

Herbert W. Armstrong College Choral Union Mark Jenkins, Conductor

CAST	
Abram/Abraham	Paula Malone Pamela Williams Male Chorus Female Chorus Full Chorus
PROGRAM	
PART ONE Overture	People, Hagar, Sarai, Abram Abram, Melchizedek, People
PART TWO Intercession	Sarah, PeopleSarahMelchizedekHagar, Angels, MelchizedekMelchizedek, AbrahamIsaac, Abraham, AngelsMelchizedek

LIBRETTO

PART ONE HONOR THE VICTOR

(People)
Here we assemble,
In the valley of the king
To honor the victor;
His praises we sing!

(Hagar) When four kings joined their forces, Sodom's valley they would raid. (Sarai) With Lot among its captives, My lord Abram came to his aid.

(Abram)

So I equipped my servants, Three hundred eighteen strong, To hunt and smite the captors And right this grievous wrong.

Our humble host succeeded, We saved my nephew Lot, All other spoils and captives, And brought our foes to nought.

(Hagar)

Long before Abram invaded And conquered this alliance, He was known in distant lands For skill in every science.

(Sarai)

An expert in the heavens, Mathematics and the arts, A champion of culture, The splendor it imparts.

BLESSED

(Abram)
All hail the righteous king
Of the city named for peace.
Melchizedek its builder,
Its ruler and its priest.
This officer of Salem,

Where He presently abides, Is Lord of all creation, The priest of God Most High.

(Melchizedek)

Partake of this bread and drink of this wine For here you are honored with blessings divine.

Blessed be Abram of God the Most High Possessor and Maker of land, sea and sky. Blessed be your God, from whom all began, Who delivered your enemies into your hand.

BEST OF MY BEST

(Abram)

I give to my Lord the best of my best, The first of my first, with which I am blessed. I give to my Lord the best of my best. Though He owns it all, He gives me the rest.

The Earth is the Lord's
And the fulness thereof,
From the oceans below,
To the heavens above.
We freely partake
His air that we breathe,
The food from His ground,
The wood from His trees.

Indebted are we
For each drop of rain,
For each ray of sunlight
For each speck of grain;
Then what do we owe,
When from this we earn?
What portion is His
To have in return?

What joyous obligation,
To make this dedication,
The principal tenth,
The chief of my strength
What blessings I shall share from this oblation!

JUST PASSING THROUGH

(Chorus)

Blessed be Abram from Sodom's king; To honor the victor, this tribute he brings: Of this victory's gains, the spoils we reap, The captives are the king's, But the goods you, Abram, may keep.

(Abram)

I have raised my hand to God Most High, Possessor of all things, And vowed that I would never be Indebted to an earthly king.

Beyond the food we've eaten here, Accepting one small thread or stitch Would fasten me unto this world, If you could claim you made me rich.

Called to leave my father's land, Not yet aware of all that God had planned. But with each step that faith supplied A vision would serve as my guide!

Everything that I had done Was a lifetime's worth, but life had just begun. With youth renewed, this fresh, new start Was a journey that leads to the stars!

I am on my way;
And each day my strength renews,
As a pilgrim I am driven by the end in view.
I am on my way.
There's a place that I pursue,
As a stranger in this world just passing through.
Just passing through.

Birds have nests to lay their young, But a lasting, earthly dwelling, I have none. My heart and soul desire to lodge In the permanent city of God!

With hope-filled vision now in mind, The destination now in store, Forgetting things which are behind, I reach for things which are before!

ADORN THE HEART

(Sarai) Our lord draws near, (Hagar) So we prepare, (Maidens) Bedeck the ear, Arrange the hair. We check the mirror, (Hagar) And make ourselves fair. (Sarai) But the real work of art Is one who first adorns the heart.

Adorn the heart with humility, with meekness and tranquility; Adorn the heart with reverence and respect. Adorn the heart with submission, with beauty's definition. Adorn the heart, With all the things a wife should reflect.

