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MANITOULIN BIBLE CAMP - 1988

ABRAHAM

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Class #3

He Counted it to him for Righteousness - Part 1

Reading: Genesis 15

My beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ, and our dear young people.

What a magnificent chapter we've got before us tonight, brethren and sisters. This is one of those gems in Abraham's life which should delight us if we see, revealed before our very eyes, b&s, a revelation of God Almighty to his friend. For that is what the chapter is about; this is a very personal chapter, b&s, it's the revelation of God to his friend, and there's a conversation between two parties; a moving conversation, b&s, and it's full of import. This would, I believe, begin now to accelerate Abraham's education in those things that are divine. I've said to you before and I'll repeat it, one of the great facets of this study, b&s, is to see the enlargement of Abraham's mind, in the things of the atonement, in which we think our selves so skilled. Yet this man had to learn those things, b&s, not merely academically but by the very experiences of life, and by the hopes and aspirations which God wrought upon him, all of which, seemed so impossible, as far as he was concerned, and it produced in Abraham, that depth of humility and that depth of faith, b&s, that made him truly the 'friend of God'. And this is a magnificent chapter, there's no doubt about that, and it will commence, I believe, to show you, b&s, the way that God went about to educate this wonderful individual in those marvellous principles, which in after time, were enacted in the life and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and 'Abraham rejoiced to see My day, said the Lord, and was glad'.

And we can only understand those words of the Lord Jesus Christ, b&s, in their depth, when we come to consider chapters like this and those subsequent to them which unfold the mind of Abraham, as God taught His friend, in those principles which were divine. Chapter 15 is connected with chapter 14, 'after these things' and it's important that we note that, b&s, after what things? After Abraham had rescued his nephew Lot from dire extremity and peril, after Abraham had returned from the slaughter of the kings, and showed an outstanding attitude of humility. And if there is one lesson, b&s, above all others that arises out of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek, apart from the great significance of the priesthood itself, if there is one personal lesson we learn above

all others, is the absolute humility of Abraham on that occasion, and that's Paul's point in Hebrews chapter 7, where he calls him 'the whole of the promises', 'the first father', and he uses those terms to indicate that Abraham could have taken precedence here, when he refers to the fact that he returned from the slaughter of the kings, and every word of the apostle's choosing concerning Abraham, shows that he would have been justified in one way, according to the flesh, if that was his way of thinking, in exalting himself; and not for a moment does Abraham do that.

'And after these things' God reveals Himself to Abraham in a vision, because of that, Abraham's outstanding attitude, b&s, not only so, but Abraham on that occasion made a clear choice between the King of righteousness and the King of Sodom; and he severely rebuked the king of Sodom and insulted him by telling him he would have none of the things that he offered Abraham. 'After these things' is an important phrase, b&s, because God will react to that; our Heavenly Father will react to that in our lives, if we follow in those ways of humility of recognition of divine principles, of turning away from iniquity, and of acknowledging the King of righteousness, then we can be assured of this, that 'after those things' the word of Yahweh will come to us, as it never came before; it's important to remember that!

And yet, b&s, arising out of the context with Melchizedek, which induced in Abraham an attitude of contempt for the King of Sodom, which he had before also, arising out of that, there was aroused in Abraham, that natural timidity and fear, to which I have referred to before, Abraham did not possess actual courage; he was a timid man and no doubt as he rejected the offer of the King of Sodom, b&s, he laid himself open to grave dangers for future days, as the King of Sodom wouldn't have taken lightly what was said to him. 'I wouldn't take a bootlace from you', and no king on earth could take that lightly, and Abraham's life would have been endangered by that statement. And so, 'after these things' we will consider all that chapter 14 is saying, 'Yahweh came unto Abram in a vision' (note that!) Yahweh came to him in a vision, and we come down in the presence as we often have, that mere revelation in another form, here was a personal manifestation, and for those of us who have gone through the life of Jacob, we know this, b&s, that Jacob had to wait a full lifetime before God did that for him, but here right at the early stages of Abraham's life, there is an affinity between him and Yahweh, that is absolutely remarkable! and Yahweh came unto him and spoke certain words, and this chapter is full of absolutely wonderful material, and I'm very thankful, b&s, we've only got 19 verses and we don't have to hurry! There are some beautiful things in this chapter, as God reveals to His friend, those eternal principles, and worked on his mind, that Abraham might blossom out; he believed in Yahweh, and He turned it unto him for righteousness as in this chapter, and when we come to chapter 22, then James and John combine their testimony to tell us, that Genesis 22 was a fulfillment of Genesis 15. And I use that word 'fulfillment' because it's a scriptural term, as James says, 'So ye see how that the scripture was fulfilled which said, 'and he believed in Yahweh and He counted it unto him for righteousness'. So Genesis 22 fulfilled Genesis 15, in other words, what Abraham did with Isaac, he saw a distinct connection with Genesis 15 and understood it all, Paul being a witness that he understood it all. He had a complete understanding of these things. Not at this moment of time, but as the purpose of God

unfolded to him, so his mind expanded upon these things.

