

Abraham and Victory Through Faith

Part 1

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[00:00:00] A chapter concerning Abraham and his victories in faith. Perhaps we could begin at the end of chapter 13, Genesis 13 verse 18. Then Abraham removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Ariok king of Eleazar, Chedralomia king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Bersha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shememba king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, which is Zohar. All these were joined together in the vale of Sidon, which is the salt sea. Twelve years they served Chedolaroma, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

[00:01:07] And in the fourteenth year came Chedolaroma, and the kings were with him, and smoked the Rephaims in Ashtaroth, Carnaeum, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Sheva, Curathaeum, and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. And they returned and came to Enmishfat, which is Kadesh, and smoked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites that dwelt in Haziotzon, Tamer. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, the same as Zohar, and they joined battle with them in the vale of Sidon. And Chedolaroma, the king of Elam, and with Tidal, king of nations, and Amraphel, king of Shina, [00:02:01] and Ariok, king of Elasa, four kings with five. And the vale of Sidon was full of slime pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountains. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshkol, and brother of Ena. And these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, 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 smoked them, and pursued them unto Hoba, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And [00:03:04] he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorah Lona, and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Sheba, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of

heaven and earth. And blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most [00:04:05] High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread, even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should say, I have made Abram rich. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Anah, Eshgul, and Mamre, let them take their portion. I'll just read the first verse of chapter 15. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. We see Abram here in this chapter overcoming, victoriously, steadfast in faith.

In the first half of the chapter we see him as a conqueror because he conquers his enemies [00:05:03] and they are vanquished by him and they rise up no more. That is to be a conqueror. But in the latter part of the chapter we see him as an overcomer when the king of Sodom, that corrupt and evil king, comes to him and by offering him these goods which belong to Sodom would have set him in a wrong course from that path of faith that he had been treading if he had accepted them. But Abraham, he withstands against that and he, by faith, stands firm and he does not fall to that temptation. And in doing so we see Abraham as an overcomer by faith. Now, the day will come when we will be associated with the Lord Jesus when he [00:06:05] comes to this earth as a conqueror. We find that in Revelation 19. He comes with the armies of heaven, the armies in heaven. And he comes on a great white horse with that name upon his thigh, King of Kings, Lord of Lords. And all the enemies are put down and he is a conqueror, his saints with him. But in this present day the Lord would have us to be overcomers. And in a sense, perhaps this is what Paul meant when he said in Romans 8, regarding all the things that were against the people of God at the end of that chapter, yet he could say in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. And perhaps to be an overcomer, to stand fast. The enemies don't go away but we in faith do not fall to them. We stand fast in [00:07:10] the strength that the Lord gives and through faith in him. And to do so would make us more than a conqueror. But I'd like to look at those enemies that are against us. And we find perhaps a figure of them in the latter part of the chapter with the King of Sodom coming to Abraham. Abraham, his inheritance was an earthly inheritance that had been promised. Everything Abraham was given or promised by God was bound up with a Christ on earth. That's what Abraham was looking for. Our inheritance, our blessing, our hope is all bound up with a Christ in heaven. So Abraham's [00:08:04] enemies were flesh and blood. But we read in Ephesians chapter 6 that the enemies that assail us, they are not flesh and blood. I'll just read it. Ephesians 6 verse 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places or in the heavenlies. And so our enemies, or we read of three of them in the scriptures, the world, Satan and also the flesh is another enemy. And we get in verse 21 of our chapter 14, it says the King of Sodom said [00:09:16] unto Abraham, give me the persons and take the goods to thyself. Now in that verse there's an allusion to all three enemies. Sodom, which would speak of the world, a corrupt city which had its corrupt king, a city which had overturned God's order, both moral and creatorial, and was pursuing its own course away from God according to its own light in rebellion against God. And Sodom would speak to our hearts of this world, the world which Satan rules over, and the world in which the flesh [00:10:09] governed by sin, that principle of lawlessness which governs the flesh is seen, where man is put at the centre of things and Christ is given either a secondary or no place at all. But God, he would have the Lord Jesus, his Son, have the preeminence in all things. This is the place that God would give his