Not elaborate braids
Nor jewels of gold,
Not pearls or costly raiment,
Which human eyes behold.
But with gentleness be graced,
With graciousness be shod,
These ornaments are priceless
In the sight of God

Your most exquisite vestures,
Your garments most refined,
Are found in humble gestures—
A quiet frame of mind.
These virtues are your garnish
A heavenly array,
So never let them tarnish
Renew them day by day.

My daughters now aspire To don this fair attire Only heaven can impart. Adorn the heart.

PROMISES

(Abram)
Our God was manifested
In fleshly, human frame;
He promised wondrous blessings
Upon my family name.

(Sarai) What promises? What promises?

(Abram)
Well, later when I slumbered
My thoughts began to gleam.
This Holy King of Salem
Appeared within a dream.

(Melchizedek)
Fear not, Abram:
I am your shield,
Your strength and reward,
Your increase and yield.

(Abram)
And in this dream I answered:
"Eternal God and Lord,
What blessing shall you grant?
What gift shall you afford?

What promises? What promises?

You know that we are childless, No offspring can we bare, But chief among my servants Is one who is my heir: Eliezer of Damascus, The steward of my house, To me, is like a son, As one born to my spouse."

The Lord Eternal answered; And this is what He decreed:

(Melchizedek)
This shall not be your heir,
But one born from your seed.

(Abram)
He pointed me to heaven,
Its scale I did regard;
He promised me descendants
As numerous as the stars!

What promises. What promises.

(Sarai)
What promises. What promises.

The reason we are childless, Is your wife who cannot bare; The Lord has closed my womb From giving you this heir: What promises can come With me standing in the way? You could have this child With assistance from my maid.

Of our ten years here in Canaan, We've been fruitless every one; But this girl we found in Egypt Could bear for us a son. Obey the voice of reason, This is how it must be done.

(Both) What promises! What promises!

GOD WILL HEAR

(Angels)
O mother to be,
What brings you such woe?
From where did you come?
And where will you go?
This road back to Egypt, this desolate trail
Provides no escape, nor will spare you travail.

(Hagar)
For cruelty and anguish I fled my estate.
From the face of my mistress, I seek to escape.

My mistress had made a request, And one that engendered much strife. I had pledged any task But what she would ask Is that I be her lord's second wife.

He needed my womb for his heir; Admittedly I acquiesced. And though we conceived, My mistress was grieved, And it brought to our home much unrest.

I cannot explain what changed in my eyes The lady I loved my heart now despised; The life that I bore exalted this maid; My mistress's rank had started to fade. She laid on the master her blame, For putting this slave in his arms. She said God would judge Their marital grudge. (But I shared the guilt in this harm.)

The master would not argue back; He answered with hope to appease, So this he conveyed, Since I was her maid, He said, "Do to her as you please."

I cannot explain what changed in her eyes The servant she loved her heart now despised. The life that I bore, the harshness it bred, Was hopeless travail, so from her I fled;

(Melchizedek)

The humble cry, and God will hear, From heaven He will bend His ear. Regarding each petition with great care. Their supplications He has heard From every tear to every word, Attentively He listens to each prayer.

This trait of God shall be contained Within your son's appointed name:

Ishmael: It means "God will hear." His affairs God will steer. "Ishmael," for the pleas Of a mother on her knees.

Unto your mistress now return,
The lady whom your heart has spurned,
Submit yourself to all that she requires.
And I will multiply your seed,
A numberless amount indeed,
For I have not been deaf to your desires.

Though destined here to live untamed, Remember his appointed name:

GOD SEES

(Hagar)
I knew nothing of this God
In the land from which I came,

Until this pious couple Introduced me to His fame.

As they became my masters, Their Lord was revealed, And this watchful, loving spirit To me, He now is real.

You see me, O God. For all is in your view, You see me, O God. But have I now seen you?

Is there a place where one can hide, From He who fills the Earth and sky? No wilderness exceeds His trace; No darkened shade evades His face.