But, first of all, Yahweh is going to stimulate his courage. He's going to put Abraham, on an even keel as it were, that he might listen carefully to the great message that's coming. 'Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward', and no doubt, b&s, that Abraham needed those reassuring words, I AM THY SHIELD. Abraham had many enemies by now, and he needed the protection of God, especially as he was a timid man. I want you to turn to Psalm 47, b&s, and note the comment of the psalm on that particular revelation to Abraham, I am thy shield. A shield is a protective weapon, it is not aggressive, it's a protective weapon, and in the 47th Psalm, we have this wonderful statement concerning the statement in Genesis 15. Verses 7 to 9 read, 'For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: He is greatly exalted'. Now that's a commentary on Genesis 15; the princes of the people are gathered together' (look at your margin). The voluntary of the people are gathered under the people of the God of Abraham, and we know, b&s, do we not, by our studies in Genesis 14, that there was a northern confederacy that came down against the land? But who was it that went to war against them? The voluntary people of the God of Abraham, Mamre, Eshcol, Aner and 318 trained servants, voluntary people, the people of the God of Abraham were gathered together, and God was to them, the shields of the earth. What can the shields of the earth or the spears of the earth do against the shield that God provides, b&s? 'Fear not, Abraham', and the psalmist picks that up and shows us the strength of that statement. 'For God sitteth over the heathen', that's the message that Abraham has got; Now, Abraham, you relax; you've got nothing to fear; you relax completely; I'm sitting over the top of the heathen and there's nothing that can touch you'. That, b&s, was something that was very reassuring to a man of Abraham's timidity, and no doubt would never had been given, if Abraham didn't need it. He obviously needed it!

And then God said in Genesis, 'and thy exceeding great reward'. I want to show you something, b&s, when you read your bible carefully, you don't need a lot of books all around you, just concentrate on that record; when God said that, and in the Hebrew He said it differently, although with the same meaning, 'your reward shall be great'. Imagine Abraham listening to that; here's a personal revelation to His friend, and a revelation, I believe, at night, as verse 5 indicates that Abraham went out and looked at the stars. It was a personal revelation at night, and here are the words of God ringing in Abraham's ears, he's a frightened man; obviously so, because God saw fit to revive him, to revive his courage. Now then, you put yourself in this situation; you're a little afraid of the reaction of the King of Sodom after these things. You wonder about your future; first of all, God reassures you that you've got nothing to fear, one of the shields of the earth, Abram; I'M YOUR SHIELD, and then, 'Abram, don't worry about your fears, you think about your future. Take your mind off the present, Abram, your reward is going to be great'. And do you know, b&s, Abram left at the point straight away. What would you say? If God said, 'your reward is going to be great', what would you say? what would you think?

Well, you know what you'd think; I know what I'd think, but Abram's mind just lept at the point! and as soon as God mentioned the reward, he said, 'What will you give me, seeing I go childless? There was one thing on that man's mind, what will Thou give me, seeing I go childless? It absolutely dominated his thinking, and the very mention of the reward, he just forgot about the king of Sodom or the northern confederacy or his fears; one thing, 'I want that seed'. That's the reaction God wanted of him, and He got it! It was a wonderful reaction; and do you know something, b&s, God never answered him; He never answered him and he had to repeat it, in verse 3, 'Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house in mine heir'. God ignores him, deliberately so, I believe, to see the depth of Abraham's longing for the fulfillment of God's promise. Brethren and sisters, would to God that our life, a pilgrimage from Beth-el to Beth-el would be dominated by one supreme longing, and a longing based upon God's promise! But it isn't that way, is it? We've got things to do, time is running out, and as we hear the voice of God through His Word, telling us of the nearness of the coming of His Son, it may be the time, b&s, when we've got to move into a new home, take delivery of a new motor car, make preparations on the eve of our marriage, and a host of other important things in this life, as our minds flee the point, and say 'What are you going to give me? Where is that child?' No! We think, according to what bro. Thomas said, 'the judgment is going to take 10 years; and then there's the building of the temple and so on, and when we work it all out, there's a few years to go. And I believe there are circumstances in our lives, b&s, in which we find ourselves and we find that statement, and that type of reasoning, a little relieving.

Abraham was dominated by the promise of God; that is obvious! What will you give me, seeing I go childless? 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, b&s, the evidence of things not seen; without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe, 1. that He is, and 2. that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him'. You know where those words come from? They come from a chapter that is dominated by Abraham's personality; 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him' and 'your reward shall be great'. What are you giving me? Where is that child? And God got the reaction that He wanted! Ah, b&s, how that man longed for that child. He's got 24 years to go yet, can you imagine that? And when he said, I go childless, it isn't only saying, b&s, that I haven't got any children, the Hebrew means this, 'I am dying childless'. The phrase in the Hebrew is quite has the prospect and distinct meaning and is so used in Psalm 39 and verse 14, 'I'm dying childless'; it was a desperate situation that Abraham saw himself in. And Abraham's reaction, b&s, to the promise of God was so enthusiastic, that he had a solution all ready for God. He had the problem solved; all he wanted was God's endorsement, and you know, we often condemn men for that.

Poor old Jacob comes into a heap of criticism because he deceived his father, but, b&s, for all the criticism that ever he could ponder, look, the motive was so doing, and no one is suggesting that the motive makes the action right, but the motive, would to God our motive was something like that! And Abraham may have had a scheme that didn't fit in with God's schemes; he may have thought the matter out and had a solution all ready

for God, and all he wanted was God's endorsement of it. The one thing we can say about it, b&s, he thought about it, as a matter of fact, he probably thought of nothing else, and he carefully looked at Eliezer, the steward of his house. And he felt sure, that this is what God meant as to his not having children; God obviously means this, I know, I feel, and he almost talked himself into it, and you know, the very expressions he used, gave God the opportunity to build upon that the doctrine of the virgin birth and the coming of the Son of God. This is what God was waiting for; and here the revelation began! And it began with Abraham's misunderstanding of the point that God was trying to make, and how wonderful the Word of God revealed it.

