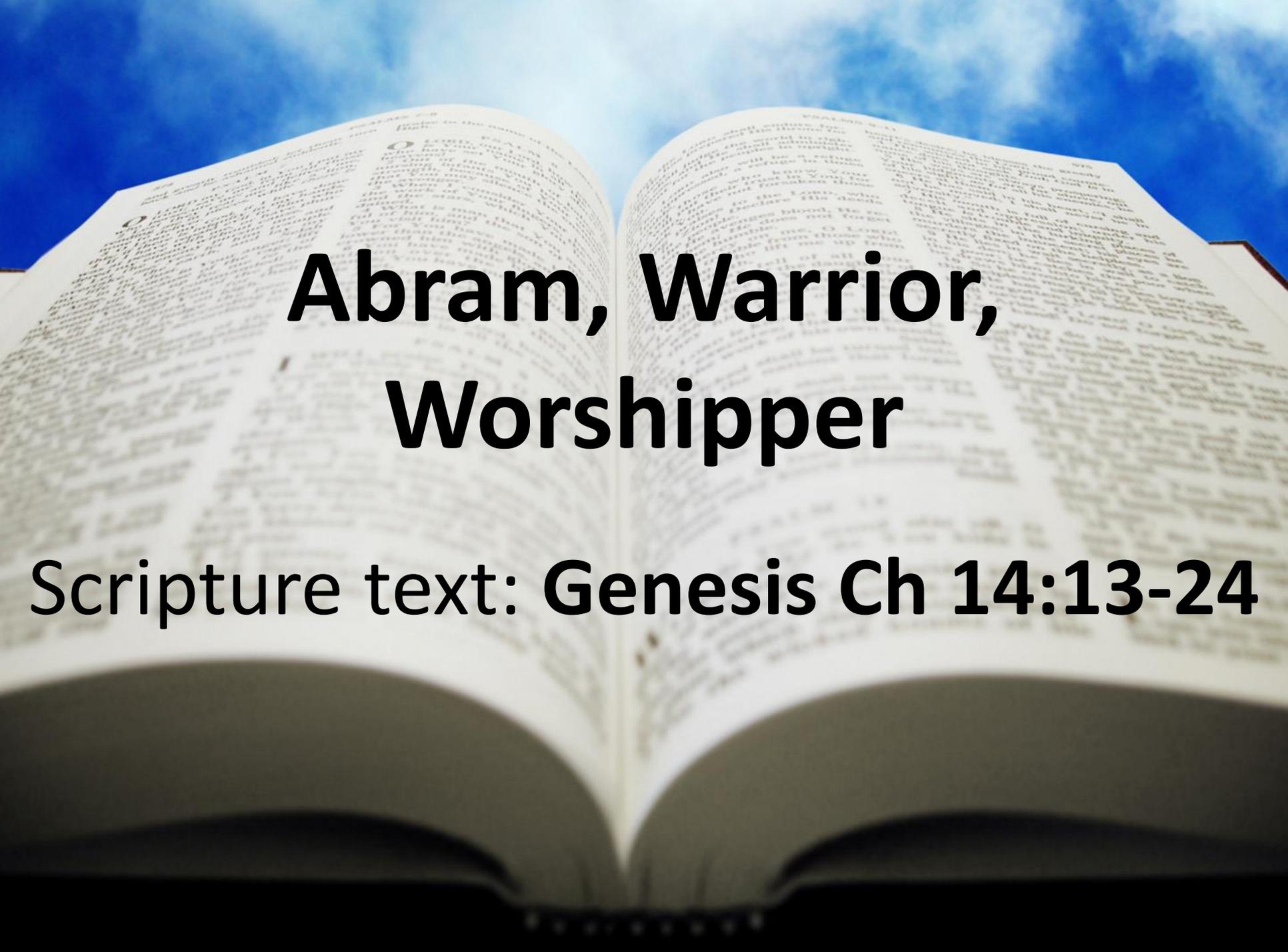


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

Abram, Warrior, Worshipper

Scripture text: Genesis Ch 14:13-24

Genesis 14:13-15 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

His attitude. Abraham did not get involved in the war until he heard that Lot had been captured, and then he began to act. Abraham was separated, but not isolated; he was independent, but not indifferent. In fact, he and some of the local sheiks had formed an alliance for just such emergencies. He was “Abram, the Hebrew”, which means “the outsider, the person with no secure place in society.” He was not “Abraham the hardhearted.” He was a “pilgrim and stranger” in the land, but that was no excuse for inaction.