He counts my steps; He sees my ways; My paths are ever in His gaze. The eyes of God run to and fro, And everything is His to know.

Enthroned within Your temple, You study from above, Rewarding what You see, According to Your love.

A NEW NAME

(Abram)
I hail the righteous king,
My ruler and my priest,
As for you and your two angels,
Please stay and join this feast.

Before you continue, Let water be brought; Rest under this tree, And your feet shall be washed.

Before you pass over, Allow me to fetch A morsel of bread, So your hearts are refreshed. Then you may journey ahead.

(Angels) So do as you have said.

(Abram)

Outside of our tent three travelers rest, Among them is one most illustrious guest. He came in my dreams and decreed The promises concerning my seed.

Dear wife, now prepare fine flour to bake: Three measures of meal to turn into cakes. Then I will fetch butter and milk, And a calf that our quests may be filled.

I give to my Lord the best of my best, The first of my first, with which I am blessed. I give to my Lord the best of my best. Though He owns it all, He gives me the rest.

(Melchizedek)
Almighty God, El-Shaddai is my name.
Be perfect, blameless and true.
Walk before me
And then you shall see
This covenant I forge with you.

Abram is no longer your name. You are not just a lofty father. For from you exudes Vast multitudes. A father like no other.

This word I now proclaim: Abraham is now your name.

A new name I give to you;
A great name I now bestow:
The name that I assign
Will be treasured for all time:
A name that all the world shall know.

The children who shall claim your name All males in every generation.
Through a custom of flesh
This deed will profess
The sign that they are your nations.

Sarai she shall no more be called. Her name means not just princess anymore. For soon from her womb Kings and nations shall bloom This noble mother shall always be adored.

This word I now proclaim: Sarah is now her name.

A new name I give to her;
A great name I now bestow:
These names that I assign
Will be treasured for all time:
Names that all the world shall know.

PROMISES—REPRISE

(Melchizedek)
I return unto you the years of your life.
You shall have a son by your elderly wife.

(Abraham)

Can new life be sired, as has been foretold, When I am just one year shy of a century old? What do I have to give? My life has expired. Shall Sarah conceive what she long has desired?

But Ishmael, O Ishmael
O that he were acceptable,
That he could have the blessings you will give.
For his flesh will also represent
The token of your covenant
So in Your blessed presence may he live!

(Melchizedek)
Your ninety-year old wife
Shall bear a son indeed.
My covenant is with him
And ever with his seed.
And this shall be his name
For the laughter in your heart:
"Isaac." He receives
These blessings I impart.

Now as for Ishmael, Your prayers I have heard. Behold he too is blessed, This vow I have conferred: I will make him fruitful, Twelve princes as his sons, Exceedingly they increase: Great nations have begun. But my covenant is with Isaac, Whom Sarah shall conceive Within the coming year; This blessing you receive.

(Abraham, Melchizedek, Angels) What promises, what promises.

LAUGHTER

(Sarah)

What promises! What promises.

My ears cannot believe these words I overhear That I shall bear a son within the coming year. Just outside this tent This message heaven sent Cannot be what they meant.

My fruitful days have long expired, The scourge of time has taken hold; What pleasure could I entertain, When my lord, well, is also old? Yes, both of us have withered dry; Our years are far too numerous; So to think we could beget a child, To me, that is quite humorous! Ha!

To reconcile our shriveled state,
With hope that we might be so blessed,
How could such promises not be
Construed as just a clever jest?
God spoke of all our progeny
In numbers astronomical;
But flowing from this feeble frame?
To me, that is quite comical. Ha!

This former space for children, For years what I sought after, Is now just good for unbelieving laughter. Ha!

IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?

(Melchizedek)
Is anything too hard for the Lord?
Is anything above His reach?
So why do you doubt,
And why is your mouth
Professing such unbelief?

Is anything too hard for the Lord?
Is anything beyond His grasp?
Let your faith be restored,
For concerning the Lord
There is no impossible task.