He says, 'I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus'. The word 'steward' ben mesheq, 'the son, the son of possession', he says, that's the word in the Hebrew; this son of possession, he is my son. He's going to possess all things; he was an adopted legal heir of Abraham, and Abraham thought that this was in accordance with the rules and the code of the day, which he had left in Ur of the Chaldees, the wonderful civilization, this is how they did it! The ben mesheq's, they were the sons of possession; you adopted them into your house, they had full status as sons, and became your legally adopted heir. HE FELT SURE THAT THIS WAS WHAT GOD MEANT; and He didn't mean that at all! Eliezer, Eliezer of Damascus, El is my help; you know what the real heir was going to be called, don't you? And that's the point that God is going to make; even the name of the steward stood in contrast to it; he may have been 'El is my help', but the One that God was talking about, and Abraham had not yet perceived, was to be called Emmanuel, God with us. That's a little different; there is no hint of adoption there, b&s, or substitution, or somebody representing someone in an indirect way; GOD, GOD ALMIGHTY WITH US, was the One that God was talking about.

And then commenced that education, as God didn't answer him; God never answered him, and he had to state it again, and he thought he'd come at it another way. Perhaps God didn't understand; Abraham wouldn't have thought that of course, but in the excitement of the moment, perhaps sub-consciously, it was in the back of his mind. He'd been an....after God, didn't he understand that Eliezer wasn't a man that he would hide as a servant, why, behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir', you see, b&s, there was the difference between a man who you might hire to serve, and a man that was born of other servants in your home, because when you had got servants in accordance of the rules of these days, and they had children in your house, those children were counted as yours. That was the legal terms of the day; the code of Hammurabi which they dug up extensively, they found out this code and this was one of the things written upon it, that a servant that had had a child in the master's house, that child belonged to and was considered as, the son of that master.

'Lo, one born in my house is mine heir', Eliezer was bonded perhaps he hadn't quite realized that; God had realized it, b&s, and you know, Paul made the point a long time later; this is what he said, (you listen) 'For every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God. For Moses was a servant who was faithful in God's house as a servant for a testimony that would come after, but Christ as a son, whose house we

are' (note what the apostle says) 'Every house is builded by some man but He that built all things is God and Christ as a son over his own house'. You see what Paul is saying, b&s, that God built the house, that Christ built the house, it's a contradiction in terms if we didn't understand the doctrine of God manifestation. It's telling us that two men built the house, or two individuals built the house; but they didn't, one did! 'For all things are built by God, that Christ as the son over His own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast our conviction firm unto the end. And Paul took that point, b&s, from the third chapter of Hebrews where I'm quoting, through the fourth and the fifth and the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, ten and picked it up again in the tenth chapter and says, 'that we have a faithful high priest over God's house'; and the house was that which God is going to build, and the house was going to be built on the foundation stone, the Son of God. Every house might be builded by some man, but this is not going to be built by man. And Abraham might have had one born in his house, but that's not what God was talking about.

And then God commenced and He told him two things; and the two things God revealed unto him, b&s, were identical in principle to what He revealed to David years later. And that's why the New Testament opens up with those words, 'The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of David', because here it is, here's the link between the two. God then commenced His operation upon Abraham and told him two things; now you listen to what he told him. He first of all directed Abraham's attention to his own body, He said, 'Abraham, the one I'm talking about is going to come, first of all, out of your own bowels. Do you understand that? Yes! Now you come outside. Now the man is going outside, b&s, and you've got to picture this scene. And Paul's point is this, in Romans chapter 4, 'he considered his own body', the AV says, 'he considered not his own body'; the sense is the same if you read it correctly, but the actual Greek says, 'he considered his own body'. He thought about it, then God took him out abroad and said, 'Now there's your body, Abraham'. Abraham is contemplating on that and then God says, 'Look up there in the heavens', and He was commencing his education.

Ah, yes, the boy that would be born would come out of Abraham's loins, but that's where he'd come from, Abraham; out of the heavens. 'Count the stars if thou art able to number them', and that's the point God is making with Abraham. And Abraham was going to see that and He made the identical point with David, as Nathan came in, b&s, do you remember the occasion? When David, sitting upon the throne, thinking about building God a house, and God says, 'I don't want you to build me a house; I will build you a house' (every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God) and so He reversed the thing to David and He said two things to him. He said, 'thy seed shall come forth out of thine own bowels, and I WILL BE HIS FATHER', and that's a distinct contradiction in terms. And David thought about it, and he said, 'is this the manner of man, O Lord Yahweh; is that the manner of man? And that's why you have Abraham and David linked together in the first chapter of Matthew and in the first verse. Because there was the revelation that was to come, b&s, truly the son of Abraham, truly the son of David, that He came down from heaven to do the will of His heavenly Father. And that's where God directed Abraham's attention, and you know what Paul's point is this, 'tell the stars', says God. In that very verse that God said that, in verse 5, 'He

brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars'; in that same verse we have the word 'number', and it's exactly the same Hebrew word, 'Number the stars'. Listen to the voice of the apostle Paul, listen to the voice of the apostle Paul, b&s, in the 9th chapter of Roman, for he says, 'the children of the flesh are not the children of the seed' or rather, 'the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed', and the Greek word he uses has exactly the same meaning as the Hebrew word in Genesis 15, 'for the children of the flesh (one born in my house is my heir) that are not the children of God, but the children of the promise, they are counted for the seed'. Where are you going to count the seed from? Where is the genealogy to be counted from, b&s? The genealogy of any scriptural ideology that's worth anything, begins with the Father. All of us have genealogies in the scriptures, with some of them that begin with the mother, but the official genealogy of any scriptural ideology begins with the Father. If you want to start counting the generations of Jesus Christ, then start counting up that direction. And that's what Abraham is being told, b&s, and there's no suggestion in that verse, of the seed being like 'the dust of the earth', because the dust of the earth was when God concentrated upon His own body, and said 'out of thine own bowels'. The children of the promise are counted for the seed!