While believers must not compromise with the unsaved in matters of spiritual walk and ministry, they may cooperate when it comes to caring for humanity and “promoting the general welfare.” When you see that people are in trouble, you don’t ask them for a testimony before helping them. Sacrificial service is one way of showing the love of Christ to others. If Christians don’t carry their share of the common burdens of life, how can they be the salt of the earth and the light of the world?

For example, **Joseph served in Egypt**, and God used him to preserve his family and the Jewish nation. **Nehemiah served a heathen king**, yet God used the authority and resources of that king to enable Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. **Esther** was a Jewess **married to a Gentile ruler**, and God used her to protect the Jewish people from almost certain annihilation. **Daniel in Babylon never compromised his convictions**, but he did assist several rulers and was greatly used by God. We may cooperate with different people at different times to achieve different purposes, **but we should always be conscious of our obligation to glorify God.**

Abraham treated his nephew with love, both when he gave Lot first choice of the land (Gen. 13:9) and when he risked his own life to rescue him. Lot had not been kind to Abraham, and Abraham had every excuse to let his nephew suffer the painful consequences of his own stupid decisions. But Lot was his “brother” (14:16), so Abraham practiced brotherly love and overcame evil with good (Rom. 12:17–21; Gal. 6:1–2).

Romans 12:17-21 Repay no one evil for evil, but **give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.** If possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably with all.** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "**Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.**" To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; **for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.**" Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Galatians 6:1-2 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

His army. Though a man of peace, Abraham was prepared for war. He didn't fight from selfish motives to get personal gain; he fought because he loved Lot and wanted to help him. When you consider the characteristics of Abraham's army, you see what it takes in the spiritual realm to have victory over the world.

(1) They were born in his house (v. 14).

Spiritually speaking, this reminds us that “whatever is born of God overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4). Our first birth made us children of Adam, and he was a loser; but our second birth makes us children of God, and Jesus Christ is the Victor. He has overcome every enemy (Eph. 1:19–23), and He shares His victory with all who will trust Him. “And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Ephesians 1:19-23 and what is the **immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe**, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and **seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places**, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

(2) They were armed (v. 14). It takes more than zeal and courage to win a war: You must also have effective equipment. The Christian soldier must wear the whole armor of God and use the spiritual weapons God has provided (Eph. 6:10–18). Our weapons are spiritual, not fleshly (2 Cor. 10:3–5); and we use them in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God and prayer are our two most effective weapons (Acts 6:4), and we must use them by faith. As the well-known song expresses it: **“Put on the Gospel armor/Each piece put on with prayer.”**

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

(3) They were trained (v. 14). No matter how good their equipment is, **if the soldiers are not trained, they will be easily defeated.** One of the purposes of the local church is to train God's people how to use the Bible effectively, **how to pray, how to recognize the enemy, and how to follow orders as soldiers in the army of Christ.** The better you know your Bible, the better you are equipped to fight the battle (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.**

The Captain of your salvation wants to train you and “make you perfect [complete]”, and the Greek word means “to equip an army.” If we fail in the battle, it is not the fault of the equipment or the strategy of our Captain. Something is wrong with the soldiers.

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(4) They believed in their leader. Abraham and his allies rode 120 miles to make a surprise attack on the four kings, and they won a complete victory. Apparently Abraham got his directions from the Lord, so **the whole enterprise was a victory of faith.** The spiritual application is clear: **If God's people expect to defeat their enemies, they must trust the Lord and obey His orders.** This is how Joshua conquered the Promised Land and David defeated the enemies of Israel, and **this is the way the church must fight today.**

(5) They were united. There were not three armies with three leaders; **there was one army, and Abraham was in charge.** If God's people today **were united in love, what victories we would win!** We sing, "Like a mighty army/Moves the church of God"; but the church is very unlike an army, especially when it comes to the discipline of marching together. "The trouble with the church," said a pastor friend, **"is that there are too many generals and not enough privates!"**

(6) They were single-minded. Their goal was not personal revenge or private gain, but **victory over the enemy so that the captives might be freed.** A double-minded soldier **is destined for defeat.** *2 Timothy 2:4* *No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.* When you remember Achan (Josh. 7), Samson (Jud. 13–16), and Saul (1 Sam. 15), you see how true that statement is.

