

Abram and the Nations

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- [0 : 00] As we get the message today, I am reminded that we have an inclination to doubt other people. So often when we hear people say things, there's part of us that goes, hmm, I wonder what their motivation is.
- I wonder what they're really trying to get. And I was thinking about that. I thought of some expressions that we often use in our speech that reflect this doubt, this almost innate doubt that we have of others.
- We're told to read the fine print. We're told if it's too good to be true, it probably is. Don't believe everything you hear. And definitely don't believe it until you see it.
- The check's in the mail. And then we jokingly say, well, if the Internet said it, it must be true, right? We're told there's no such thing as a free lunch.
- And then, of course, after every political speech, fact check. Because we have to see where they were lying and where they weren't. And finally, an expression that's entered our speech over the last year or so, fake news.
- [1 : 05] That means we just doubt everything, doesn't it? But in today's message, what we're going to find is that while it may be easy to doubt the words of other people, there is someone whose words that we can trust.
- And that is God. We are going to find today that God keeps His promises. So if you get one thing out of our message today, that's going to be it. I want you to know that God keeps His promises.
- An important part of our passage today is going to actually come from two weeks ago when we were in Genesis, looking at earlier in chapter 12. And so there is God's promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12.
- And that's really going to become our tent for the message today. So we're going to see our message today looking back to those earlier promises at the beginning of chapter 12.
- So I'm going to read those for us. This is at the beginning of chapter 12, beginning in verse 1. And this, once again, is God speaking to Abraham and providing him these promises that we are going to talk about.
- [2 : 04] Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation.
- And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you, I will curse.
- And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And also in chapter 12, there is a specific promise that is passed to Abraham concerning land that they will possess.
- While Abraham and his household were passing through the land of Canaan, God says to Abraham in verse 7, To your offspring I will give this land.
- We'll be coming back to these promises during the message today. As we go into our message, the outline for today, we have five points that we're going to be looking at. We're going to be looking at first, promise honored.

[3 : 02] We're going to then see second, promise expanded. Third, promise empowered. Four, promise guided. And five, the fifth thing we'll look at, will be the connection between Melchizedek and Jesus.

Let's look at number one, promise honored. I'm going to begin reading for us in verse 10. What I want you to focus on as I'm reading is this is Abraham and his wife as they are entering Egypt.

And so I want you to see Abraham's plan as he enters Egypt. Now there was a famine in the land, so Abraham went down to Egypt to search on there, for the famine was severe in the land.

When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai, his wife, I know that you are a woman beautiful in appearance. And when the Egyptians see you, they will say, This is his wife!

And then they will kill me, but they will let you live. Say you are my sister, that it may go well for me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake.

[4 : 06] If I was to retile this section for a children's book, I would title it this, Abram's very bad plan. Abram's plan is this.

He's going to enter the land. He's going to present Sarai, his wife, as his sister, which is a slight measure of truth. Sarai is actually his half-sister. So there's a little bit of truth there, not the right truth.

And then the next thing in Abram's plan is that then the Egyptians won't kill him. And the third thing, Oh, Abram didn't make any provisions for Sarai.

Just going to let it and see how that goes for her. And let's just pause for a moment. So Sarai, as she is coming into Egypt, is at least 65 years old.

So let that just kind of stay with you there. So Sarai, apparently at 65 years old, must be quite the stunner. Abram is worried that people are going to kill him so that they can have his wife.

[5 : 14] Abram's plan unfolds as expected, which is to say that his plan unfolds terribly. Here's what happens with Abram.

Just as they plan, Abram and his household enter into Egypt. And just as he's predicted, the Egyptians see Sarai, and they think she is very beautiful. She is so beautiful, in fact, that we see in verse 15 that she is taken into Pharaoh's house.

And because Sarai is in Pharaoh's house, we see that Pharaoh, we're told in verse 16, dealt well with Abram. So because Sarai is with Pharaoh, Pharaoh says, Hey, Abram, let's have a good relationship.

And as a result of this good relationship, Abram is about collecting sheep, and oxen, and servants, and many other things. And one of the things I want you to see is in verse 16, is that when it says that Abram had sheep and oxen, that word had has the idea of came to be.

So by understanding as it came to be, there is a direct linkage between Pharaoh dealing well with Abram as a result of Sarai being in Pharaoh's house.

[6 : 35] So Abram is collecting these things because Sarai is with Pharaoh. And Sarai, while she's in Pharaoh's house, we're not provided with the exact nature of this relationship between Sarai and Pharaoh.