And in Psalm 147 and verse 4, which we cannot now turn up, also b&s, we learn in that verse that 'God counts all the stars and He calls them by name'; God knows who they are, because they're all born of Him, and are begotten with a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and they are counted for the seed. And God counts the stars as we found in Psalm 147 and He knows them all by name. The Psalm finishes up by telling us that His revelation is to Israel and no one else. For that's where the stars of heaven will come from, from the Israel of God. There are some wonderful principles in this chapter, b&s, that Abraham had to learn. And there's that man, he's getting old, he's not 99 yet, he's 24 years short of that, but he's worried.

It was particularly notable that before he left Ur of the Chaldees, that Sarai had no child. There was already a problem back there; Paul point in Romans 4 was that he considered his own body now dead, and if you look carefully at Roman 4, you'll notice that Paul is not only quoting from that scripture, he's quoting from the whole lifetime of Abraham, because he extracts from the later chapters as well, to prove that Abraham thought about this, not just at this moment, b&s, he never ceased to think about it. And if you look carefully at Romans 4, you will notice that Paul is not limiting Abraham's thought to that verse, but he quotes the latter portion of Abraham's life and defines the whole idea that Abraham always considered his own body now dead, and wondered and wondered how it should be! And although he wondered, b&s, the marvellous thing was, he never doubted it could be done.

And you know, we have in verse 6, a revelation from God that the record of Genesis 15, would not need this comment; it adds nothing to the promise, it's in no form of explanation about the promise, if you take verse 6 out of Genesis 15, it wouldn't alter the sense of the chapter whatever; it's just inserted in there quite deliberately as a divine comment on Abraham's mind, and Paul made this point, b&s, that that phrase was put

in there deliberately for your sake and my sake. That chapter doesn't need it; if you were to take verse 6 out of chapter 15, it wouldn't alter the sense of that chapter at all! BUT, from heaven we get this revelation concerning Abraham's mind, that he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him for righteousness. And that, b&s, quoted by the apostle in Romans 4 verse 3 and verse 22, Galatians 3 verse 6, and James in chapter 2 and verse 23, is one of those monumental verses of scripture, written for our admonition; and here's something that you can think about, you'll never find the term 'righteousness' mentioned anywhere else in Abraham's life but there! And that's important! And I believe deliberately that as God revealed this man's life, and he's known in the scriptures as the 'father of the faithful' and for having that attribute of righteousness of faith, which appears again and again in the apostle's writing, once but once in the whole life of Abraham do we have it, and it's there!

Why? Because it comes at a time when the first revelation, that from that dead body, God would act, the first time that it is stated, we have in conjunction with that, that Abraham believed it implicitly, and that's what is counted to a man for righteousness. And we have the doctrine among us, b&s, and I don't mention this in any way, in any derogatory sense, to those that hold it, but to warn you of the dangers of it. We have the doctrine among us, 'that the righteousness of faith which Abraham possessed was real righteousness, actual works of righteousness, which he did! Which is not simply a negation of Romans 4, but the absolute opposite! You could not get anything more converse to that, than what you have in that statement, because what these people do not understand, and it's just simply escapes me why they don't understand it, that we're not being told here of what Abraham did, but what he believed, and you've only got to think about what he believed, to see the point that God is making. Because it's not simply that Abraham believed the points being made, but it's what he believed! What did he believe? he believed, b&s, in a human impossibility; now that's what he believed. It's not simply that we believe God, that God could do this or do that, it's that we're prepared to believe God can do what is humanly impossible to do! Now, that's what's counted to him for righteousness. 'Whereof Abraham hath not to glory, says the apostle, in works of flesh; not at all, and it was subsequently that Abraham acted, walked, did, the things that gave evidence of the fact that He believed in God, and this was said of him, b&s, right at the time when God expressed Himself in those terms, 'your body is dead; you can do nothing, look, up there; number the stars, so shall that seed be'. And he wasn't only referring, b&s, to the fact that the seed would be multitudinous, but we know obviously it was; that's not the only point, but that will be the heavenly origin of the seed, and Abraham, I believe began to see that. He began to see it; there's no doubt about it at all!

Now then, in verse 7, God addresses Himself to Abraham in these words, 'I am Yahweh that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it', and you know, b&s, you've only got to auger the name of the country, to have a scriptural phrase that was not used once or a dozen times, but, plenty of times, and I wouldn't know how many! 'I am Yahweh that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, to give thee this land to inherit it', was a constant repeated phrase to Israel; there it is to the father of the faithful, and God is trying to show him, as He showed Israel when He brought them out of Egypt, b&s, that it was by divine power that the waters were divided; that it was by

divine power that Pharaoh was brought to his knees; that it was by divine power that the Passover was kept; and when the Passover was kept only one man had faith in it. 'By faith, we read, Moses kept the Passover; by faith they crossed through the Red Sea. It was a matter of one man initiating something by the power of God, that got those people moving. 'I am Yahweh', and when God called to Abraham that, He was telling him, 'Look, Abraham, I spied for you; I moved you; I took hold of you, and I brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it; Yes, Abraham, you believe I can do it, I'm telling you Abraham, I can do it! and I've commenced a process in your life which will never end, Abraham. I took hold of you and I do not intend to let that word fail. I AM YAHWEH THAT HAS DONE THESE THINGS; LOOK, UP THERE! Now, that's the character of that man's faith, b&s, never mind about your failings, never mind about getting despondent. People saying they can't partake of the emblems because they feel so awful; I can't go to the meetings because I feel dreadful; I say, a curse on those thoughts, let's have the thoughts of Abraham, b&s. Yes, our bodies are dead, yes, our works are dead, but God is able, and if we have that sort of faith, b&s, then we'll be impelled upon a course of action that will take us into the Promised Land. I AM YAHWEH THAT BROUGHT YOU UP, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THAT LAND TO INHERIT IT.

