

# ABRAHAM

## A Man of Great Faith

**Intro;** A few folks are remembered from generation to generation.

**A. A few people become famous but most are forgotten**

1. *Eccl 9:5 For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten.*
2. *Eccl 8:10 Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also is vanity.*
3. *Eccl 2:16 For there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, Since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come. And how does a wise man die? As the fool!*
4. While we can think of many famous people who lived 100's and 1000's of years ago, they are **few compared to all who lived...**
5. History tells us a little about a few who were famous and important but almost nothing about the *'great unwashed masses.'*

**B. The Bible is the same; it tells of a few famous saints and sinners.**

1. Many of these are **'Heroes of Faith'**
2. *Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...*
3. These witnesses who surround us are the Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11. While several are mentioned, they are still few.
4. *Heb 11:31-33 By faith the harlot **Rahab** did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. <sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of **Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah**, also of **David and Samuel and the prophets**: <sup>33</sup> who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions...*
5. We need **heroes**, women and men to look up to. Young people especially need this –**not the modern rock, movie & sports stars.**
6. These **heroes of faith** were victorious over sin. They conquered, despite great odds, and they encourage us to overcome.
7. **We are running the race.** The heroes of faith surround us encouraging us to not give up. They make it and so can we.

**C. We are studying 'Mighty Men of God' this week.**

1. There are also **many mighty women of God** in the scriptures. Heroes can be men or women.
2. They are all examples to us. We learn from their examples how to be faithful to God and be saved.
3. As we study Might Men of God, we need to also become God's mighty men. **We must see what we can be.**

**D. Now we will look at Abraham, the 'Father of the Faithful'.**

## I. First, His legacy...

### A. First we will see who Abraham became.

1. We will turn mostly to the N.T. and see what is said of him **after his death**. This is who he became. This is **why** we study him.
2. Then we will go back to the O.T. and see **how** he became that person. We will see his **growth of faith**.

### B. Abraham became important in both Old & New Testaments...

1. He is mentioned by name over 250 times in O.T. and over 50 in N.T. He is the **'Father of the Faithful'** in both covenants.
2. Jehovah is described as the **'God of Abraham'** about **16 times** –mostly with Isaac and Jacob.
3. *Gen 28:13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.*
4. *Psa 47:9 The princes of the people have gathered together, The people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.*
5. Abraham is also the **'Father of the Faithful'**. He is the father of the faithful **both under Moses AND Christ**.
6. *Rom 4:11-12 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.*
7. *Gal 3:5-9 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?; 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*
8. Jehovah is the **'God of Abraham'**. Abraham is the **'Father of the Faithful.'** These help describe his great faith.
9. Paul tells us in Romans 4 that **he walked in 'steps of faith'**. We must walk in those same steps of faith.
10. Since we are also descendents of Abraham, with the Jews, the history of the O.T. is **our family history** –even though it is not always very pretty.

### C. Abraham was also the 'friend of God'.

1. While I believe Jehovah has many 'friends', very few are directly called so in scripture. It would be a great privilege to be called God's friend.
2. *2 Chron 20:7 "Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?"*
3. *Isa 41:8 "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.*
4. *James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*
5. I know of only Moses who is also called God's friend, but many others are certainly friends of God;
  - a. **David**; A man after God's heart
  - b. **Enoch**; He was not because God took him
  - c. **Elijah**; Taken alive in a fiery chariot
  - d. **Daniel**; Greatly loved by God; 3 times
  - e. **Paul**; Caught up into the third heaven
  - e. **Isaiah**; Here am I, send me

6. *Exod 33:11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.*
7. *Deut 34:10 But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face...*
8. We can be friends of God today. We can be friends of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior. Jesus tell us how.
9. *John 15:14-15 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

**D. We see then who Abraham became; one of the most important people in Scripture** –along with Moses, David and Jesus Christ

## II. Second, His History

**A. Now we will see how Abraham became who he became...**

1. First, Abraham was probably not always a strict follower of God and Him only... **He may have been a pagan...**
2. *Josh 24:2-3 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.'"*
3. **Sin**, the god of the Moon and the goddess **Nin-gal** were the main gods worshiped in Ur. Abraham's family may have worshiped several gods, including Jehovah. **Sin was also worshipped in Haran.**
4. We will see that **Jacob** and his family worship the idols **after going back to Haran** where Abraham's family was.
5. God called Abraham away from his family to serve only Him. **Abraham's faith grew until he did only recognize the Lord.**
6. Abraham left what would be the greatest nation of its time to go what we would call a **'Third World Nation'**. It would be like leaving the **U.S.** to live in **Belize**. It would take a **great sacrifice** –Haran was also highly advanced...
7. *Abraham lived in the city of Ur (Gen. 11:28, 31) at the height of its splendor. The city was a prosperous center of religion and industry. Thousands of recovered clay documents attest to thriving business activity. Excavations of the royal cemetery, which dates from about 2900 to 2500 b.c., have revealed a surprisingly advanced culture. Uncovered were beautiful jewelry and art treasures, including headwear, personal jewelry, and exquisite dishes and cups. -- Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary.*