But we do know this. We do know that Pharaoh thinks she is unmarried, and Sarai has certainly been appropriated into Pharaoh's house.

And Pharaoh has brought her into his household for the purpose of making her his wife. But while Sarai is in Pharaoh's household, Pharaoh and the people with him, we're told, are afflicted with great plagues.

I told you this section was going to be about promise honored. And that's what I want us to see now, is how God honors his promise to Abram. In chapter 12, verse 3, God promised to Abram.

He says, Him who dishonors you, I will curse. And so what we have in this passage is that Pharaoh, unknowingly, has dishonored Abram by taking Abram's wife, and bringing her into his household for the purpose of marrying her.

[7 : 58] And while Pharaoh has made this act unknowingly, God, nevertheless, sends a plague upon Pharaoh and his household. God is honoring that promise that he made, that for someone who dishonors Abram, that God will curse.

Pharaoh eventually learns that Sarai is actually Abram's wife. And we can see his response to this there beginning in verse 19. Pharaoh speaking says, Why did you say, She is my sister, so that I took her for my wife?

Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go. And Pharaoh gave orders concerning him. And they sent him away with his wife and all that he had.

And then Abram and his household depart Egypt with his wife and more enriched at Pharaoh's expense. In this account, we actually find Pharaoh acting more honorably than Abram.

But despite that, God continues to honor his promise that he has given Abram, that he will protect his family, and that those who dishonor Abram, God will curse.

[9 : 20] As we think of our own lives, what I want you to think as you hear this passage today, is I want you to think about Abram. Abram, who is a great standard bearer of faith, a patriarch of the faith.

But we see him in this passage simply acting horribly. There are simply no excuses for Abram's actions in this passage. And what I want us to think about for ourselves is that we all fail.

But we need to not let these faults define us. Each of us has spiritual failures. Each of us has moments in life when we can look back and like Abram say, I've acted poorly before God.

I've acted poorly before the people I love the most. And while there are certainly consequences for our actions, those actions need not define who we become.

It is the schemes of the evil one to remind us of our failures and say that the failures will define us. We can come and look and see the example of Abram here, who despite his failure here, will not let that failure define him.

[10 : 37] In fact, as we see Abram grow and develop, and even in our message today, we see that Abram will be lauded for his faith, his trust in God. So I'd ask you today to not let the failures of your past cast long shadows into your future.

Each Sunday as we come and gather here during our service, we have a time where we're able to confess our sins before God. And we confess with the hope, with the assurance, that we will be forgiven.

Let me read a passage from you from 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The second thing I want us to look at today is to see promise expanded. So the second thing will be promise expanded. Now, Abram is described in chapter 13, verse 2, as very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.

Now, to the extent that his wealth is our ill-begotten gains from Egypt, we do not know. But nevertheless, Abram has many things. And then a dispute arises between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot.

[12 : 03] Lot, who is his nephew, who is part of his family. And there's not enough land for the herdsmen, for Abram and Lot. So Abram offers Lot the solution.

Beginning in verse 8, he says, Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen. For we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you?

Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you go to the right hand, then I will go to the left. So Abram comes and gives Lot the choice of lands.

He says, Lot, we can't be in the same place. It's not working out. It's causing conflict. You just decide where you want to go. If you go that way, I'm going here. If you go here, I'm going the other way.

Lot, your choice to make. And then we see in verse 10 that Lot does indeed make his choice. He chooses the Jordan Valley, which is described as well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord.

[13 : 04] By appearance's sake alone, Lot has chosen the better land. Because he has chosen the land that is well watered, looks very fertile, and looks like it will be a great place for his herd to continue to expand.

But we're told also in the scripture that as Lot moves into the Jordan Valley, he eventually settles in Sodom. And in verse 13, reminds us of what is to come and reminds us what is the case now as Lot has come and settled in Sodom.

Because in verse 13, the men of Sodom were described as wicked and great sinners against the Lord. Now I want us to pause for a moment and I'm going to put this before you, that I want you to be very wary of making decisions based upon appearances alone.

Let us be careful in making decisions based upon appearances. Lot in this case has made his decision upon the land appearing well watered.

It looks good. Yet we find that Lot is going to be living among great sinners against the Lord. This is now the fourth instance we've seen so far in Genesis where people have made choices based upon attractive appearances and they have made the wrong choice.

[14 : 32] So the third time this happened was actually earlier in our passage today where Pharaoh sees the beauty of Sarai and eventually brings a plague upon his house. The second time that we see this decision being made upon appearances alone comes from chapter 6, verse 2.

