

King Of The Hill

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[0:00] Another chapter in the life of faith as we see it in Abram. There are all kinds of different places that I'll be reading tonight.

Strange places to us. The important thing is for us to know that these places were as real as Wyatt and Woodland. And these kings are as real as our president and the king of Syria and the others who are ruling today.

And we have here lessons for us from the things that happened in the past. Genesis 14, the word of God reads, At this time, Amraphel, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Elasser, Keter-Lehomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Goem, went to war against Bera, king of Sodom, Bersha, king of Gomorrah, Shinar, king of Adma, Shemibur, king of Zubon, and the king of Bela, that is Zoar.

All these latter kings joined forces in the valley of Siddam, the Salt Sea. For 12 years they had been subject to Keter-Lehomer, but in the 13th year they rebelled.

In the 14th year, Keter-Lehomer and the kings allied with him, went out and defeated the Rephaites, the Ashton, in Ashtoreth, Carnaim, the Zuzites, in Ham, the Emities, in Shava, Kiriathayim, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as Elperan, near the desert.

[1:35] Then they turned back and went to En-Mishpat, that is Kadesh, and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites, who were living in Hazazan-Tamar.

Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Adma, the king of Zubon, and the king of Bela, that is Zoar, marched out and drew up their battle lines in the valley of Siddam against Keter-Lehomer, king of Elam, Tidal king of Goem, Amrathal king of Shinar, and Ariat king of Ellessar.

Four kings against five. Now the valley of Siddam was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them, and the rest fled to the hills.

The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food, then they went away. They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Escol and Anar, all of whom were allied with Abram.

[2:49] When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

During the night, Abram divided his men to attack them, and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

After Abram returned from defeating Keter-Lehomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the valley of Sheva, that is, the king's valley. Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine.

He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, Blessed be Abram by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. The king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself.

[4:03] But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have raised my hand to the Lord God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, I made Abram rich.

I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me, to Aner, Escol, and Mamre. Let them have their share.

Well, everyone knows how to play King of the Hill. I think they play that in Switzerland. I'm not sure. Maybe they don't. Everyone knows you scrap and you fight and you claw.

And then for a moment, a brief moment, you're on the pile, you're on top. It's your moment of glory. The King of the Hill is not just a game that we play as children, though.

It takes on a different form when you're older. So we get a promotion and we want the trumpets to play. Here comes the king as we walk down the hall.

[5:17] We have a great game. We make the winning shot. And we are kings for a day. I remember, I don't have any of those sorts of things in my history, but one time in high school chemistry class, we were studying valent shells, which none of you, I'm sure, really know about.

There were the electrons spin around the nucleus of the atom. And the test came back and everyone bombed except for me. And I got a perfect score.

And I was king, king of the chemistry class. It's not a very high hill, not a very useful hill, but I was king for a day.

In today's story, Abraham is king for a day. And we've seen him in famine, and we've seen him in prosperity, and now we see him in success.

Success is a danger in its own way, isn't it? Proverbs 27, 21, A crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

[6:24] When we are in the situation where we've had a great success, we're king for a day, it's a furnace where our faith and what we're made of is tested.

Well, tonight we're going to see Abraham in the furnace of praise and how he survived it. You're going to have good days in your life. And the question is, how is your faith going to stay intact in that situation?

And along the way, we're going to see two brilliant, wonderful pictures of Jesus Christ. So let's get going. The first 12 verses of chapter 14 are a real doozy, aren't they?

I'm not going to read them. I've always wondered under what circumstances I might become disabled doing this job. And these verses would probably injure me in some way if I were to repeat them.

So let me summarize the passage simply. There was an alliance of kings from up north, sort of where Iraq and Orion are today, where Abram came from.

[7:31] And they got together and they conquered, they moved down into Canaan and they conquered the area there. They subjected all these little city-states and then they made them pay tribute.

And among all the city-states that they had conquered, there were five cities on the plain. Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, Zoboam, and Zoar. In a few chapters, God is going to destroy all of these cities except for Zoar.

But right now they're rich, they're prosperous, and apparently they had gathered enough strength so that 13 years after their subjugation, they got together and they said, enough is enough.

We're going to throw these guys off. We'll get rid of them. And so they rebelled. It was a revolutionary war of sorts. So the next year, Cedamar, and he's the head of this alliance of the north, he decided to do something about it.

And he gathered together his allies and they made their way down into Canaan. Now, at first, they didn't go directly for the cities on the plain because that would have created a tactical problem.