Your sure evidence is not what you sense With feeling or hearing or sight. It is being assured God will honor His Word—That nothing can hinder His might.

(Angels, Melchizedek)
Is anything too hard for the Lord?
Is anything outside of His skill?
Could His power expire?
Would you see Him perspire
When He labors to accomplish His will?

Is anything too hard for the Lord?
Is anything outside His command?
Can our God be detained?
Can His plans be restrained?
Who can limit the work of His hand?

Let your faith be restored In the promised reward. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

PART TWO INTERCESSION

(Melchizedek)
Shall I hide from Abraham
My purpose and my plan
As he will be a kingdom strong and great?

(Angels)
All nations of the Earth
Will magnify their worth
Because of all his blessings you create.

(Melchizedek)
For I have chosen him,
And know what lies within,
That He will guide his children and his house,
And they shall keep my way,
My righteousness display.
That I may surely execute my vows.

(Angels) In Sodom news is grim,
(Melchizedek) I hear reports of sin,
(All) Gomorrah's grievous evil cries aloud.
(Angels) We go now to confirm.
(Melchizedek) If what I hear is sure,
Then punish all the wicked and the proud.
(Angels) We shall punish all the wicked and the proud.

(Abraham)
If you aim for the wicked
And some righteous you see
Would you still send destruction
Or revise your decree?

Perhaps there were fifty, Would they be condemned? Would the Judge of Creation Bring destruction on them?

(Melchizedek)
If I find in Sodom
Fifty righteous there,
Dwelling in the city,
Then that place I will spare.

(Melchizedek/Angels)
Fervent prayers, fervent prayers that intercede,
When the righteous cry for another's need;
Fervent prayers, fervent prayers, they avail much;
By the selfless plea our God is touched.

(Abraham)
I am mere dust and ashes
And I speak to the Lord,
But for five less than fifty,
Would you hold back the sword?

(Melchizedek)
If I find in these cities
Forty-five employed
Who are counted as righteous,
They will not be destroyed.

(Abraham)
Gomorrah and Sodom
To destruction are bound,
But would your purpose be altered
If two score were found?

(Melchizedek)
For that number in Sodom
My plans I would break.
I would never destroy it
For forty's sake.

(Abraham) O please be not angry, that I intercede. I speak to you boldly, for more I dare plead. Suppose there were thirty of the praiseworthy kind. (Melchizedek) I will never destroy it if thirty I find.

(Abraham) O please be not angry if I ask you again, Would you spare it for twenty? (Melchizedek) I would spare it for ten.

(Abraham, Melchizedek, Angels)
The humble cry, and God will hear,
From heaven He shall bend His ear.
Regarding each petition with great care.
Their supplications He has heard
From every tear to every word,
Attentively He listens to each prayer.

By selfless intercession God is touched; These righteous, fervent prayers avail much.

REJOICE, O BARREN

(Sarah)

Today we celebrate this son of promise! My lord has made this merry feast. My son is weaned and growing quickly And so my joy has now increased.

Rejoice, O barren woman! Your voice now join along In joyful hallelujah! Break forth in festive song!

(Sarah)

When I was taken by a king
Who thought my lord was just a brother,
Our God had cursed the noble house
That not one wife could be a mother.
So when the king perceived the way
All blessings might resume,
The prayers of my lord Abraham
Restored the barren womb.

(People)
Rejoice, O barren woman!
Your voice now join along
In joyful hallelujah!
Break forth in festive song!

(Sarah)
Through faith in wondrous promises,
New power I received;
No human capability
Could cause me to conceive:
Performing the impossible,
Our God has made me laugh;
May all who hear these miracles
Now join on my behalf! Ha!

May all those who follow,
Those counted as righteous,
Be children like Isaac,
The children of promise.
Look to your father Abraham
To lead you to the Lord,
To Sarah as your mother
In whose womb you were formed.

CAST THEM OUT!

