Haran, Abraham and his nephew Lot and their families continued their migration southwest into Canaan, passing through the hill country of Shechem and on to Bethel. (pp. 535–36)

The Mari Tablets, unearthed in excavations at Mari ... belong to the eighteenth century B.C. Haran was also a flourishing city in the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries B.C., as is known from frequent references to it in cuneiform sources. Cuneiform tablets from Nuzu [in Assyria] greatly illuminate the patriarchal age.⁶ (p. 536)

5. Terah died in Haran at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:32). The Lord then told Abraham to leave Haran and the area of Mesopotamia and go “to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation.” That proclamation in Genesis 12:2, “I will make you a great nation,” is the first mention of the Abrahamic Covenant.
6. This Covenant was repeated with the promise of a land grant in Genesis 13:14–18. Next, in Genesis 15, the boundaries of the land are given, including everything west of the Euphrates from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea southward to the “River of Egypt” (Genesis 15:18–21).
7. The next proclamation of the Covenant is in Genesis 17:4–8. In verse 5, the name Abram, “exalted father,” is changed to Abraham, “father of a multitude” of nations. The Covenant is declared to be everlasting in verse 8.
8. Following the events on Mount Moriah, the Lord again confirmed the “everlasting” paragraph of the Covenant in Genesis 22:15–18.
9. During these events, Abram had a number of failures. When a famine occurred in the Negev, he made a fateful decision to go to Egypt (Genesis 12:10–16). They were intercepted on arrival and Pharaoh’s officials took them to the king’s palace.

⁶ Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 535–36.



10. Fearful for his life, Abram told Sarai that she should claim to be his sister, which worked out well for him, but not for the Pharaoh. God the Father was having none of this and struck Pharaoh's house with plagues. Another example of Abram's human viewpoint rationales.
11. Back in the Negev, Abram went back to Bethel where he had established his tent before the excursion into Egypt. Abram was wealthy in livestock, silver, and gold (Genesis 13:1–4).
12. Abram and Lot realized their livestock holdings had grown to the point they overwhelmed the land. Abram suggested they separate and offered Lot the first choice of the direction he would take. The land to the southeast looked inviting, so Lot moved his tents to Sodom while Abram remained in Canaan.
13. In Genesis 13:10, Lot was attracted to the "valley of the Jordan, that it was well-watered everywhere." Some have challenged this passage since the area later became desolate. Cyrus Scofield has this instructive footnote:

13:10 well watered. At least as early as the time of Joshua, most of the Jordan valley was desolate, utterly unlike the description in this verse. Yet the destructive critics have thought that this story originated in the time of the later Israelite kingdom. Archaeological research has now proved that the Jordan valley was filled with populous cities for many centuries, but that most of these had disappeared by the time of Joshua. The spade of the archaeologist has served again and again to confirm the Scriptures, not to deny them.⁷
14. In Genesis 13:16, the Lord again expanded the Abrahamic Covenant regarding his progeny, "If anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered." With that, "Abram moved his tent and settled down by the oaks of Mamre,⁸ which are in Hebron and built there an altar to the Lord" (Genesis 13:18).
15. Chapter 14 documents the Jordan Valley Campaign comprised of a Mesopotamian Allied Army under Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. This campaign consisted of a series of eight battles, the final one at the Valley of Siddim,⁹ the location of five cities called the Pentapolis.

⁷ C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Study Bible: NASB* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26n13:10.

⁸ "Three men bearing the names of Aner, Eschol, and Mamre helped the patriarch Abram rout the invading Mesopotamian kings according to Genesis 14:24. Abraham had pitched his tents by the oaks of Mamre who is given the patronymic [ancestral name] Amorite" (R. L. Alden, "Mamre," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976], 4:48).

⁹ Including the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar.



16. Chedorlaomer's victory over the forces of the Pentapolis completed his campaign and he headed back toward Mesopotamia by retiring northward up the Jordan Valley. Traveling with the army were hostages from the Pentapolis including Abram's nephew, Lot.
17. This allied army was led by four generals, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, Tidal, king of Goiim, Amraphel, king of Shinar, and Arioch, king of Ellasar. As they advance northward up the valley, a fugitive, who had escaped the Battle of Siddim, gave Abraham intelligence that this army was approaching with Lot held as a hostage.

(End JAS2-33. See JAS2-34 for continuation of study at p. 331.)



18. With this news, Abraham began to put into action some decisions he had made on his arrival near Bethel:

Genesis 14:13 Then Abram's G-2 operative came and told [נִגַּד (*nagath*): what was previously unknown is now made known] the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mámre the Ámorīte, brother of Éshcol and brother of Áner, and these were allies [בְּרִית (*berith*): refers to a self-imposed obligation on the part of two or more partners; a mutual agreement that is reciprocal] with Abram.

v. 14 And when Abram heard that his relative [Lot] had been taken captive, he led out [רִוַק (*ruq*): the mobilization of troops] his trained men [חַנִּיכִים (*chaniykh*): a hapax legomenon referring to men systematically trained for combat], born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan-jáan.

v. 15 And Abram divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hóbah, which is north of Damáscus.

1. These men were prepared to do battle. When Abram got his G-2 report from his intelligence operative he did not have to call a meeting with Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner to decide what to do.
2. These four men did not have to negotiate to agree on a coalition. They did not have to decide to what degree they would participate in a peace-keeping force. There was no debate about how many troops each man would provide and whether or not they would be involved in hostile actions or just police actions. There was no debate about what provoked Chedorlaomer's attack on the Pentapolis.
3. No such silliness was necessary. These four men had already entered into an alliance which stipulated they would collectively defend each other's interests. The treaty obviously included a paragraph which activated participation by all signatories in the event anyone's relatives, servants, or herds were abducted or stolen.
4. Note in verse 13 above, the word translated "allies" is בְּרִית (*berith*) and refers to a self-imposed obligation. The coalition had already been formed and the men had already been trained. They were an instant reaction force prepared to report for duty whenever a situation demanded it. Therefore, once Abram understood Lot's situation he was able to instantly call the coalition's forces into action.