Son, but man says, no, we want that place. And as a result, we get this administration, this order which is really a disorder of lawlessness against God. And this is what marks Sodom. And then we get the King of Sodom, Satan. And Satan is another enemy. We read [00:11:04] in the first epistle of Peter that he warns us against Satan, your adversary, goeth about as a roaring and a raging lion, seeking whom he may devour. Satan, who himself wants the place that Christ alone can have. He wants to be worshipped. He has set his throne, or he sought to set his throne above the heavens, that place that only Christ can occupy. That's the place that Satan wanted. Therefore he is the enemy of God and therefore the enemy of the people of God. And he too is set against us in our desire to be faithful. And then we get implied in what the King of Sodom says to Abraham, we get the flesh. Because the King of Sodom says, give me the [00:12:01] persons and take the goods to thyself. Satan would maintain his power over the souls of men. The King of Sodom says, give me the persons or the souls. I want those. But you, I'd like you to have the goods of Sodom. Because Satan would seek through appealing to the flesh, that nature within us, which we've inherited from Adam, which is corrupt, which Paul could say, in me, that is in my flesh, good doth not dwell. And we read, don't we, in Romans 8, concerning the carnal mind, that enmity against God. That's the fleshly mind. Verse 7. Because the carnal or fleshly mind is [00:13:15] enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And so Satan would say to us, think about yourself. Have yourself as the object.

And look at all the lovely things there are in this world that you can be occupied with. And in doing so, he would try to turn us aside from faithfulness. And then he will be able to quench [00:14:03] the testimony of the Gospel in our lives. And he will hold on, as it were, to the souls that he wants so much in this world. His prisoners. We read in Isaiah 14, concerning Lucifer, that he is not willing to open the door of his prison, to let his prisoners out. But thanks to God that he is the one, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who has defeated Satan. And we read, don't we, in Hebrews 2, that Satan is in fact a conquered foe. Hebrews 2, verse 14, For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, [00:15:05] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. So we were once captives to Satan. But the Lord Jesus has delivered us through the truth concerning himself as the Saviour, as our Saviour. And indeed every captive that he takes from Satan, he does so through revealing this truth to their hearts, and faith in him, and that deliverance, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. So we have the enemies arranged against us, and in Christ there is the answer to overcome those enemies, whether it's Satan, whether it's the world, whether it's the flesh. We get the man, don't we, in Romans 7. And he's a wretched man. He wants to please God. He [00:16:08] is, I believe, a child of God. He's truly born of God. But he finds within himself, he has not got the power to do the things which he wants to do. And at the end of that chapter he cries out in his wretchedness, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? And then the answer comes in verse 25. He looks away from himself, and he looks up to heaven where Christ sits in glory, and he says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There's the answer, and he receives it in faith. So now his strength, he no longer seeks strength to resist the flesh in himself, [00:17:08] in his own strength, but he receives it from the one who has overcome and sat down upon his father's throne, who's put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And he, through the power of the Holy Spirit, now walks, not according to the flesh, but he walks in a way which is pleasing to God. Well, I'd like to look at Abraham's faithfulness to God, and also later on with Melchizedek, God's faithfulness to Abraham, which underpins everything. Abraham's faithfulness to God can be seen in the tent, in the previous chapter, and in the

altar. Now the tent spoke of Abraham's [00:18:03] separation from the land in which he was in. He wanted no part of it. He walked separate from it. He would be given it when, in God's time, when God gave it to him. And until that time, he didn't want any of it. He wanted no part of it. And so he did not live in a city. He did not settle down. His separation was shown because he lived in a tent. And in Hebrews chapter 11, we read of him in verse 8, By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive from inheritance, obeyed. And he went out not knowing whether he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and [00:19:06] maker is God. And then verse 13, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The tent was the outward evidence of Abraham's position, his confession that he was a pilgrim in the earth, because he had something so much better. It was not that he sacrificed these things. He wanted them really, but he wouldn't have them. He would abstain from them. No, he had something so much better that he no longer wanted these things, because Stephen tells us in his address just before he was martyred, that the God of glory [00:20:03] appeared unto our father Abraham. Abraham had seen the God of glory, and so the glory of the cities around him, they were dim in comparison with that, and he did not want them. And he pursued that course because his heart had been, as it were, captivated by God, and a moral transformation had taken place in his heart. God had transformed him morally, and now he would tread that path of faith separate from the world around him, pursuing a course which, and he would never have those things in his lifetime. He died in faith, but that made no difference to him because God had promised them, and so he knew that that promise would be fulfilled, whether in his lifetime or [00:21:05] later on. That was irrelevant, but it was God himself whom he pursued. That was his object, and it was the things that God had promised him that he wanted, because God had promised them, and he loved God. And the altar would speak of that. If the temple would speak of Abraham's separation from the world, the altar would speak of Abraham drawing near to God, because the altar, it speaks of approach to and acceptance by God. It is the ground, as it were, of that approach and acceptance, and I think last month we had that thought brought before us in the altar, in that scripture in Matthew, where it says that the gift is sanctified by the altar, [00:22:06] because the altar speaks of Christ himself. And the life and death of Christ, Christ offered up to God in life or in death, had all his value in the sight of God because of who he was, and so the gift, the sacrifice, is sanctified by the altar. This is the basis, as it were, from which the work of Christ was so pleasing in the sight of God, because of the one who offered himself to God, the greatness of his person. Now, in Exodus 20, there are instructions by God as to these altars, and if we could just turn to Exodus 20. We read there of an altar made [00:23:06] of earth, verse 24 of chapter 20. An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen, in all places where I record my name, and I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto my altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon. So we get an altar of earth, and that would speak to us, again, of the person of Christ, but as to his humanity. The name Adam means earth, and the Lord Jesus is the last Adam. He became a man. He took a place in a foreign order of things, although he himself was not part of that order, [00:24:05] but he took a place in it because he is the man out of heaven. He could say to those who opposed him when he was upon earth, you are from beneath, I am from above. You're of this world, I'm not of this world, but he was a true man. He was a true man, but all that we see in him as he walked through this earth, that lovely moral character of holiness that we see in him, he took all his character from who he was. He was God. And so the altar of earth would speak of his humanity, and we read again in Hebrews chapter 10, verse 4, it is not possible that the

blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, [00:25:12] wherefore when he cometh into the world, he says, sacrifice an offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me to do thy will, O God. Above when he said sacrifice an offering and burnt offering and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law, then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. So these sacrifices that were to be offered up on this altar of earth spoke of the [00:26:06] Lord Jesus and his holy humanity coming into this world as a man in order that he might die, in order that he might taste of death for everything, that he might offer up himself to God as that mighty sacrifice. And all these sacrifices speak of him in one way or another as he offers himself up to God. Now the altar of stone, if the altar of earth speaks of his humanity, then surely the altar of stone would speak of his deity, because stone is something permanent. In becoming a man he became that which he was not before, but the altar of stone would speak of something fixed, which does not move. And this is the name of the Lord Jesus, the same. We find that name in Psalm 102, thou art the same. That is a name of God, it's the name of Christ. [00:27:03] He is called the same because he is the unchanging one, he is God. And regarding this altar, no tool must come upon it. Man mustn't lift up a tool on it, mustn't shape those stones, because if we are to know God, if we are to know Christ, if we are to know the Father, it can only be in the revelation that he gives of himself. It cannot be after the devisings of our own mind or imagination. It is only in the word that we find the truth of the revelation of God in Christ. He himself is that revelation. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And so in Christ we get the full revelation of God, and we must not interfere or intrude in any way our own thoughts upon that. [00:28:05] We must receive it as the Holy Spirit would give it to us in his word, because he would have us to be in the full knowledge of these things and in the full enjoyment of them, even though we cannot, we cannot, as it were, work out that mystery, but we can receive it by faith and not seek in any way to intrude upon it. And then no steps were to go up to the altar, because there must be no self-exaltation by men in the presence of God. Even if it's on that first step, that little first step, there must be no degree of exaltation before God, because Christ alone must have that place. None other can share it, and so there must be no steps, God says, up to my altar. Peter, he suggested in a way that there should be steps when he said, [00:29:01] let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, one for Elias. And then God spoke from heaven, this is my beloved son, hear him. God would not have any, as it were, to be brought alongside his son. He must have the chief place and the only place. He must have the place of preeminence. Now, you can't have a tent without an altar. The two must go together, otherwise the tent would just be an outward formality, conformity. Sodom, he had a tent, but he didn't have an altar, and very quickly he lost his tent, or he gave up his tent, and he lost his pilgrim character altogether and settled down in Sodom. The tent must be the result of the altar, as it were. Our separation from this world must be a result of our drawing near to God [00:30:04] and our desire to be in communion with him. And then we have in the latter part of the chapter, God's faithfulness to Abraham. Before the king of Sodom comes to Abraham, God has caused him to be met by another king who strengthens his hand and by whom he can stand firm through his ministry, this Melchizedek, who we read in Hebrews is interpreted king of righteousness, king of peace.

Now, I'd like to look at Melchizedek just briefly, because he speaks so wonderfully of the Lord Jesus. First of all, the person of Melchizedek, and if we turn to Hebrews, chapter [00:31:02] seven and verse three, we read of Melchizedek, he was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God. He abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the

spoils. And so Melchizedek, we don't read of his genealogy, we don't read of his death. Why? Because he is taken up to be a type of the Lord Jesus, who had no beginning and has no end. He is God, and he is the great I Am, the one whose existence is in himself, equal with the Father. How great this man was. And he combined two offices, he was both a king and a priest.