(Sarah)

Today we celebrate this son of promise! Yet ruined is our joyous feast. The servant's boy is mocking Isaac, And so my scorn has now increased.

There is the laughter of disbelief; There is the laughter of delight; But the laughter I hear Is not one of cheer, But of scoffing, derision and spite.

Surely my lord hears it too;
His jeers are at Isaac's expense.
My son's persecution
Requires retribution.
What mother would not rise in defense?

Cast them out, the slave and her boy!
Cast them out, lest our home be destroyed!
Cast them out, both servant and son!

Lest they deprive the promised one, The only promised one!

When one is the son of slave, And the other the son of the free, Then both cannot share The honor of heir For this fact I will make no apology.

I had no objection to be called just a "sister."
I thought I was willing to be one of two wives.
But being one of two mothers,
And watching our sons,
A new, sordid envy has only begun.

GOD WILL PROVIDE

(Melchizedek)
The servant's flight do not protest,
And for the lad be not distressed,
In all that Sarah said to you now heed
Through Isaac shall your seed be called,
Yet Hagar's son I have foretold
Will be a nation since he is your seed.

God will provide, God will provide, All of his needs are already supplied. Remember his seed is soon multiplied; Trust in this promise: God will provide.

THIRST

(Hagar)
My son, the bottle is empty;
The water is spent;
Sleep under this shrub,

While your mother laments.

By men and by nature we have been reviled; Now let me not see the death of the child.

(Melchizedek, Angels)
The humble cry, and God will hear,
From heaven He will bend His ear,
Regarding each petition with great care.
Their supplications He has heard,
From every tear to every word,
Attentively He listens to each prayer.
This trait of God shall be contained

Within your son's appointed name: Ishmael: It means "God will hear" His affairs God will steer. "Ishmael": For the pleas Of a mother on her knees.

What ails you, Hagar, that you cry?
God hears the lad from where he lies;
Fear not; consider what he shall become
For I will multiply his seed,
A numberless amount indeed,
Arise and now return unto your son.
Though destined here to live untamed,
Remember his appointed name:

Behold, a well of water Now springing from the ground; These living streams Will intervene; So new life may abound.

God will provide, God will provide, All of his needs are already supplied. Remember his seed is soon multiplied; Trust in this promise: God will provide.

BY FAITH

(Melchizedek) Abraham, Abraham (Abraham) Here I am, Here I am.

(Melchizedek)

Take now your son, the son whom you love, And go to a mountain I will tell you of, Three days from this place; there I will require You offer your son, as an offering of fire.

(Abraham)

Just as God had said.

By faith, when I was called to leave the home I made, Though I did not know where I was to go, By faith, I obeyed.
By faith, I dwelled in tents, a stranger to this land.
By faith, I confessed my seed would possess
The portion God had planned.
By faith, my wife conceived by one as good as dead;
And where life could not form, a child would be born,

I believe in God who brings back from the dead, Who calls things that are not as though they were. I believe in God and hope against all hope That all which He has promised is sure!

But what good is my belief
If not upheld by deeds?
For faith without works cannot survive.
My faith all men will know
By the works I now will show;
My faith—my faith is alive!

So by faith, I will obey and make this sacrifice Our only begotten son, the only promised one, By faith, I pay this price. And by faith, I know that God Can rouse him from death's sleep. The blade of this knife has already cut off his life. But God's covenant He will keep.

No doubt or unbelief, no agony or grief,
Will cause my faith to waver in this storm.
But stronger now it glows, God's glory in me grows,
What He has pledged, yes He will now perform!

GOD WILL PROVIDE

(Isaac) My father, my father! (Abraham) Here am I, my son. (Isaac) Our servants wait yonder Till our worship is done.

You brought the fire, and I bore the wood; You built this altar where God said you should. But where is the gift my father has planned? What shall we offer? Where is the lamb? Father, help me to understand.