[8:47] They decided that they needed to secure their position first. And so every good general knows you don't want to fight a war on two fronts. And so that was Hitler's great undoing.

He thought he could take care of the Soviet Union while in the east, while in the west. You know, he could hopefully defend himself against the British and the other allies. Well, that was his big mistake because when you have a war on two fronts, it's extremely difficult to fight.

Cedamar knows this. He doesn't want to have a war on two fronts. And so he takes care of these cities and these groups that would be in his rear when he went to deal with the cities on the plain, these five rebel cities.

And he crushes the men, these other cities, the Zuzites, the giants who were the Rephites, the Emites, the Horites, all these other people. He crushes them, routes them.

His army is powerful and strong and deals with them. And then finally, nine kings meet in battle. It's four against five. And Cedalamar, who's one of the four kings and his group, destroys the armies of the cities of the plain.

[10:02] So Sodom, Gomorrah, and the rest. And then the plundering begins. Now, plundering for a common soldier in ancient war was like payday.

It's what you fought for. Everything else was subsistence living, but when you were able to plunder, that's where you made your money. And so the four kings, and that means all the people under them, verse 11 says, seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and their people and their women, and they went away.

They went back up north after subduing these five city-states. But they took one item too many.

They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom.

Last time we saw Lot, he was living by Sodom. But now, along the way, he's in Sodom. He's moved into the city.

And there's a lesson there, isn't there? It's very easy, once we've compromised with the world, to move from living by the world into moving into the world.

[11:20] And parents, that's an excellent object lesson for you to teach your teenagers. Jesus said, remember Lot's wife.

Well, we need to remember Lot too. He has a story of a man who gave himself to this world and ended up suffering for it. That's not the main point of the passage, but put that in your minds, parents.

Speak to your teenagers about it. Back to our story. Someone escaped and ran back to Abraham. And verse 14 says, when Abram heard that Lot had been taken, he called out his 318 trained men and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Now, Dan is in the northern part of Canaan. And so, he caught them right at the edge of what's going to be the promised land. And we just saw, and it's been making news constantly, how the SEAL team came in and in the middle of the night, they snuck into the Osama bin Laden compound and they destroyed him and the group there.

Just in that same way, in a very daring nighttime raid, Abraham divides his forces and he goes in and he routes Cato Lamar and the people with him.

[12:42] And Abraham was able to recover all the goods and Lot. He's able to recover Lot and all the women that were with him and all the women and people of Sodom. And so, this is Abraham's great moment of triumph.

Remember, we're talking about what do you do when you're king of the hill for a day? Well, Abraham has this moment where he's on top. He stands with kings. He's on the mountain. He's the greatest among the great. This whole chapter is portraying Abraham as a king. We're going to see him as a priest later, but here he is living and working and ruling and conquering over kings.

And we're going to see how he survives that with his faith intact in a few minutes. But I want to stop right here and let's look and see what a powerful picture of Christ Abraham is.

The Old Testament has two different ways, two basic different ways of revealing Jesus to us. The first is, I think, what we normally think about, predictive prophecy.

[13:57] And so, there's this foretelling of what he's going to do and what he's going to be like. And so, the virgin will be with child. Or, the king will come humble riding on a donkey.

And we know that the Lord Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. But there's a whole other way that the Old Testament reveals Christ to us. And he's all over in the Old Testament in types and shadows. There's these little vignettes, these little pictures, these little just exposés of what he's going to be like, what he's going to do. And it's not put out there explicitly.

Rather, it's embedded in the lives of his people and in their actions. And so, Moses gave the bread. He was God's instrument in the desert to the Israelites.

But Jesus, he says, I'm the one who's greater than Moses. I give you the living bread, the true bread. David is a good shepherd. And Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

[15:07] the Passover lamb is a picture of Jesus who gives his life as the lamb of God for the sins of the world.

One of our, one of my family's children's story Bible says, every story whispers his name. Sometimes it's louder than a whisper. But you can see him there.

And we see Jesus here in the life of Abraham. Abraham. Abraham is this mighty conqueror, this triumphant king. And in that picture, for a moment, you see your Lord.

Listen to what Charles Spurgeon said. He preached a verse on, in this passage, he didn't preach the whole chapter, but listen to what he said. What a splendid type is Abraham in the narrative before us of the Lord Jesus Christ.

our Lord Jesus Christ in the abundance of his love had taken us to be his brothers. Remember, Abraham and Lot were like brothers. But we, through our sin, had gone into the land of Sodom. [16:17] And Jesus Christ dwelt alone in his safety and happiness enjoying the presence of God. And the host of our enemies with terrible force and cruel fury carried us away captives.