[00:32:10] We don't read of any man in the whole of scriptures who is both a king and a priest. We get sometimes a king and a priest put together in a certain context, for instance, with Ezra, Jeshua, the high priest, Zerubbabel, who was with the royal line, but never is that office combined in one man. But in Melchizedek it was, because he speaks of Christ, both king and priest, and with a king, or anyone who has office, the office is that which gives him his glory. With a mere man, that's true, isn't it? If a king was stripped of his kingship, he would be just like you and I. He would have no more glory anymore. But with the Lord Jesus, [00:33:01] when he is given an office, he gives glory to the office, because of the greatness of his person. And we read that in regards to him being a king, in Psalm chapter 2, God says concerning his king, Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said unto me. Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And again in Hebrews, Hebrews 5 and verse 5, we read of his office as a priest that he has been given by God.

Chapter 5 and verse 5, it says, So also, verse 4, No man taketh his honour unto himself, [00:34:05] but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. So both as king and as priest, he has those offices because of the greatness of his person. He is God's son. And the glory of his priesthood and his kingship, if there is such a word, is because of who he is. He gives glory to that office. And then we read of the order of the Melchizedek priesthood in Hebrews 7. It's not after the order of Aaron. It's a new order of priesthood. We might say that the Lord's priesthood is after the pattern of the Aaronic priesthood, [00:35:01] because Aaron is taken as a pattern and his ministry and the garments he wears, they all set forth a picture of the glories of Christ and the ministry that he undertakes in the holy place on our behalf, for us. It's all after that pattern. But the Aaronic order could not speak of the Lord's order of priesthood. And so this Melchizedek priesthood had to be introduced to us so that we might know what that order was. And the order of the Aaronic priesthood, we read in chapter 7, was one that was constituted under law. So it could never bring perfection.

In other words, it could never bring completion. It could never complete the purpose and the counsel of God under that order of things, under that order of law. There had to be another order [00:36:01] brought in. And that order comes under a new covenant. We read in this chapter that the Lord is surety of a better covenant, a new testament, and that is the covenant of grace. And the Lord's priesthood comes under that covenant. He is the guarantee of all the promises that God has given us in grace. That new covenant, not made with us, no, made with Israel, but we come under the blessing of it, and all the promises we have are on, as it were, the basis of that covenant, that covenant of grace. And the Lord Jesus, his order of priesthood is according to that order, that covenant of grace. And of course, the Aaronic priesthood, as we read in this chapter, they could not continue because of reason of death. And that's all that can be brought under the law. It ends in death. But the Lord Jesus, he was made a priest, we read, according to the power of an endless life. [00:37:06] And so he is a priest forever. His priesthood will not be given to another. He is a priest forever. That's the order of his priesthood. It is an eternal priesthood. And then finally, the ministry of Melchizedek. He came forth and gave Abraham bread and wine.

Now, the ministry of Aaron is taken up in Hebrews as a picture of the Lord's present ministry for us. If

I can just read that, in Hebrews 9, Hebrews 9, verse 11, but Christ being come and high priest of good things to come [00:38:01] by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. And then again, down the chapter, verse 25, for Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but entered heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. So God's present ministry towards his people, his priestly ministry, is after the pattern of the Aaronic ministry. He has gone in to the holy place to intercede. But the Melchizedek ministry is that he goes out, he comes out in blessing, and that ministry will be seen primarily in the millennial reign of Christ, when all things are brought into accord with the mind [00:39:08] of God. And we get that thought when Melchizedek is spoken of as the priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. God is the possessor of heaven and earth, but he will not actually, as it were, take up that possession until the millennial reign of Christ. And then he will be seen to be the possessor of heaven and earth. At the moment, the earth has got corruption in it, and defilement, and that which is opposed to God. And also the heavenly places too, we read of that in Ephesians 6, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Although Christ is supreme in the heavenly place, there is still that spiritual activity which Satan, and under Satan, and it's [00:40:04] in opposition to God. But under the millennial rule, we read in Isaiah chapter 24, and verse 21, it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high. That's Satan. And the kings of the earth upon the earth, that's the earth, and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. And so the heavens and the earth will be brought into conformity to God, and he will set his king and priest there. [00:41:06] And in Zechariah chapter 6, we read of that king and priest.

It says, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the council of peace shall be between them both. Jacob had a vision, a ladder stretching up to heaven in Genesis 28.