And I'm going to read that for you. The sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive and they took them as their wives. Any they chose. Immediately after that, God reduces the lifespan of people to 120 years.

There's an immediate consequence that's listed in the scripture after the sons of God began to marry the daughters of man. And in fact, soon after that, the flood happens.

And finally, the first instance where we've seen people making choices based upon appearances comes from the Garden of Eden in chapter 3, verse 6. So there in the garden we see, So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was delightful to the eyes.

She goes about leading her and Adam and Eve then eat of the fruit and the sin enters the world and they're cast out of the garden. All of it started based upon appearances.

[15 : 54] So the caution for us is that we need to be wary of making decisions based upon appearances alone. We might want to attend a school because it has a very chic name.

We might choose a job because the salary begins with a very alluring figure. We might change jobs because that new job offers some snazzy job title.

And it'll be nice to tell the people around you your new snazzy job title. We might date a person because that person has appealing features.

You're looking at that person and you're going, that's a Sarai right there. They look good now. And when they're 65, they're still going to look good. And people will be envious of me. Not the reason to pick out someone to date.

I could go on and on. But the point is that we need to be wary of making decisions based upon appearances. Otherwise, we may find ourselves similar to Lot and that we are surrounded by great wickedness.

[17 : 08] We find that Lot in his choice actually excuse the promise of God. He walks away from the promise of God. Lot's enticement towards the attractive land has led him into the Jordan Valley.

This is a problem because in chapter 12 earlier, Abram's family was traveling through Canaan, the land that God had promised them.

And we read this verse there but I'll repeat it for you now. In chapter 12, verse 7, God says to Abram, to your offspring I give this land, that being Canaan, the land that they are in. And here in chapter 13, we find that they are in the exact same place.

That Abram and Lot are not only back in Canaan but in chapter 13, verse 4, we see to the place where Abram first made an altar. They're back in the exact same place God has given them the promise of the land.

And when that strife emerges between the herdsmen of Lot and Abram, and then Abram gives Lot the choice. Where do you choose? Lot chooses the Jordan Valley which is not part of the promised land of Canaan.

[18 : 13] He has left the promised land and he has chosen the Jordan Valley way over there. They're in the exact same spot of the promise. And Lot says, I don't want what you've given me.

I want something over there because it looks better than what you have given me here. So while Lot goes off into the Jordan Valley, Abram remains in Canaan.

And after Lot leaves and Abram, still in the land of Canaan, we see in verses 14 and 15 that the original promise of God for the land of Canaan to Abram and his family is repeated.

But then we find that promise expanded. That God actually increases the promise that he has given Abram. I want you to see in verse 16 how this promise is expanded.

God says, I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. So the promise expands from land to now, not only land but innumerable progeny.

[19 : 25] And the key point of when this promise came is it was noted specifically after Lot had separated from him. Lot missed out on the expanded promise because he wanted to pursue the enticing land of the Jordan Valley.

Third thing I want us to look at is promised in power. So the third thing will be promised in power. Now chapter 14 begins with a lengthy description of kings and battles.

I'll provide a bit of a summary for you. And so you're certainly welcome to look along in the scripture but I'll provide you a little bit of what's taking place here in this part of the message today.

So here in chapter 14. So what we have is that a group of kings has come from the east and they have come on a lengthy war party. So they are not here close to where Abram and Lot are now.

They've come from a far country and now they have come in on this war party. And they have traveled around the desert and now as they come into this area where Abram and Lot are located they are going to be traveling along the east side of the Jordan River.

[20 : 40] Now Canaan and Abram's location is on the west side of the Jordan River. So Canaan and Abram are unaffected by this war party.

Lot on the other hand we are told that he has journeyed east and he has relocated himself in his journey east into the Jordan Valley which is right in the path of this war party that is coming through.

And this group of kings that is coming through and raiding the land they eventually arrive in Sodom and there in Sodom they claim another victory and in claiming another victory they will also capture Lot.

Let me read for us in chapter 14 verses 11 and 12. So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their provisions and went their way and they also took Lot the son of Abram's brother who was dwelling in Sodom and his possessions and went their way.

We find that Abram then learns of Lot's capture and in this encounter that is taking place there is a great war that is going on.

[21 : 57] In verse 9 it's described as four kings against five. So this is a significant conflict but Abram still has learned of Lot's capture and has decided he is going to do something about it. He is going to go and retrieve Lot and bring him back.