We were violently born away with all the goods which we possessed into a land of forgetfulness and captivity forever. Christ, who had lost nothing by this, nevertheless, being a brother born for adversity, pursued our haughty foes.

He overtook them. He struck them with his mighty hand. He took their spoil and he returned in crimson clothes, leading captivity, captive. He restored that which he did not take away.

Abram was that righteous man raised in the east to whom God gave his enemies as driven stubble to his bow. And so the Lord Jesus has driven our enemies like chaff over to the wind.

For they fled at the presence of Jehovah Jesus. And by the valor of the atoning Lamb, they have been utterly broken in pieces forever.

[17:28] forever. So do you see the similarities? Abraham was so gracious to Lot. He could have said, that's what you get for living in Sodom.

Remember, when we were picking where we wanted to live, you chose where you wanted to live. And you play with the fire and you're going to get burned. He could have said that, but in grace, Abraham went and rescued Lot at great danger to himself.

There's no sure thing that Abraham would survive this except for God's promise. He did that to rescue Lot despite Lot's sin.

Just like Jesus. Think about how powerful Abraham was in his attack. And what about Jesus? Satan was a strong man.

And he had his armor on and his weapons around him. We were safely stowed in his house. And how is, how are you going to break into a man's house when he's a strong man and armored?

[18:39] Well, Jesus came, the stronger man, and by the valor of the atoning Lamb, he crushed Satan. Satan. And so, he threw our enemy down.

And so, in the life of Abraham, we see a picture of Jesus. We get a glimpse of what he's like and what he's like for us, our mighty, conquering rescuer. We're going to see another picture of Jesus in a little bit, but there's more of the story to tell.

In verse 17 and on, it records this meeting between three kings. Abraham, who's king for a day, king of Sodom, and then Melchizedek, king of Salem.

And they meet in the Valley of Kings. But let's talk about Melchizedek first. His name literally means king of righteousness.

He was the king of Salem, which is Jerusalem. Salem is the Hebrew word for peace. So he's the king of righteousness and he's the king of peace.

[19:48] Verse 18 says, he was the priest of the, he was a priest of the, of God most high. Now that is really something and it would have been remarkable for an Old Testament person to have read this passage.

He was a king and a priest. In the Old Covenant, God made it clear that kings and priests were to be kept separate. Whenever a king decided to act like a priest, God took action.

So Hezekiah one time decided that he wanted to be a priest and remember Hezekiah was a good king. He was a righteous king but he overstepped his authority. He took too much responsibility upon himself and he decided that he was going to act like a priest and God cursed him with leprosy. So there's the strict division in the Old Covenant between the kings and the priests. The kings were from the tribe of Judah and the priests were from the tribe of Judah. The priests were from the tribe of Levi.

They didn't mix. But this man, Melchizedek, was both a priest and a king. And even more than that, he blessed Abram.

[21:02] Blessed be Abram by God most high, creator of heaven and earth. Now, that's amazing because as the book of Hebrews says, without a doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater person.

Now, Abraham was the greatest figure of the Old Testament. He's the father of Israel. And here he is on his greatest day.

He doesn't walk on the high hills any higher than what he walks on today. And so, here he is, the greatest man in the Old Testament, on his greatest day, in the middle of his greatest triumph, and he meets someone even greater.

The author of Hebrews says, just think of how great he was. Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder. Without a doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater.

Now, I think it was because Abraham met Melchizedek at the moment of his great triumph that he was able to do what he does next.

[22:20] Meeting Melchizedek helped Abraham to do what he did next. Now, remember, the king of Sodom is there. He's at this meeting of the kings. And so, he says to Abraham, let's make a deal.

You can have the goods, give me the people, and keep the goods for yourself. And it's a pretty generous offer. We won't fight about what belongs to who.

Instead of fighting over who gets the spoils, the king of Sodom says, here you go, you just give me the people. Give me my people back. And it's a generous offer. It's a tempting offer.

Didn't Abraham already say no to the riches of Sodom once? He did. Last chapter, he said, no, I'll go with this land instead. Didn't he let Lot have the first choice?

He took the short end of the stick. And he could have said to himself, look, God's blessing me. I made that decision earlier, and now it's coming back, and it's blessing upon my head.

[23:24] Providence is saying, go ahead and take what the king of Sodom is offering. God's rewarding me for my faithfulness. And sometimes we can reason like that, can't we?

We take providence as the guide instead of God's word or faith. So did Abraham think that way? Well, it takes more than providence to know God's will.