They're wonderful words, and do you know what they produced in Abraham? A tremendous reaction! They produced a reaction in him; he believed those words; Paul says he never doubted it, and it echoes down through the corridors of history, that there was a man who believed it, and yet we read in verse 8, 'Lord Yahweh, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And it's even been suggested by some commentators, (like straws in the wind to expository men), that Abraham no sooner had it said of him, that he believed God, then he doubts that and puts a cloud upon his mind. (You never heard me say anything so happily foolish in all your born days as that); as if we'd have from verse 6, a doubt come into Abraham's mind, and yet Paul took that, as being a fundamental doctrine of the truth. Now I know, b&s, there was no doubt, as a matter of fact, what Abraham said in actual fact, enriched, enriched the things he was thinking about; because there's no doubt whatever; the problem was because of the revelation that God gave him. This was the problem; this body is going to be used, a son out of your own bowels. And Abraham had no illusions whatever of what his body was made up of. You know, b&s, as he goes down in the record of scripture, as a man that described his own body as dust and ashes. Bear that in mind! It was typical of Abraham, he thought, as I say, he lacked natural courage, it was one, maybe, of his failings. One of his great strengths was his humility. He went down in history as the man who coined that phrase, dust and ashes. And that was his problem! Out of my body only one thing can come out of my body; heavenly things? inheriting forever? NO, how can that be! I don't doubt that it can be done; it will be done, BUT, how can it be? What can you do? what about the moral problem? I'm a sinner, my seed will be sinners; we're born of the flesh, that which is born of flesh is flesh. It will come forth from the bowels of sin. I will fail, my son will fail, his sons will fail; I don't doubt, you God, I know it to be true, but how are you going to do that?

And God immediately showed him a sacrifice. Here's an education, b&s. He

immediately showed him a sacrifice. Now you think of this, if you want to understand this chapter, or look at this parallel with David because Matthew doesn't open up with the words, 'son of Abraham, son of David, for nothing. It is not an empty phrase as we Christadelphians know, but there is more in it than you think at times, or what I think. The thing is this, they are linked together for the absolute similarity in their education. Now you know what Peter said, concerning David's understanding, three times in the book of Acts, in chapter 2, he tells us, and he goes to great lengths to tell us, that David knew and understood. 'He therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had warned that of the fruit of his loins, he would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ'. Logical? my body? He must die. Sit on my throne forever? He must rise from the dead. He seeing this before, knowing, this was Abraham's problem. And God immediately showed him a sacrifice. Here is a joy of stride in Abraham's education. A joy of stride in his education that later on was to blossom out, 'whereby he seeing the promises afar off' Genesis 22, he led his son by the hand, and he saw the place afar off, and run in the corridor of time we have Paul's comment, 'that Jesus Christ died to confirm the promises made unto the fathers'. To make them sure; Whereby shall I know? and He showed him the sacrifice.

You think about that; you see what's going on, don't you, b&s? Not difficult to see Abraham's mind working. I want you to notice the sacrifice that he took! Take an heifer of 3 years old, and a she goat of 3 years old, and a ram of 3 years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. You know, b&s, never believe that until we came to the Law of Moses, that certain animals and sacrifices were given their significance. Don't believe that! The truth of the matter is that the Law of Moses, was a piece of legislation which picked all these things up that were revealed before us, and gave the significance to those things that were already in use; particularly is this true, with the story of Genesis, that is, the first three chapters of Genesis, concerning the fall of man. It is nonetheless true of Abraham; why specify those animals if there is no significance in them? And what's Abraham's problem? You see, you've only to get your mind working on this and you'll understand the chapter. If we've got the key, if what I've suggested is the key, then that will all fall into place. You watch it fall into place!

The problem is this body; the problem is sin; the problem is how is God Almighty, who cannot look upon sin, how can he put us into His kingdom forever? How can He do that morally? We know that God can do anything; but morally speaking, how can God, who knows nothing else but purity, the very source and founder, how can He put me, (and if you knew what was in my mind half the time, you wouldn't fellowship me), how can He put me in the kingdom? How can we know that God can do it? And He reveals the sacrifice! What is an heifer of three years old? I puzzled over that, I suppose, for something like ten or fifteen years; I reckon I got the answer with this study. You look at Isaiah 15, it's only mentioned twice more in the scriptures of truth, b&s, and and we must get our clue. Isaiah 15 is our clue to the heifer of three years old (tape turned) b&s, but that was the only sacrifice under the Law of Moses which was totally sacrificed outside the camp. It was the only sacrifice under the Law of Moses which could be used over and over again; it was implicated more than once, because they rendered it to ashes, and only used a bit at a time, mixing it with water. So here is the one sacrifice,

the seed of the woman, made outside the Law, the only one that could remove death, and the only one that could be efficacious time and time again. And Abraham's problem was 'how am I going to inherit that promise?

I want you to turn to Hebrews chapter 9 and listen to this, a heifer of three years old, how can mortal man inherit immortality, b&s? Here's your answer, a heifer of three years old! verse 13 says, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this cause He is the mediator of the New Covenant that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (now listen to these words) that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance'. What a magnificent sweep that is? Abraham was called of God, he received the promise and it related to an eternal inheritance, he said, 'How can it be done? And God said, 'Take an heifer of three years old; his problem was death, his problem was sin, and God says, "I'm aware of that problem; it shall be provided for'. This was the commencement of his education. No wonder, b&s, as the two of them went together, when he offered up Isaac, and James says, 'and so the scripture was fulfilled' because what Abraham saw in that heifer, he was going to see in his only begotten son. Incredible, isn't it?