5. We know that the three brothers had also assigned their trained men to the coalition force from the statement that concludes the description of the battle between Abram's Delta Force and the Mesopotamian Allied Army:
Genesis 14:24 "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."
6. These four divisions formed a Rapid Deployment Force organized by Abram and motivated by divine guidance. Abram had confidence he was in the geographical will of God when he settled on the high ground at Hebron.
Genesis 13:17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."
v. 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.
7. When Abram had entered Canaan he set up his tent on a mountain near Bethel (Genesis 12:8). Following a famine which forced him to move temporarily to Egypt, Abram returned to Bethel as is noted in Genesis 13:3.
8. At Bethel, the Lord repeated to him the Abrahamic and Palestinian Covenants and invited him to take a walk around the land: Genesis 13:17.
9. After having taken this tour, Abram made the decision to move his headquarters from Bethel to Hebron. In Genesis 13:18, the three verbs, "moved," "came," and "dwelt," tell us that Abram "settled" in Hebron which was near high ground.
10. This was a strategic move with regard to the best location for him to pasture his herds (Genesis 13:2) and to defend them from aggressors.
11. At the time, Lot had not made the decision to move to Sodom. Therefore, the development of a coalition among Abram and the three Hamitic brothers who also lived in the area was motivated by the desire to protect their holdings from rustlers or armies.
12. Abram by faith had come to Canaan. This is an expression of wisdom. He was directed by the Lord not only to that area but specifically to Hebron.
13. Without wisdom, Abram could well have decided that since the Lord took him to Hebron he was safe under the Lord's protection without need for military preparedness.
14. However wisdom is the result of taking in doctrine and allowing it to provide instruction and guidance regarding the basic decisions in life.

15. An important principle comes into view: Abram has become a star witness in Lucifer's appeal. The Old Testament documents the Formal Trial. The events in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall constitute the opening argument for the Prosecution. The time between the Fall and the Incarnation documents the argument for the Defense.

NOTE: The restoration of planet earth in Genesis 1:3 follows Lucifer's guilty verdict and his request for an appeal. The first phase involves Adam and Ishah as witnesses for the Prosecution between their creation and the Fall.

From the Fall to the Incarnation are witnesses for the defense followed by Jesus as Witness for the Prosecution.

Church Age believers provide a rebuttal testifying for the Prosecution while in conflict with witnesses for the Defense.

The Tribulation is dominated by witnesses for the Defense while the Millennium presents witnesses for the Prosecution.

In the Eternal State, the guilty verdict of Lucifer is upheld and witnesses for the Defense are tried before the Great White Throne. All of them are incarcerated eternally in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 15).

16. Consequently, when Abram was specifically identified as a star witness for the Prosecution he came under severe scrutiny by Lucifer, the attorney for the defense. As a result, Lucifer was allowed to test him. The tests challenge Abram to use doctrine giving him opportunities to accelerate his spiritual growth.
17. Abram has been promised the land between the Nile and the Euphrates. He saw both. He was born in the Euphrates river valley and he had just returned from Egypt and the Nile delta. He had been told that his base of operations was to be Canaan and had just completed a walking tour.
18. The establishment of his headquarters at Hebron was directed by the Lord as a place of geological advantage both economically and militarily.
19. Wisdom led Abram to organize and train his servants into a rapid deployment force and to enter into a coalition with his neighbors in the area.
20. The validation of these decisions occurred when he and his allies were ready to take immediate action when the news came from Siddim that Lot had been captured by Chedorlaomer.
21. In a treaty, each party agrees to the following provisions: I am with you under the following conditions. If I fail to respond, then I break the conditions of the alliance.



Principle: If members of your coalition are not with you, they are against you.

22. Abram’s G-2 operative also provided information on the movement of troops: they were headed north back to Mesopotamia, north via the King’s Highway. Having cleared out the entire Jordan Valley, they were in an emotional state following complete victory accomplished in a grueling year-long campaign:

In Genesis 14:4–9, details are given about the campaign exercised by the Mesopotamian Allied Army. Prior to the attack on the Pentapolis, this army had six victories over:

1. The Réphaim in Áshterōth-karnáim,
2. the Zúzim in Ham,
3. the Émim in Sháveh-kíriatháim (v. 5);
4. the Hórītes at Mount Séir (v. 6);
5. the Ámalekītes at En-míshpat,
6. and the Ámorītes in Házazon-támar (v.7).

23. Assuming they had eliminated all meaningful threats throughout the area, the army’s withdrawal from the valley was conducted without the usual safeguards normally employed.
24. Also, Abram’s wisdom is reflected by the fourth Qal imperfect verb in Genesis 13:18, בָּנָה (*banah*), Abram “built an altar to the Lord.”
25. Although military preparedness is a necessity in the devil’s world, it is tragically flawed if not supported and backed by divine power and protection.
26. Such divine direction will not be available to Abram’s army if he does not maintain a relationship with the Lord. Wisdom comprehends the correlation between the two. Military preparedness plus divine protection equals victory over predator forces.
27. With this news, Abram organized his cavalry for pursuit:

Genesis 14:14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men [חַנְיָקַי (*chaniyk*)¹], born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

¹ “Trained men. The Hebrew word used here occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible; it is employed in early Egyptian documents to indicate the hired soldiers of Palestinian chiefs at this period” (C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Study Bible: NASB* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 27n14:14).