**B. Consider the call of Abraham...**

1. *Gen 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*
2. In this passage Abram will become a great nation. Later **'Abram'** (*Exalted Father*) will be called **'Abraham'** (*Father of a Multitude*).
3. *Gen 17:4-5 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many*

*nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations."*

4. Consider the list of nations that come from Abraham.
  - a. **Israel** during the Judges and United Kingdom periods
  - b. **Israel** and **Judah** under the Divided Kingdom period. These are from Jacob.
  - c. Esau, Abraham's grandson, become father of the kingdom of **Edom**.
  - d. Ishmael's descendents become the **Arab nations**. While they were minor in the O.T. period there are many of them today.
  - e. The **church** today. While it is the church of Christ and the kingdom of God it was promised to Abraham—all nations would be blessed in his seed.
5. Abraham was 75 when he left a comfortable home in Haran and then wandered in fear in a strange land for a hundred years—Gen 25:7; He died at the age of 175.
6. **Abraham lived in fear for a hundred years for a land he would not see nor his children for hundreds of years.**
7. *Gen 15:13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years."*
8. Abraham quit worshipping idols—his grandchildren will start again. Time and again we see he builds an altar and calls on the name of Jehovah. Time and time again his descendents will return to idols.
9. *Gen 13:3-4 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.*
10. Several times Abraham lost his wife Sarah because **he said she was his sister**. He lived in fear of being killed because of her.
11. *Gen 12:11-13 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."*
12. While we must accept the **culture of the day** and recognize that **women** were usually considered **property**, we are still amazed that he **did not have enough faith in God to protect him**.
13. **Abraham's faith does grow**. We do not know **how often God talked to him**. He may have **felt alone** much of the time and depended on himself and not God.
14. In **Gen 12:14 ff.** and **Gen 20** he loses Sarah. Jehovah rescues her. **Yet his son Isaac will continue to show the same lack of trust—Gen 26.**

### **C. Abraham also shows a lack of faith in regard to his seed.**

1. God promises that *he would become a great nation and in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed.*
2. Abraham tries to **help God out** and provide the child Jehovah did not give him. He may have thought **God expected him to come up with the seed** and then God would bless them.
3. *Gen 15:1-4 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."*
4. **In that day**, if a family did not have a child then a slave born in their house was declared the heir. A wife could not inherit. Nuzi and Mari tables tell us a lot about this period of time.
5. *Gen 16:2-3 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing*

*children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup> Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.*

6. The results of this union is **Ishmael**. There will be **enmity** between Sarah and Hagar and later Isaac and Ishmael.
7. This was a legal thing to do for them, in earthly matters –**Nuzu tablets**. A childless woman could have her husband give her a child through her servant. **Ishmael was from Abraham's body**.
8. While he tried to do God's will his way, when told he was wrong Abraham always **backed off** and kept obeying the Lord. This was true with **Eliezer** and **Ishmael**.
9. *Gen 15:5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>6</sup> And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*
10. *Gen 17:19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.  
Gen 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore to him; Isaac.*
11. **It had been 25 years since the promise was first given.** God finally fulfills His promise in His time. This is similar to God telling **Zachariah** his prayers were answered.
  - a. Luke 1:5-25; Zachariah had not asked for a child for many years.
  - b. God gave him the child he asked for, but in his time.

#### **D. Lets consider how much Abraham's faith grows.**

1. Abraham finally had his son. Isaac was the child of promise and the one to fulfill all the promises God made and Abraham sacrificed for.
2. **Genesis 22;** God calls upon Abraham to make the supreme sacrifice. He asks him to offer his only son. Abraham did so.
3. *Heb 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," <sup>19</sup> concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*
4. Abraham had decided how God would do things. He would kill Isaac and God would raise him up. We often think about how God should do things.
5. In a sense Abraham's offering of His only Son is a **type** of God offering Jesus Christ. In Abraham's mind Isaac was dead. Someone has said, **"What God did not demand of Abraham, He demanded of Himself."** God actually offered His Son.
6. **Yet the Lord, once again, does things His way.** We do see that **Abraham believed in life after death.** By the first century the Jews believed that Abraham welcomed all Jews into Paradise.
7. *Luke 16:22 "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.*
8. Abraham's faith grew greatly. Ours can too. We must walk in the steps of faith of Abraham if our faith is to grow.

**E. We see then how Abraham became the 'Father of the Faithful'. He always obeyed God.**

**Con; We should want to be friends of God today.**

**A. To do this we must walk in the steps of faith and let our faith grow.**

1. *Luke 17:5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."*
2. *2 Thess 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,*
3. *2 Pet 3:18 ... but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*
4. Faith can grow if we continue to serve the Lord and do not give up. We either move forward or fall back. The choice is up to us.

**B. We begin by becoming a Christian.**

1. We must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He died for us that we might be saved.
2. We must repent of our sins and turn to God. We are then baptized (immersed in water) to have our sins washed away to become a Child of God.
3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
5. See also Matt 28:18-20, Act 8:35-39, 17:30-31, 18:8, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, Gal 3:26-29, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.

**C. Can we help anyone serve God and become His mighty person?**