Now then, the rest of the animals didn't cause me any problems; they shouldn't provide any problem. If we've hit the nail on the head, and I believe we have, Paul's very comment in Hebrews 9, 'the ashes of an heifer, that they which were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance' and follow it down in the chapters in Genesis here, if we've got that one right, look at the rest of them. She goat, ram, turtledove and pigeon; search the Law of Moses! She goat, b&s, what was that for? Why, that was a sin offering for the commoner, and it was sin that was part of the inheritance; the ram, was the only animal used for the trespass offering, that was in other offerings too, but here it relates to sin, and turtledoves and pigeons, b&s, they were used as the alternatives for those who could not get the ram or the she goat. They were the alternatives; every single one of those animals relates to Abraham's problem. How am I going to handle it? and God shows him. Even by the mention of the three years old in the case of the she goat and the ram, the breeding stock, which was the prime of the flock, kept at that age, that they might produce the seed through whom Abraham might have the eternal inheritance, when death was removed and sin was removed (I should put it the other way around) when sin was removed and death was removed, there's Abraham's problem solved!

And God said in verse 10, 'He took unto him all these' (note that) He took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst', now we know what Abraham was doing; Jeremiah 34 and we might look this up. It's a well known reference, and it shows us the custom of making a covenant, but I want you to have a look at it because there's something interesting about this, in relation to Abraham. Jeremiah 34 and verses 18 and 19, 'And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain,

and passed between the parts thereof. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf', so there is a reference to the Abrahamic covenant, b&s, when the men divided the animal and the two parties passed between the parts of the sacrifice, and the covenant was cut. Before we go on, I just want to mention a fact to you that if we are right, and we know we are, b&s, don't we? because of Paul's comments. Look at all those animals the Law of Moses picked them all up in that sense, not only that, listen to this. The 31st chapter of Jeremiah, speaking of the New Covenant, the prophet makes this point, 'that the feature of the New Covenant that makes it stand out above the Old Covenant was the forgiveness of sin. And when you go home tonight look at Hebrews chapter 10, and at the top of the left hand page in the wide margin bible, on the right hand column, there are two statements right across over the page. There was an amendment for sins made every year; 'their sins and iniquities I will remember no more', and even in our bibles they've got them right, (contrast one to the other on top) but that was the law of the Old Covenant, there's the law of the New. And the feature of the New Covenant was the forgiveness of sins. So Peter stood up after the day of Pentecost, when he had the Jew and Gentiles together, and said, 'ye are the children of the promise and of the covenant which He made with our fathers. For He hath sent Jesus Christ unto you first, to turn every one of you away from your iniquities'. For He hath sent Jesus Christ to bless you; to turn everyone of you away from your iniquities because you are the children of the covenant that God made with the fathers. That was Peter's point; where do you think he got that from, if he didn't get it here? that's the very feature of the Abrahamic covenant, b&s, that need we have to get into the kingdom, to have our sins removed.

And Abraham divided those pieces up; search the scriptures and you'll never find that Abraham passed between those pieces, and I don't believe that he did! It has been often thought, b&s, that because of Jeremiah 34, and because we understand the principles so well, of our covenant with God, that it's a natural thing to think, that Abraham would have passed between those pieces, and later on when the burning lamp and the smoking furnace went through those pieces, that God performed His part of the contract. I don't believe that Abraham ever passed between those pieces. And I believe furthermore, it would be incongruous if he did. All Abraham did, b&s, is all that you and I can do, and that is , we give attention to the covenant. He kept the birds away; there's not much else we can do. Our covenant with God, b&s, is not that we have made a contract with God, where two parties pass between the victim. It is not so! Our covenant with God is exactly the same as Abraham's covenant with God; one party passed between those pieces, b&s, representing both parties.

That's exactly what's happened with the Lord Jesus Christ; you see, b&s, Abraham saw the smoking furnace and the burning lamp go between those pieces and I don't believe he went between them; because Abraham was beginning to understand, 'Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit?' the very point that Abraham was making with God, was that I can do nothing about this. The very point that Abraham was making was that God (offered) the problem and God divided the animal, and Abraham watched, and God passed between those pieces, b&s, when Abraham was dead in the horror of great

darkness, and no mortal could pass between the pieces than fly. And God was trying to tell him that there's only one way that Abraham could get into the kingdom of God, that is, there has to be a sin offering, and yet, for all that, Abraham himself could not make that sin offering; it had to be given by God; it was going to be the seed of the woman, and not only that but, Abraham himself, could not affect that sin offering. Someone else had to do it for him, and someone had to represent him; and along came Jesus Christ. 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'. And we meet God, b&s, in Him,, and all we can do Sunday morning by Sunday morning, in our own lives, is keep the birds away! But for ourselves, we protect and pray to that covenant; God will perform, He'll perform His part and we've got to perform ours. And Abraham kept the birds away. Remarkable thing, b&s, Jesus Christ was the covenant victim for all, because a covenant is of no force while the covenant victim lives, and if Jesus Christ was the means whereby God made that covenant, then it is obvious, b&s, that until Jesus Christ came, Abraham was not represented by himself but by the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham knew that! Abraham knew that before ever he could inherit the land, his seed would inherit before him. He'd already been told that!

Here he has a sin offering and he understands that he's the problem; he stands out of the way; he believes in Yahweh, and there is nothing more that he can do; he makes that covenant and God passes between the parts thereof. And then a horror of great darkness falls upon him, and we know what that means don't we, b&s? It's a symbolic action in which death overcomes Abraham, the very words in Psalm 55 and verse 4, 'the terrors of death encompass me about is the same word as the word 'horror'. Here were the terrors of death, as they compassed Abraham about, and then, b&s, the answer of God! What was Abraham's question? 'Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? Do you know what God did? HE PUT HIM TO DEATH AND THEN HE ANSWERED HIM. 'Know of a surety', and He spoke to him as a dead man. And if ever there was an action in that Abraham was dramatically taught that God was to be the prime mover in whatever happened in his life, there it was! He put him to death and then He answered him. 'Know of a surety' what a wonderful thing, b&s, and Jesus said, 'He's not the God of the dead but of the living!', For Moses heard at the bush, 'I AM THE LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM OF ISAAC AND OF JACOB, and there God's talking to him and he's dead (symbolically dead) and He talks to him.