And so he said there, no way, I'm not taking any of this stuff. If I took it, someday someone, and you, king of Sodom, will be able to say, I was the one that made Abraham rich.

So what was going on in Abraham's heart? At that moment, when he said no to the offer of the king of Sodom, well, he was living on God's promise.

At that moment, he was saying, you know what, I want God to make me rich. I'm not going to settle for anyone else except for God making me rich, and I know God will make me rich one day.

[24:34] God can bless me in his own time and in his own way without man's help, and so I don't need you, and I don't want your stuff. Now, if you look closely, you can see behind the king of Sodom's tempting offer, the same clause that held out the fruit to Adam and Eve, and the same clause that held out the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, and he said, here's a shortcut.

This is the easy way. This is the quick way. You don't have to wait for God. If you do it my way, it will be so easy, and you can have it now.

But Abraham didn't take it. Didn't. By faith, Abraham held out for God. He waited for God, and it was his faith that overcame the world.

The same temptation is offered to you. Every day, wait on God, wait for God's blessing, live on God's promise, or get what you can get now.

In Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan tells the pilgrim going to Interpreter's house. In Interpreter's house, Pilgrim saw two boys.

[26:04] Interpreter took Pilgrim into a little room, and in that room, each one in their own chair were two boys. The older was named Passion, and the younger Patience.

And Passion is really agitated. He's really discontent. He's throwing a fit. And Patience is waiting calmly and quietly. And Christian asked, why is Passion so unhappy?

Why is he so agitated and discontented? And Interpreter's answer, the governor wants him to wait for his best things until next year, at the beginning of next year. But he wants it all now.

Parents, do you have children like that, that want what they want now? Well, that's Passion. But Patience is willing to wait. Now, just then, someone came into the room, and they put a small bag of treasure down at Passion's feet.

And with glee and with joy, Passion took the treasure, and he started laughing at Patience. But in a little bit, all of his treasure was gone.

[27:10] And he was left like the prodigal son, with nothing but rags. Interpreter said, these two boys are pictures, Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of that which is to come.

Passion wanted it all now. He wanted everything now. And that's the men of this world. Interpreter says, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, means more to them than all of God's promises. But all their treasures take wings and fly away. And on the day when it matters most, they have nothing.

Now, which one are you? Are you Passion? Do you have to have your good things now? Or are you patience? Abraham was willing to wait.

But how? How is he able to? How can that be? How can you wait? How can your faith survive? That's an important question.

[28:22] Because it does me no good to tell you to wait if you don't know how to. If you can't do it. So here's the secret of Abraham's success.

He's on the mountain. He's having his day in the sun. He has his great victory. And it could have been so easy. Can't you feel that? It could have been so easy for him to say, why not take it now? Look what I've done. Look what I've accomplished. But just at that moment, he meets Melchizedek. He meets Melchizedek.

He met someone greater than him. And not just a greater person from a worldly point of view. He met a living, breathing picture of Jesus Christ.

So think again with me about Melchizedek. He was the king of peace, king of Salem. He's the king of righteousness. But who is the king of righteousness?

[29:30] Who is the prince of peace? It's Jesus. Jesus. And who truly feeds his people? Melchizedek came out with food and wine.

Jesus offers his blood and his body. It's Jesus that gives his body as food, as the true and living bread.

Jesus is both king and priest. And he's not an ordinary priest like all the other old covenant priests. more than that, he wasn't a priest in the order of Levi.

He's a totally different kind of priest and totally different kind of order altogether. Psalm 110 speaking about Jesus says, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So Jesus wasn't just some ordinary priest. He was in the order of Melchizedek.

[30:31] But what does that mean? What does that mean? And what does that mean for you? It's just this. Jesus priesthood will never end.

It will never end. Melchizedek, his birth and his death are neither recorded. Neither of those are recorded in scripture. It doesn't say that Melchizedek inherited his priesthood from his father or from his ancestry.

And when he died, it doesn't say that it passed on to one of his children. He was something all together by himself. He just comes on the pages of scripture just for a moment and then he's gone and he's like this immortal picture.

Never being born, never dying. I'm not saying that he actually lived forever or was never born and he wasn't Jesus. But as he's presented on scripture in scripture, he's this picture of Jesus who doesn't live, who doesn't die.

And so Melchizedek's priesthood rested in who he was, in his person, in his office. And Jesus is that kind of priest.

[31:41] He doesn't die and then have to give up the priesthood to his children and he didn't receive it because his fathers died. Hebrews says Jesus lives forever. He has a permanent priesthood.