And what I want us to see is that when Abram goes about this process of retrieving Lot from this powerful war party and this powerful group of kings that he is going to be promise empowered.

I want you to think back to one of the original promises that God gave to Abram. God says to Abram I will make of you a great nation. With this idea of Abram who will become a great nation.

Abram begins his expedition into the foray to retrieve Lot, his family member. Now God indeed does say to Abram that I will make you a great nation.

But Abram enters this conflict here to retrieve Lot. He enters this conflict that has involved nine kings and he is described as Abram the Hebrew.

[23 : 08] Now this is a strange terminology to find here in this place. Abram the Hebrew. The reason is that Hebrew refers to descendants of Jacob who will be renamed Israel.

So Jacob Israel have the same name. Hebrew is his descendants. So the Hebrew is really the descendants of Jacob who are the descendants of Israel. the thing is that Jacob that's Abram's grandson.

There aren't Hebrews quite yet. In fact the next person in scripture who is going to be described as a Hebrew is going to be Joseph. That's one of Jacob's sons. So the term Hebrew here in chapter 14 is an anachronism.

It doesn't quite fit in place. But what that does provide us is it does provide us with the description of the nation that Abram's descendants will become. Abram's descendants will become a great nation.

Abram here in chapter 14 though is no great nation. In fact he is described as having 318 trained men.

[24 : 15] That is not a great nation. And when you think of let's go and try and follow a warring group of kings to retrieve part of their bounty, I really feel like if you can count everybody who is going with you, that is probably a bad sign.

So the fact that he knew he had 318, that is almost as disappointing as thinking you do have 318, that you could count them all. We missed one. Oh, we did, didn't we?

318. But Abram with his 318 trained men will enter the fray like a great nation. So Abram pursues the plundering kings all the way to Dan, which is about 100 miles away, probably a little over 100 miles.

And there in pursuing those kings all the way to Dan, he then attacks successfully. And with his small band, Abram somehow becomes the pursuers of these kings.

So these plundering kings from the east, who were once the predator, have now become the prey. And the new apex predator is named Abram.

[25 : 31] Abram, the alpha predator. He's got 318 trained men. He's also got some allies. More importantly though, he has the promise of God.

The promise of God is this, is Abram, I will make you a great nation. Abram, right now, is warring like a great nation. In fact, Abram keeps up the pursuit all the way to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

That's another 50 miles. Abram and his band of people pursue those kings another 50 miles. And in the process, they're able to retrieve Lot and the many possessions.

One of the things I want us to think about is the faith of Abram. It's one of his most notable qualities. He had faith. He truly believes God. When he went to retrieve Lot, he needed this faith.

Without faith, without belief, Abram, the Hebrew, and his 318 train bin had no chance. They had no chance by human standards.

[26 : 40] But with belief, with God's provision, Abram defeated, pursued, and plundered a group that just ransacked numerous nations.

So I ask you today, how will your faith send you forward? We've seen Abram who was able to go forward and accomplish incredible things, an amazing victory.

We know that he is a man of faith. So my question for you is, how will your faith send you forward? The reality is that many followers of God are deficient in faith.

And all of us at some point struggle with faith. as we think of this, of people who are deficient in faith, and for those of us who are struggling with faith, we find ourselves doubting the possible, fearful about the unknown, dwelling upon obstacles.

While we're lacking in trust, we find ourselves waiting for certainty to act, needing more coaxing, needing more assurances, promises, and all the time forgetting the promises of God.

[27 : 56] And when we do that, we are never realizing the greatness that God has planned for us. And when you do that, you're not realizing the greatness that God has planned for you. When I do that, I am not realizing the greatness that God has planned for me.

faithless faithless, and perhaps most disappointing of all, is that when we have people who are faithless, we have followers of God who are faithless, they become anchors to those around them, holding others back with their endless reservations, doubts, fears, and concerns.

And in our church, what we need, we need people who are warriors of faith, people who have great faith, because we need people who will be trailblazers.

Abram was a trailblazer. He left his home country, traveling through the world, and we still find him in this nomadic existence, going into places where God is not known.

He is a trailblazer of the faith, and in our church, we need people who will be trailblazers of the faith. We need people who will go forward by faith.

[29 : 09] Who will make a way for others to know Jesus. And when we look around in our communities, there's not other churches doing this. When we go to where we live, and where we work, and where we attend school, there's not other followers of Jesus there.