(Abraham)

God will provide, God will provide, Every need is already supplied. The things we require are never denied; Have faith, my son: God will provide.

A lamb has been chosen which God foreordained; The offering He ordered is bound to be slain. A lamb without blemish, a lamb without spot A pure sacrifice is bound for this lot. (Isaac) As sheep with the shearers, I silently wait.
(Abraham) A lamb to the slaughter,
He yields to this fate.
(Isaac) A lamb has been chosen
Which God foreordained;
(Both) The offering He ordered is bound to be slain.

(Abraham) I give to my Lord the best of my best! (Angels) Abraham! Abraham! (Abraham) Here I am! Here I am! (Angels) Upon your son stretch not your hand; Nor do any harm unto the lad. For God will provide, God will provide, There in the thicket a ram is supplied. Instead of your son, its blood is applied. Here on His mountain, God will provide.

NOW I KNOW

(Melchizedek)
Now I know that you fear God.
Now I know you hold nothing back from me.
Now I know you will keep all my commandments,
No matter what the cost,
No matter what the loss.
Now I know; this I plainly see.

Now I know I will bless you.

Now I know that these promises are sure.

Now I know I will multiply your family,

As the sands upon the shore,

As the stars forevermore.

Now I know this will stand secure.

Your seed shall rule the world, All families shall be blessed. And all the human race Shall understand My grace And every nation shall be at rest.

Now I know that I swear this. Now I know on my life I make this vow. Now I know that I will make it happen. If it requires dying, Then I will perish trying. Now I know; this is certain now.

REACH FOR THAT CITY

(Abraham) In this world we have no home, As pilgrims just passing through: (Sarah) Not of this life, mere strangers here, Yet a better homeland we pursue. (Isaac) So we seek a lasting city, Which is just beyond our clutch. (Hagar) Though we see it in the distance, It seems close enough to touch!

(Quartet)

So we reach for that city!
We fix our eyes and stretch our hands.
We reach for that heavenly home!
We reach for that promised land!

(Chorus)

To this land it shall descend This tabernacle shall endure. Forever bound into the earth, So eternally it stands secure.

When we reach our destination, Ending all anticipation; With God's purpose now achieved, And His promises received, (Quartet) Forever we will stand on sure foundations!

So we step, so we stride, with our God as our guide, Till this everlasting city we find.
We traverse, and we tread, for the hope just ahead.
We go forth, never looking behind!

(Chorus)

So we step, so we roam, Closer yet to our home. To this everlasting city we trod. On our path, at this pace, We advance toward this place Whose builder and maker is God!

(Sarah/Abraham) Our faith forms a footprint Revealing the way, (Hagar/Isaac) If others will follow, Their feet never stray; (Quartet) Though we travel in front, We will all be together one day, Where our spirits are longing to stay!

CHORAL UNION PERSONNEL

Rachel Cul Lynda Dawson, Am Lilian Harms, Rachel Hyde,Valerie Jenk	pika Azariah, Emily Burns, Alexis Cruz, pepper, Chrissie Dattolo, Brandi Davis, ber Eagle, Corinne Eagle, Sarah Evans, Julia Hayes, Ariel Hester, Lucia Hope, tins, Victoria Locher, Christy McCarty, di Rodis, Ariana Saranga, Ansley Welsh
ALTO	
TENOR	
BASS	
ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL	
ORCHESTRA	PERSONNEL
ORCHESTRA Flute Parthena Owens Oboe David Price	PERSONNEL Trumpet Karl Sievers Trombone Jeff Kidwell
Flute Parthena Owens	Trumpet Karl Sievers
Flute Parthena Owens Oboe David Price	Trumpet Karl Sievers Trombone Jeff Kidwell
Flute Parthena Owens Oboe David Price Clarinet Tara Heitz	Trumpet Karl Sievers Trombone Jeff Kidwell Timpani Roger Owens
Flute	Trumpet
Flute	Trumpet
Flute	Trumpet

Bass...... Larry Moore*, Jack Helsley