Therefore, this is where it connects to you, your life. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

On your best day, on your best day, what do you need to resist Satan's temptations and the world's temptations and hold on and still trust?

Well, you need to see Jesus, your king of righteousness, your prince of peace, your priest. Looking at Christ is the only thing that will keep you sane, that will keep you humble, that will keep you believing, keep you hoping in your great day of triumph when you're king for a day.

He's at the right hand of the Father interceding for you. He's there and you need him to be there. You need him to be there on your best day, believer.

[33:08] You need Jesus praying for you. On your best day, you need him interceding for you. On your best day, on your most righteous, holy, good, victorious, great day, you need Jesus being there, being your righteousness, your holiness, your salvation before the Father.

Without him, your best day, your most holy day, you would be in hell. You would be in hell without him there.

And your reward is sure. Your inheritance is guaranteed. The promises of God are rock solid because Jesus is there for you.

And so you can say, you know what, my best things are ahead. And I'm not talking about the riches of this world. My best thing is Christ. And in him, I have everything else.

And on your worst day, dear believer, on your saddest, hardest, most sinful day, he is there, bearing those wounds that say, forgive, oh, forgive, they cry.

[34:23] Don't let that ransom sinner die. On your worst day, dear believer, you can look up and see Jesus there. He's your Melchizedek then.

He lives forever to intercede for those who come to God through him. And he's your king of righteousness on your worst day. He's your king of peace on your worst day.

He's established that peace between you and God. And so on your worst day, because of him and because of his ministry to you from the father's right hand, you are not God's enemies.

You are not God's enemy and you are his friend through the blood of Jesus. And so your inheritance is sure. You don't have to now that you've stumbled into sin, now that you've stumbled into weakness, you don't have to fret and worry and work and try to get something from this world or something for yourself because Jesus is there for you.

Guaranteeing your inheritance. And he's there to forgive you and he's there to give you grace in your hour of need. Now, if you're outside of Christ, if you make no profession, confession, if you see if you're an unbeliever, and I hope you know who you are, on your great days, on your great days, have you given glory to God?

[36:01] Have you given Him honor? You've lived for the world. You've been a man of this world. And at the end, if you keep going your way, you'll end up just like passion with nothing but rags.

You've dishonored God for living for this world instead of living for His promises. You've called God a liar just by not believing what He says about heaven, about what He says about Jesus, about what He says about you.

So you've dishonored Him, you've disobeyed Him, and yet Jesus died to save sinners. And so the gospel comes to you in the middle of all that dishonoring and disobeying.

He was a priest like no other. He was like no other. He didn't offer up another. He didn't give another person or another animal's blood or something like that.

He offered Himself. take me instead of them. Take my life and spare their life.

[37:14] And so He offered Himself up once and for all for sinners. And God was so satisfied with that sacrifice that He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and put His seal of approval on what Jesus has done.

And then He exalted Him all the way to His right hand where now He ever lives to intercede for those who will come to God through Him. And so you can be saved.

You can be saved. Jesus is at the right hand of God for sinners who will come. He's ready to receive sinners there now.

God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. Do you need repentance?

It's in Jesus' hands. Do you need forgiveness? It's in Jesus' hands. Don't wait a moment. Simply believe.

[38:22] Believe in that promise. Believe in what Jesus has done and you will be saved. let's pray. Heavenly Father, it is because of Jesus that we have the courage and the confidence to come into Your presence now.

We are sinners one and all. No one knows our sins like us. No one knows my sin like me.

Thank You, Lord Jesus, that Your blood is sufficient to wash away all of our sins, to cleanse all those who will come to God through You. Lord Jesus, send abroad Your mighty Spirit and call sinners to Jesus.

Make Jesus so real, their needs so real, that they would come flying to Jesus Christ to be saved. saved. And I pray for my brothers and sisters here.

The world can be so tempting. The world can be so easily deceived.

[39 : 45] It can be so cunning. And Satan's traps are so secret and hidden. I pray, Lord, that You would give us open eyes to flee this world and run and make our way looking to Jesus, making our way to the heavenly city.

Lord Jesus, thank You that right now You rule and You are a priest for us. And that on our great days, we know we need to look higher and there we see someone who is greater than us and who we desperately need to rescue us.

Lord Jesus, be that mighty King. Be that great high priest for all Your people. Give us encouragement in our faith. Make these things real to our hearts that we might live them out, that we might teach them, that we might, out of the overflow of the goodness of the gospel, we might speak to others.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.