And what does He do? He gives him a rundown, b&s, on the history of his seed; in other words, God is not trying to give him any details here, as to what is going to happen to his seed, but a very broad outline. God is indicating to this man in this horrid great darkness, whereby he could still consciously hear God and understand God, although he was cognizant of the fact that a horror of great darkness had gripped him, and understood that he had entered the terrors of death; he understands that history must pass, history must pass, b&s. He's got to go to his fathers in peace and man is going to go on sinning; the iniquity of the Amorites is going to be full, (and the Amorites are in his own camp). He understood the character of those men; they were different from the ordinary Amorites, but all men sin. And God showed him the record of the seed, serving strangers, strangers afflicting them, 'Know of a surety'.

Abraham died in faith, b&s, not only received the promises, but had seen them afar off. And it came to pass, 'when the sun went down', when the sun went down. If you like to work it out, it is possible, that the vision of chapter 15, took over, or took at least a part of three days, because the chapter opens in a vision, later on we find him being brought out at night, and here we're told the sun was setting, and he wouldn't be keeping birds away, no! that's a work of the dead. It may have been the part of three days while the typical confirmation of the covenant took place, even that is significant. It just so happens, b&s, that when he took Isaac to mount Moriah, that on the third day he lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. There's nothing without significance in these records!

And when the sun went down and it was dark, Abraham saw two things; he saw a smoking furnace and he saw a burning lamp. A smoking furnace was a circular fire pot used to carry the fire, much the same after the fashion at least, censers, that the priests used to carry the coals of the altar in; the word is rendered 'cooking' it's rendered 'oven'. The idea is of a circular fire pot used to carry the coals, and in that firepot Abraham saw the flame of God, and it's remarkable, b&s, it's absolutely remarkable, that when Abraham saw the site of Moriah after 3 days journey, and he went to sacrifice Isaac on mount Moriah, it's absolutely remarkable, the record says, 'and he took fire in his hand'. Why would he do that? Couldn't he make fire when he got there? There would be no lack of wood; but Abraham took it in his hand, because I think he understood that here was collaboration between the heavenly Father and the son, born of the woman, the seed of promise. Taking Isaac with him, b&s, he had a smoking furnace and he had a burning lamp, and they passed between those pieces.

Anybody else who wants a very interesting exercise in the scriptures of truth, will have to get a concordance and look up that word 'burning lamp' and follow it through the bible. You'll be richly rewarded; this is how the word is used, b&s, it is used as the lamp for Gideon; it's used in the 62nd chapter of Isaiah as the 'lamps of salvation' (the furnace); it's used in Ezekiel 1 as the 'eyes of the cherubim; and it's used in Daniel 10 as 'the flaming fire in the eyes of the son of man'. It's the lamp that burneth, b&s, that joins man to God, that illuminates the covenant and makes it possible, that men may meet together with God. Who was it that represented God on this occasion? Was it Melchizedek? you come to Hebrews chapter 6, b&s, look at this?

In Hebrews 6 and verse 13 we read, 'For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath' (Now look at the margin of your bible for the word 'confirmed'; He interposed Himself by an oath) In other words, b&s, that we may be ensured of the immutability of God's counsel in the promises made to Abraham, whereby we might know that of a surety we might inherit the land, do you know what God did? HE PUT HIMSELF IN BETWEEN BY AN OATH, He put Himself between us and Himself. We're the problem! We have no

approach to God on our own ground; we cannot with our feet, stand on holy ground, b&s. It's impossible for God to accept us in our persons. We have to have a representative, and in order that we have a representative to God, God Himself acts as a representative so that we may meet as one. So God put Himself between by an oath.

Where was the oath? The Lord has sworn and will not repent; thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He put Melchizedek in there with the oath, and that's exactly what Paul goes on to say, as he reveals to us then the Melchizedek priesthood. Either Melchizedek was representative on that occasion or he stood in Abraham's eyes at least, as the one upon earth who was represented by the burning lamp, and the flaming fire that passed between the pieces. And the oath, of course, deals with eternal things; and therefore, when Yahweh says, 'Yahweh hath sworn' He was creating an immortal man; it deals with eternal things and Jesus Christ laid in the tomb, b&s, he was dead, extinct and could do nothing. And the operation of God raised him from the dead and Paul says, 'have faith in that'. Abraham had faith in that, and he was dead, and God said, 'Know of a surety', in other words, Abraham, you're going to die. History will roll over you, and iniquity will abound; but know this, I'm master of it all; I can overcome it all; I can overcome your problem of death and I can conquer sin, Abraham. The iniquity of the Amorites may fill up and overflow but you'll come out, Abraham! Know of a surety, neither your mortality nor sin will ever hold Me back. Know of a surety, and Abraham was assured by One who was his friend, b&s. It's a wonderful revelation that we've had here, a remarkable revelation, and then, a magnificent finale! I think it is anyway.