His achievement. Abraham and his allies were so strong that they chased the enemy for 100 miles, freed all the captives, and recovered all the spoils.

Did Abraham and his worldly nephew have a long talk as they rode back?

Did Lot keep the promises he made while he was in danger?

Did he make any promises to Abraham?

We cannot answer those questions, but we do know this: **Neither the Lord's chastening nor the Lord's goodness in rescuing Lot did him any good.** The goodness of God should have led him to repentance (Luke 15:14–19; Rom. 2:4); but instead of repenting, **Lot returned to Sodom.** He could have been reunited with Abraham, but **he chose to go back to sin.**

These are choices that each and everyone of us makes, what will you choose?

“Abraham was the father of the faithful,” wrote Alexander Whyte in his classic Bible Characters. “And Lot, his nephew, was the father of all such as are scarcely saved.” Some will be saved “so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:15), but it is far better to have “an abundant entrance” into the Lord’s everlasting kingdom.

2 Peter 1:11 For in this way there will be **richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:12-16 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- **each one's work will become manifest**, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and **the fire will test what sort of work each one has done**. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire**. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Genesis 14:17-20 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And **Melchizedek king of Salem** brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "**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!**" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Genesis 14:21-24 Gen 14:21 And the **king of Sodom** said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." But **Abram said to the king of Sodom**, "I have lifted my hand 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 should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."

A new battle. Sometimes you face your greatest dangers after you have won a battle. It was after the capture of Jericho that Israel's self-confidence led it into defeat at Ai (Josh. 7); and after his success on Mount Carmel, Elijah panicked and ran away in fear (1 Kings 19).

No wonder the saintly Scottish pastor Andrew Bonar (1810–1892) said, **“Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.”**

When Abraham returned from battle, he was met by two kings: Bera, King of Sodom (“burning”), and Melchizedek, King of Salem (“peace”). Bera offered Abraham all the spoils in return for the people, while **Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine**. Abraham rejected Bera’s offer but accepted the bread and wine from Melchizedek and **gave him tithes of the spoils**. **All of this is symbolic and presents some important spiritual truths that you should understand and apply today.**

Abraham had to choose between two kings who represented two opposite ways of life. Sodom was a wicked city (Gen. 13:13; Ezek. 16:49–50), and Bera represented the dominion of this world system with its appeal to the flesh (Eph. 2:1–3). **Bera means “gift,”** suggesting that the world bargains for your allegiance. But **Sodom means “burning,”** so be careful how you choose! If you bow down to Bera, everything you live for will burn up one day. That’s what happened to Lot!

Melchizedek means “**king of righteousness,**” and **Salem means “peace.”** Hebrews 7 and Psalm 110 both connect Melchizedek with Jesus Christ, the “King of peace” and the “King of righteousness” (85:10). Like Melchizedek in Abraham’s day, Jesus Christ is our King-Priest in heaven, **enabling us to enjoy righteousness and peace as we serve Him** (Isa. 32:17; Heb. 12:11). Certainly **we can see in the bread and wine a reminder of our Lord’s death for us on the cross.**

Isaiah 32:16-17 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And **the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.**

Hebrews 12:11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

So, when Abraham rejected Bera and accepted Melchizedek, he was making a statement of faith, saying, **“Take the world, but give me Jesus.”** Lot should have made the same decision, but he chose to return to his life of compromise.

May we all make the same choice ... Daily!!!

Choose Life ... Choose Jesus Christ!!!

Why would it have been wrong for Abraham to take the spoils? After all, didn't he risk his life and the lives of his retainers to defeat the invading kings and rescue the prisoners? Legally, Abraham had every claim to the spoils; but morally, they were out of bounds.

Many things in this world are legal as far as courts are concerned but morally wrong as far as God's people are concerned.