And the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. It was a ladder which had its base upon earth, and the top of which was in heaven. And the angels of God ascended and descended upon it, [00:42:03] and above it was the Lord himself, was Jehovah himself. And that speaks of the time when there is, as it were, accord between heaven and earth, and communion between heaven and earth, and God is above all things. And he sets his king upon the earth, the Lord Jesus. And in John chapter 1, the Lord makes reference to this vision, and he says to Nathanael, who says, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel. He says, You'll see greater things than these. He said, You will see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. And so all, as it were, is on that basis. God in his counsel and purpose has fulfilled all his desire in Christ. All on that basis, Christ. All is brought to fruition in him.

[00:43:08] And so the angels descend and ascend on him. It's all on account of him. And so the counsel of peace is between them both, between Jehovah in heaven, and his king and priest upon earth. The counsel of peace in Luke's gospel, the gospel which is so much the priestly gospel, it stresses the priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus. Although he was not yet a priest, we read that, don't we, in Hebrews, that while he was on earth, he could not be a priest, but he acted in a priestly way. And Luke brings that out. And at the beginning of Luke, when he is born, the angels declare glory to God in the highest. Upon earth, peace, good pleasure, delight found in man. It is a millennial prophecy. Heaven and earth on accord [00:44:03] under God in Christ, his king and his priest. Well,

finally, we see how Abraham was so strengthened by this ministry of Melchizedek. He gave him bread and wine. And bread would speak of that which sustains. Wine speaks of joy. The Lord said, didn't he, to his disciples when he drank of the cup before he suffered. Well, he didn't drink of the cup, but when he gave them the cup before he suffered, he said, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink anew with you in the kingdom of my father. He looked on to that time when he would, as Melchizedek, bring forth the wine, bring forth the joy which he would have in his people upon earth, Israel. Up to then, he had had no joy in them. But in the millennial reign, [00:45:02] he will find that joy and he will share it with his people. And Abraham, he has a foretaste of what he's been promised in that ministry, and his heart is strengthened. And in all his desire for those things, the things that the king of Sodom present to him are of no value at all. He does not want them. And he says, I don't want them. He says, I haven't got myself at the centre of my thoughts. I want God to have the glory. I want him to have the glory for giving me that thing he has promised. And I will not receive these things at your hand. I will not be made rich by you. I will wait to be made rich and blessed by God. And the Lord himself, when Satan came to him, and he promised him all the kingdoms of the world, if you will worship me, the Lord Jesus would not receive the kingdoms [00:46:04] at Satan's hand. He would receive them only at the hand of his God and his Father. And he said to Satan, he said, thou shalt worship God and him only wilt thou serve.

Well, although we've said that primarily the ministry of Melchizedek is a future one, yet I think that we can enjoy that ministry now. We can have, we know the Lord sustaining us and giving us the joy, which was his joy when he was in this earth, in communion with his God and Father. My joy, he says, I leave with you. That's the joy that was his in his own heart. And we can be, we can have that joy by being in communion with him and walking with him. This is the joy that he gives us. And [00:47:01] in Hebrews 10 at the end, we speak, it speaks of the assurance of hope. Abraham, he was given the assurance of that hope through the ministry of Melchizedek. Faith, we read, is the substantiating of things not seen. And the conviction of, sorry, I can't remember the. Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

And although Abraham hadn't seen with his eyes that which God had promised, the ministry of Melchizedek made it real to his heart by faith. And as we draw near to our great high priest, we read in Hebrews 10, 19, having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by [00:48:07] the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has concentrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. Our hope is not the same as Abraham's, as we have said. His was with Christ on earth, but ours is with Christ in heaven. That's our hope. Abraham waited for Christ to put his feet upon Mount Olivet and to take up his kingdom. And the Lord said, didn't he, Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Abraham, we don't know how much he entered into that truth, [00:49:02] but the fact is, the day that he longed for and rejoiced in was the day of Christ. And Abraham saw it by faith, and the joy of that made him glad then, before he'd even received it. And we're encouraged now to enter into the holy place where Christ sits, and as a result of that ministry, that priestly ministry, to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. As we said, this underpins everything, the faithfulness of God, the one who promised these things, he will faithfully bring them about, and he will be faithful in his dealings with us, and through his love, we will be strengthened that we can continue on a pathway which is a difficult one, and often a lonely one, but which we can continue in through his [00:50:08] faithfulness and the ministry of our great high priest. I wonder if we could sing 160.

O bright and blessed hope, when shall it be that we, his face long loved, revealed, shall see?
Perhaps we could sing the first four verses of this hymn.