We need trailblazers to go and get them. Trailblazers to tell them, come, come and follow Jesus. But if we want to be a trailblazer, like Abram was a trailblazer, we need to have faith.

So my question for you, in this year, how has your faith sent you forward? Over these five, six months, how has your faith sent you forward? What actions have you taken to show faith in God's provision?

fourth point for today is going to be promise guided. So promise guided. So Abram the Hebrew returns from victory, and he is met by two people.

So we see Abram in verse 17, he is met by the king of Sodom. The king of Sodom is king where men were wicked and great sinners against God.

[30 : 27] And at the mention of king Sodom, then Abram is met by another king, king Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and priest of God most high.

And there in verse 18, we find that Melchizedek brings bread and wine for Abram and his people. This bread and wine reflects the basic provisions needed for him. I think in our day, we might think of someone bringing sandwiches and bottled water for us.

And there Melchizedek pronounces a blessing over Abram in verses 19 and 20. And here's the blessing that he provides for Abram. He says, blessed be Abram by God most high, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God most high, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

Abram responds to this blessing and gives a 10% offering, a tenth of everything, to this priest, to Melchizedek. Melchizedek. An interesting thing about Melchizedek is that he seems to appear from nowhere and returns to the same.

There's no background information, no further information is provided on him. When did he become a priest? How did he become a priest? We're left not with the answers to these questions. But we'll revisit this later and we'll talk more of Melchizedek in a little bit.

[31 : 41] And then immediately after Melchizedek, the king of Sodom is brought back into the picture. So once again we've seen the king of Sodom introduced, king Melchizedek comes in place, and now king of Sodom is back here.

And the king of Sodom says to Abram, give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself. Abram refuses the king of Sodom. Abram says to the king of Sodom, he says, I have lifted my hands to the Lord, God most high, possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you say, I have made Abraham rich.

I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten and the share of the men who went with me. What we find is that Abram utterly refuses the king of Sodom.

Abram allows zero relationship between himself and the king of Sodom. There are two kings before Abram, and we almost have this image that's being provided here of these two kings simultaneously vying for Abram's allegiance.

The question is, with which king will Abram associate? As we think of the idea of promise guiding, we see the choice before Abram, thinking of the promise that he has received from God, that God has told Abram, I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.

[33 : 11] between these two kings, which one will provide that? Here's the king of Sodom who has daily provisions, a blessing, and guess what? Abram's still going to have to give him stuff.

And then we have the king of Sodom who lives in the lush land and offers to bestow great wealth on Abram. Which king will receive Abram's allegiance?

Abram roundly rejects the king of Sodom. He says, you're not going to make me rich. I'm not taking anything from you. We have no relationship. So the king of Sodom, that place who was great sinners against God, Abram says, we are not in relationship.

We're certainly not friends and there's going to be no exchange of goods between us. Abram trusts God. He trusts that God will bless him and make his name great.

And since Abram trusts that God will bless him and make his name great, then he doesn't need to rely upon the king that happen. Fifth thing I want us to see is the connection between Jesus and Melchizedek.

[34 : 18] Melchizedek is not mentioned again in the Old Testament. He's mentioned here in Genesis chapter 12. He's not mentioned again in the Old Testament, save for a reference in Psalm 110. But interestingly, the book of Hebrews provides a lengthy description of Melchizedek.

And if you want to turn to Hebrews 7 in your Bible now, speak a second sermon.

I don't think anyone wants that right now. So we're just going to provide a little snippet for you of what's taking place in this uniqueness of Melchizedek and how Jesus is like Melchizedek.

So in just before the last verse of chapter 6, so right before chapter 7, we find that Jesus, Jesus by the way, he's living about 2,000 years after Melchizedek.

So their time frame is nothing at all related. So we can think of us to Jesus, it's kind of like Jesus to Melchizedek. It's a long time. But nevertheless, despite that great distance of time, we describe that Jesus is described as after the order of Melchizedek.

[35 : 30] And that phrasing, after the order of Melchizedek, actually comes from a prophecy in Psalm 110. So it's kind of these things are being brought together. And one of the things I also want us to see in understanding that Jesus as this priest after the order of Melchizedek is the role of a priest.

So a priest is someone who mediates the relationship between God and people. So that's in our church, so we don't have priests. We have pastors who are leading us along the way.

It has to do with our understanding of that relationship between us and God. Whereas in some churches they would have priests, so someone who is mediating that difference. So when Jesus is a priest, Melchizedek is also a priest.