'In the same day, Yahweh made a covenant with Abram'. We have a change now, b&s, it was a promise before, now it's a covenant! Before, God made promises but the word 'made' is different this time, it means 'to cut'. The word's going to change again; it's going to change again, b&s, a little later on. Twelve months before, you know what God did with the word? He changed it again. It went from 'made', 'to cut' and finally when He came to Abram to say, 'Listen, Abram, do you know what's going to happen now? I'm going to do it; We're going to do it together, and then He used the word 'to rise'. I'm going to make the covenant 'to rise'. What a marvellous sequence of ideas; to make a promise, to cut the covenant, and to rise it up. That's exactly what's happened. The promise of Jesus Christ, to all them that believe, He's been cut for a covenant to the people, and God raised Him from the dead, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. And when God cut that covenant, do you know what He did? He promised Abraham the world (if you read that statement in Romans 4 verse 13, b&s, how many times have you thought about it?) No doubt you've thought about it many times like I have; we read the 4th chapter of Romans and we understand that he was promised the land; we all know that! but Paul makes that remarkable statement that Abraham was promised the world, and I always use to believe, that what Paul meant, of course, was by inference, that if Abraham was promised the land, and he was going to have eternal life, then by inference, of course, it means that once Abraham is in the land and immortal with the Lord Jesus Christ, he's a co-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in that sense, he was promised the world. BUT Abraham was promised the world; and there it is, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates' (that was the world).

You turn to the 19th chapter of Isaiah, and bear in mind too, that when Paul said he was promised the world, he was quoting from Genesis 15, (just bear that in mind). Isaiah 19, that was the world, in verse 23, 'In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom Yahweh of armies shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance'. I will give thee this land, Israel shall be a blessing in the midst of the land, and make that one third with Assyria from the river Euphrates with Egypt the river Nile, the river of Egypt. So in those terms of what Abraham understood the world to be, that was the world! And he was promised, literally promised the world, and Paul was right; and it's not by inference at all!

Now then, you may say you're reading a lot into it? Am I? You wait! Now b&s, how does this chapter finish? It finishes with grandeur because it names all the countries; you count them and you think you're going to count seven; well, you're wrong! You're going to count 10. Moses made this point, b&s, that there were 7 nations of Canaan; didn't he make that point? In Deuteronomy 7:1 Moses made the point that there were 7 nations in Canaan, and therefore, the promise made to Abraham went beyond the bounds of the land of Canaan because there are 10 there. And 10, b&s, is the aggregate number of the nations; for 10 men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, all the nations. 10 of them and there are 10 there. Now then, let's take it a step further; look at the first one mentioned, the Kenites. Do you know what they produced? Well, they produced Jethro or rather, Jethro produced them, out of whom came Heber and Jael the wife of that man, who killed Sisera; in other words, the first one mentioned produced an outstanding family of Gentiles, known as the Rechabites, who were with Israel during the captivity, b&s, when the nation of Abraham's seed was down in the earth and disobeying God's promise and absolutely unfaithful, there was one family left! A family of Gentiles known as the Kenites!

Who are the next ones? The Kenizzites; you know who they produced? They produced Caleb, the dog, was a Kenizzite; and when all Israel in the wilderness journey, as Paul points out, when every single one that came out by Moses was disobedient, and only two men that were faithful, Joshua (Yahweh will be salvation) the only other one was a Gentile dog. Abraham's going to be the father of many nations, and he was promised the world, and the rest of the nations are mentioned. (And I don't know anything in particular about them, but this I know, that the last one, you couldn't have chosen it better). This, b&s, is the finger of God!

The last one mentioned is the Jebusites, do you think that's chance? Well, think of this, think again! The city of Jebus (Jerusalem) was the last stronghold overthrown by David in the land. Think about this! If you look up the word 'Jebus' in Strong's concordance, it's literal meaning is this, 'trodden down'. And so Jerusalem was taken by David from the hand of those that had trodden it down; do I need to go any further? Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles; of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled'.

That's the last nation mentioned. God was preparing this wonderful man, b&s, for the revelation that he was to be the father of many nations. There's the friend of God. And the attitude of mind evidenced from this occasion, b&s, was 'counted unto him for righteousness'. He may have had his weaknesses, (we stoop before his greatness), b&s, he was an incredible man. And the revelation finished, with that wonderful promise, 'Unto thee will I give this land', God had said. Now look at it, Abraham! Abraham, your attitude of mind was evidenced with Melchizedek, the king of Salem; your attitude of mind Abraham, look Abraham, I'll give you the world. You're a sinner, Abraham, you worry about that? It's good that you do, Abraham. I'll look after that; don't worry about it. because I speak of an eternal inheritance, because you're a sinner, you think that death can hold you? It is not possible to hold you, Abraham. Fall into a horror of great darkness and I'll talk to you when you're dead, and I'll tell you Abraham, 'know of a surety'. That's how I can talk to my friend, I can talk to him in death!

This is a revelation, b&s, that is worthy of our greatest consideration, and Abraham, went away doubtless, thrilled and thinking about these things, of the sacrifice that was made, of passing between the pieces, the burning lamp, of seeing the necessity for sacrifice, of seeing God's involvement in sacrifice; of knowing that the One to come was His child; that Mary comes from there, tell (number) the stars-so shall thy seed be. The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; that the children of the promise are numbered through the seed, said the apostle. Abraham knew that; he began to see those things, b&s, and his horizons were broadening before him, and as the horizons of his mind broadened in relation to his own problem of the flesh, and in the problem of how God would operate upon him, so God broadened his horizons with His promise and he began to see the world, because he began to see God's part in His promise. And that man was lead from strength to strength, through various circumstances in his life, until finally, finally the great revelation, b&s, would come, when he would name a place, 'Yahweh shall we see'. And the incredible thing about that was this, that was the only major, major thing in Abraham's life, where Yahweh failed to appear unto him, but spoke with him. Because He didn't need to appear because Abraham knew that, and saw God in all that was around him, in the One that was on the altar with Isaac, and God spake to him out of heaven, 'this is my beloved Son, hear ye Him'. And the incredible part of it, was that Abraham had his mind expanded to take in all these things, so the revelation of God did not leave him. And 'Abraham rejoiced to see My day', says Christ. He saw it, b&s, and he was glad!