

**Series: God & Abraham #1175**  
**Title: Genesis 14**  
***The Geopolitics (Part 2)***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. This is our last day with one another before we take a break for the weekend. And next week we are going to ask the next question of our text, Genesis chapter 14, and that is *where* did the action – across several battles – that made up a war, *where* did all of that take place? For this discussion, it will be helpful if you have access to a map I will be using. And I want to get this to you, if possible.

You can request it, and I encourage you to do so, ASAP by emailing me. My email address is [mark@godisministry.org](mailto:mark@godisministry.org). Alternatively, you can send a note to my Post Office box and I'll do my best to get this in the mail to you, although you will not have it in time for Monday. So, if possible, email me. My address by regular mail, should that be your only way to get me, is God Is, PO Box 802 Winchester Massachusetts 01890. If you want this map, which does a very good and clear job of defining locations in Genesis 14, reach out to me as the weekend commences. Thank you.

As for today, we want to have some review and then to finish the unique perspective Dr. Kenneth Kitchen, the British, Christian, and world renowned Egyptologist gives in his 1995 article in *Biblical Archaeology Review* with the title, *The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?* The reason we are doing this is so that we can see just how very plausible it is that the geopolitical conditions were such that Genesis 14 is completely true. This, along with what we said earlier in the week on ancient written extrabiblical sources, such as the Ebla and Larsa Tablets, those and these geopolitical conditions prove the skeptics wrong when they say that Genesis 14 could not possibly have happened the way we believe it did.

I remind you, the main point Kitchen makes is that the war, as described to us in Genesis 14, is certainly plausible based on the historical evidence we *do* have from the history of Mesopotamia in the times of Abraham. Quoting Kitchen now, "There is one – and only one – period that fits the conditions reflected in Genesis 14 – the early second millennium BC. Only in that period did the situation in Mesopotamia allow for shifting alliances..."

And he correctly says, "Only in that period did the situation in Mesopotamia allow for shifting alliances..." By this he is referring to geopolitics. And by geopolitics we mean international relations influenced by geographical factors. Or, how geography effects politics. Genesis 14, as we have read, certainly speaks to political alliances based on geography. We have the four kings working together and coming from the northeast down into the territory of the five kings of the south, in a separate alliance with one another. So, in order for the biblical account to be true we have to have a period in history when there was no clear single political ruler or power in this same area, but rather a time of alliances between major and minor, what we might call, city-states.

And guess what...such a time exists, making the conditions right for what happens in Genesis 14. And we are following Kitchen's argument that leads him to the conclusion the time of Genesis 14 was in the early second millennium BC (say around the year 2,000BC). Continuing with just a bit more of review, let's take his justification piece by piece and begin with this: the events of Genesis 14 had to have taken place *before* the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC (the years 1,200-1,101). Why?

Alliances like we read about in the Bible *could* have taken place from the time of the third millennium BC (the years 3,000-2,001) to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (the year 1,201BC), although geopolitical alliances would have been limited by the Egyptian dynasty's reign and rule in the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Then, says Dr. Kitchen, in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC conditions in Canaan changed because of things (biblical) like the emergence of early Israel. So, sometime before the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC was when the events of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis took place. This is point one.

Second, he points out that (quote) "in the late third millennium BC (so the years 3,000-2001BC), Mesopotamia was dominated for a time by a single power, the third dynasty of Ur." (End quote.) So, doing the math, in the time before the year 2,000BC there would not have been room for political alliances

because there was this one dominant rule. However, the third dynasty of Ur was overthrown by Elam in 2,000BC. And here is the key: from 2,000BC for about 250 years he says, “No single power ruled in greater Mesopotamia from Ur [and beyond].”

Let me say this again, because I really want you to catch it. From 2,000BC for about 250 years he says, “No single power ruled in greater Mesopotamia from Ur [and beyond].”

So, because of this, Kitchen continues (quote), “The area swarmed with major and minor city-states, combining and recombining in ever changing alliances. Some like Isin and Larsa (there is Larsa again, friends), Mari, and then Assyria and Babylon, became more prominent than others. States such as these occasionally headed major alliances, but power was still divided. As one oft-quoted ancient text observes, ‘There is no king who is strong just by himself...’ Other documents of the period repeatedly refer to alliances of three, four, and five powers.” End quote.

Ah ha! So, there is the time period into which there is no dominant power, but rather warring alliances. Sounds like the time of Genesis 14, doesn’t it? This is how Kenneth Kitchen begins his argument for the reliability of the Biblical text from a geopolitical perspective.

And then, to further drive home his point (a significant thesis I agree with), he adds that from history we know that various military campaigns in Mesopotamia and into the very land Abram and Lot live on in the Bible, are well attested from the third to the early second millennium BC. And, in his article, Dr. Kitchen reports this. I will quote him, and this involves some names that are not exactly Joe and Jane, by way of pronunciation. So bear with me. He makes a key point, drawing from ancient records, and that is what I want you to capture.

Kenneth Kitchen writes, “Indeed, one account from the early second millennium (BC) is similar to Genesis 14 – though from the opposite perspective, that of the alliance of eastern kings. In a splendid inscription of Iahdun-Lim of Mari [and let me break in here; Mari, which was located in Mesopotamia, up the coast of the Euphrates River from Ur, Mari is another treasure trove of cuneiform clay tablets, but I will save details on those for another day, except to tell you they date after the time of Abraham but only by a few hundred years and can be applied cautiously to Bible studies on Abraham. So that’s this reference to Mari]

Back to Kitchen now, “In a splendid inscription of Iahdun-Lim of Mari we are told that Shamsi-Adad I of Assyria reached Lebanon, advanced past the timber mountains and proceeded to the Mediterranean Sea; he made offerings to celebrate his success (as Abraham tithed to Melchizedek in Genesis 14.20) and imposed his rule and perpetual tribute on the peoples he conquered which was paid until the very year of the inscription, when Shamsi-Adad I defeated an alliance of four other vassals who rebelled.” Now here is the key, listen closely to this: “The conquest, servitude, and revolt in this inscription are paralleled in Genesis 14.1-11, but from the opposite viewpoint. In short, the kind of military engagement described in Genesis 14 is at home in the early second millennium BC.”

This is *so significant!* I repeat the words of our competent historian and brother-in-Christ Dr. Kenneth Kitchen, “the kind of military engagement described in Genesis 14 is at home in the early second millennium BC.” That is what his article has shown us yesterday and today. Friends, geopolitical realities at the time of Abram and of Lot, in Genesis chapter 14, in the second millennium BC fit *perfectly* with what the Scripture says! And of course they do, because God has authored the Bible and God cannot lie, nor ever lead us astray. Reliable, ancient sources, outside Scripture support the Scripture!

I got to run, but I will remind you of this on Monday and then we will ask, *where?* Join us then for God Is!

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