They're mediating the relationship between God and people. So Hebrews 6 explains the uniqueness of Melchizedek. Melchizedek is indeed a unique figure in the scripture. So one of the things with Melchizedek, his name means righteousness.

He's the king of righteousness. Melchizedek is also the king of Salem. Salem means peace. Melchizedek is the king of peace. Melchizedek lacks a genealogy.

[36 : 42] There's no beginning, no begin, no begin, no end. And it's said that he continues as a priest forever, like the Son of God. In fact, Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 is perceived as greater than Abraham.

Abraham and Abram, our character from today, are the exact same person. So Melchizedek is perceived as greater than Abram. And that's almost a sacrilegious claim to make at this point in time.

In fact, Jesus insinuates his superiority to Abram, to Abraham, and people start to get rocks to begin about the process of killing him. So Melchizedek is greater than Abram, because Abram has subjected himself to him by pain, a tenth of those spoils, and also Abram's lineage, because the people who follow Abram are part of his lineage, and that's part of the nation of Israel.

They have subjected themselves through Abraham also to Melchizedek. We see that Melchizedek is greater than the great priest out of the law. So the law has provided priests through the line of Aaron, but Melchizedek is greater than these.

We see that Jesus is like Melchizedek. And Hebrews 7 begins explaining that Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek. This is specifically described as in the order of Melchizedek.

[38 : 11] He is not a priest of the law. That's what Hebrews would say. Jesus is not in the line of priests in the law, but rather a priest of the order of Melchizedek. And so Jesus doesn't come from a priestly lineage.

He comes from Judah, who is not the priest line. Levi is the priest line. And Jesus becomes a priest, not because of his lineage, not because of his birth, but through the power of an indestructible life, like Melchizedek.

And we see here in Hebrews they would say that Jesus has fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 110. name. Thus the prophecy is this. It's repeated here in Hebrews 7 21.

The Lord has shown, and while not change his mind, you are a priest forever. Jesus is a priest who is able to continue forever.

Some priests will die, other priests will die. Jesus, however, will not. And as so, he is able to constantly bring us to God, to stand in the way, so that we have a path before God, to mediate that relationship that we have with God.

[39 : 22] Jesus serves forever as our priest, mediating our relationship with God. And because of the righteousness that Jesus has, he can establish peace between God and us.

As we think of our own lives, we like Abraham, have two kings vying for our allegiance. Abraham had, Melchizedek, the king of Sodom, both vying for his allegiance.

We are on that end. But Jesus, who is in the order of Melchizedek, Jesus, the king of righteousness, the king of peace, he stands ready as a priest to bring us to the most high God.

Jesus comes offering our provisions of bread and wine. God. And as Abraham came to Melchizedek, we too must come to Jesus with an honor.

We must come giving of ourselves, giving of our life. But Jesus stands ready to receive us. We're told in Romans 10 verse 9, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[40 : 34] Jesus stands ready to receive us. But there is another king who wants our allegiance. And that other king is the king of Sodom. Just like the king of Sodom enticed Abraham, and just like the king of Sodom was able to entice other people such as Lot with that lush land, the king of Sodom stands there ready to entice us now.

The king of Sodom entices us with that appealing and attractive looking future. Offers a chance to indulge in our baseless passions. But like Sodom itself, this king of Sodom, this vile king, is filled with sin and death.

And like Sodom takes destruction, this king of Sodom offers us a path that will lead to our own destruction. Wow. King of Sodom, the land looks pretty good now.

It looks pretty good now, but it will lead to a path of destruction. So which king will gain your fealty? Will it be King Jesus, who stands ready to receive it?

Or it will be the king of Sodom, who offers a temporarily enticing place, but a place that leads to destruction?

[41 : 52] These two kings are at war. King Jesus and the king of Sodom are at war. They cannot be reconciled. There are no dual allegiances allowed.

So which will gain your allegiance? The good news for you is that King Jesus is ready to welcome you. We are told, if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So as you think of that battle that's taking place within your own life now, which king will gain your allegiance? You cannot have hope. There is King Jesus, for the kingdom of Sodom.

Let me pray this. God, we become thankful for the great example of faith that we have in our favor.

God, pray that we too might be able to model that faith and live out that faith in our love. God, we pray for each of us that indeed our allegiance would go to Jesus.

[43 : 04] God, for those who are struggling with that decision this morning, God, we pray that your spirit would continue to minister to them, and continue to show them the truth, God, that perhaps even this morning, decisions might be made to follow Jesus.

We ask all of this now. Amen. Amen.