Furthermore, before Abraham could take the spoils, he had to agree to restore the people of Sodom to their king who said, “Give me the persons”. Just as God wants to use human bodies for His glory (Rom. 12:1–2; 1 Cor. 6:19–20), so the enemy wants to use human bodies for evil purposes (Rom. 6:12–13). The enemy said, in effect, “Give me your body,” to Joseph (Gen. 39) and Daniel (Dan. 1); but they said, “No!” But when the enemy said the same to Samson (Jud. 16), David (2 Sam. 11), and Judas (John 13:27), they said, “Yes!” And what a price they paid!

Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, **which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. **Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.** So glorify God in your body.

Romans 6:12-15 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, **but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life**, and your members to God as **instruments for righteousness**. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? **By no means!**

Jude 1:16-19 These are grumblers, malcontents, **following their own sinful desires**; they are loud-mouthed boasters, **showing favoritism to gain advantage**. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "**In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.**" It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, **devoid of the Spirit**.

John 3:27 John answered, "**A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.**"

Abraham did not accept King Bera's offer. Instead, **it is likely that Abraham gave everyone he had rescued opportunity to come with him and trust the true and living God.** Abraham was a powerful sheik, and his neighbors knew about his tent and his altar. **But there is no indication that any of them (including Lot's family) accepted his invitation.**

Except for Lot and two of his daughters, they all perished in the destruction of Sodom.

A new blessing. Melchizedek had something better to offer Abraham: the blessing of the “Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.” **Abraham lived by the blessing of the Lord, not the bribery of the world.** He did not want anybody **to think that the world made him rich.** Even a small thing like a shoelace might affect his walk! Too many servants of God have weakened their testimony by accepting applause and gifts from the people of the world.

You cannot be a servant of God and a celebrity in the world at the same time.

Melchizedek met Abraham after the battle **to strengthen him for the victory.** The Lord knows the **temptations we face after we have defeated the enemy.** Abraham had met the Lord before the battle and promised to take nothing for himself from the spoils of victory. **He was single-minded as he led his army, and God gave him victory.**

Abraham did not impose his convictions on his allies—Aner, Eschol, and Mamre (Gen. 14:24). If they wanted to take part of the spoils, that was their business; and he would not criticize them. Nor did he expect them to give tithes to Melchizedek. Abraham was a pilgrim and stranger, while his allies were men of the world whose conduct was governed by a different set of standards. **“Others may—you cannot.”**

Genesis 14:20 is the first mention of tithing in the Bible. To tithe is to give God 10 percent, whether of money, farm produce, or animals. (The Heb. word means “ten.”) When we tithe, we acknowledge that God owns everything and that we are grateful stewards of His wealth. **The Jews paid an annual tithe to the Lord (Lev. 27:30–33) as well as a tithe every third year especially for the poor (Deut. 26:12–15). They could also tithe the remaining 90 percent for a special “festive offering” to be enjoyed in Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5–19).**

The practice of tithing antedated the Law of Moses; for not only did Abraham tithe, but so did Jacob (Gen. 28:22). For this reason, many Christians believe that God's people today should begin their giving with the tithe. A godly deacon said to me once, "If the Old Testament Jew under Law could tithe, how much more ought New Testament Christians under grace!" **The New Testament plan for giving is outlined in 2 Corinthians 8–9, but tithing is a good place to start.**

2 Corinthians 9:5-7 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

We must be careful to give out of the devotion of our hearts, and not as a “bribe” for God’s blessings.

But Abraham provides us with a good example of giving. He brought his gifts to Jesus Christ in the person of Melchizedek. (See Heb. 7:1–10.) We do not give our tithes and offerings to the church, the pastor, or the members of the finance committee. **If our giving is a true act of worship, we will give to the Lord; and, for that reason, we want to give our very best (Mal. 1:6–8).**

Abraham gave because he loved God and wanted to acknowledge His greatness and His goodness. What a contrast between “the Most High God” and the heathen idols! Abraham’s God is possessor (Creator) of heaven and earth. He deserves all the worship and praise of all of His people!

Before the battle, Abraham lifted his hand by faith in a solemn vow to God that he would take nothing from the spoils. He had a single heart and mind as he led the army (Matt. 6:24).

During the battle, Abraham wielded his sword **by faith and trusted God for victory.**

After the battle, **by faith** Abraham closed his hands to the King of Sodom but **opened his hands to the King of Salem, receiving bread and wine and giving tithes.**

1 John 5:4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.