

Abraham the Father of Faith

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Background:

Abraham is the father of all who have faith (Rom 4:12-17).

Rom 4:16 ... but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Outline of Abraham's life (Gen 12:1 - 25:17)

Abraham leaves Babylon with his father, who dies enroute to the land of Canaan (Gen 11:26-32).

The call and promise of God to Abraham (Gen 12:1-5).

The first test of Abraham's faith (Gen 12:6-20).

Abraham lies about Sarah and his relationship to Pharaoh

Abraham and Lot part ways (Gen 13:1-18).

Abraham defeats the Army five kings in rescuing Lot (Gen 14:1-16).

Abraham tithes of all he has (Gen 14:17-24).

The Abrahamic covenant (Gen 15:1-21).

The second test of Abraham's faith (Gen 16:1-16).

Abraham agrees with Sarah to have a child through Hagar.

Confirmation of the covenant (Gen 17:1-27).

The intercession of Abraham (Gen 18:1-33).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-38).

The third test of Abraham's faith (Gen 20:1-18).

Abraham lies about Sarah and his relationship to Abimelech.

The birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1-21).

The final years of Abraham (Gen 22:1 - 25:17).

The faith/obedience of Abraham, he obeyed God when:

He didn't know where he was going (Heb 11:8-10).

He didn't know how to get there (Heb 11:11-12).

He didn't know when God would fulfill His promise (Heb 11:13-16).

He didn't know why God asked him to offer up Isaac (Heb 11:17-19).

Abraham's righteousness is a gift (credited, imputed, reckoned, counted) to him.

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (see Rom 4:9-10, 22; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23).

Aspects of Abraham's faith

The Faith of self-surrender (Heb 11:8).

Abraham trusted God fully, he walked with God, not knowing where he was going,

Other biblical examples:

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads - shall be yours (Dt 11:24; Jos 1:3).

The priests had to step into the water for them to part (Josh 13-16).

Naaman is healed of leprosy by going and washing in the river Jordan (2Ki 5:1-15).

Gideon and 300 men fought a battle with trumpets, torches and empty pitchers (Jdg 7:8-18).

The Faith of patience (Heb 11:9).

Abraham lived in a foreign land as an alien with hope, waiting for God's promise.

Ps 39:12 I am a stranger with You, a sojourner like all my fathers

Ps 119:19 I am a stranger in the earth

1Pt 1:1 to those who reside as aliens

1Pt 2:11 as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lust which war against your soul

Phil 3:20 our citizenship is in heaven

The Faith of influence (Heb 11:10).

As he communicated to Sarah - she too considered Him faithful who had promised. Her faith was based on the faithfulness of God (Gen 18:11).

Sarah has faith for the impossible (Heb 11:11-12; Gen 17:15-22; 18:9-15; 21:1-5; Rom 4:18-21)

The results of Sarah's faith:

She received the ability to conceive beyond the proper time of life.

She helped Abraham receive the promise.

We are often overcome first by doubts. But faith can be restored. Such "second-chance" faith can enable us to experience vitality in areas of our lives we saw as being dead.

Eternal Faith (Heb 11:13-16)

Abraham was living for eternal rewards.

Ecl 3:11 God puts eternity into the hearts of man

Rom 4:13 the promise to Abraham was the world to come

Heb 12:22 we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem

Heb 13:14 we are seeking a city that is to come

Principles of Abraham's faith: (Heb 11:8-19; Rom 4:17-22)

Faith enabled Abraham to believe (Heb 11:8-10).

The life of faith is a life of risk, of stepping out into the unknown with nothing more solid before us than God's Word. Faith enabled Abraham to take an uncertain journey, not knowing where he was going, but only that God had called him.

What did Abraham believe?

1. He believed that God would create a nation through his seed (Gen 12:2-5; Rom 4:17-18).
2. He believed that God would give him a child against all odds (Gen 15:1-6; Heb 11:11-12).
3. He believed in the eternal city (Heb 11:8-10, 15-16).
4. He believed in God's power to raise the dead (Heb 11:17-19; Rom 4:18-22).

Faith can enable you and me to take risks as well. We can even stand long periods of uncertainty, because faith assures us of His eternal purposes.

Faith led Abraham to obey, It made him obey the word of God.

Faith leads to obedience.

Jas 2:21-23 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

Rom 1:5 ... to bring about the obedience of faith (Rom 16:26)

Faith led Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Heb 11:17-19; Gen 22:1-18).

Faith leads to sacrifice.

Mt 16:24-26 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mt 10:39; Mk 8:34-38; Lk 9:23-26; 17:33; Jn 12:23-26).

Faith leads to victory over temptations and trials (1Jn 5:4).

1Jn 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Faith is based on God's Word

Abraham based his faith on the promise of God.

Rom 4:17-18 as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU"

Rom 4:18 ... which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

Heb 11:18 ... "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."

Abraham knew the nature of God and consequently was able to believe what God said.

God gives life to the dead.

Heb 11:19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead ... (Rom 4:17) considered (logizomai); to take an inventory; It is used 41 times in the New Testament) – to conclude, (ac-) count (of), + despise, esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on).

God calls into being that which does not exist.

Rom 4:17 ... who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Abraham believes in hope - against hope.

Rom 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, ...according to that which had been spoken, ...

Abraham contemplated his and Sarah's physical condition:

Rom 4:19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

Abraham did not waver in unbelief, but rather, grew strong in faith

Rom 4:20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

Result = he was fully assured (full of faith) that what God had promised He was able to perform it.

Romans 4:21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

Characteristics of Abraham:

He was a friend of God (2Chr 20:7)

He was quick to obey (Gen 22:1-18)

He tithed (Gen 14:20; Heb 7:1-4)

He was generous (Gen 13:8-9)

He was courageous (Gen 14:13-16)

He was independent, not following the crowd (Gen 14:21-23)

He was a man of prayer (Gen 18:23-33)

He was a man of faith (Gen 15:6)

He was wealthy (Gen 13:2)

He was revered as a mighty prince (Gen 23:5-6)

He was a good provider (Gen 25:5-6)

References to Abraham in the New Testament:

He is in the hall of faith (Heb 11:8–10).

Christ is the seed of Abraham (Mt 1:1).

He foresees the days of Christ (Jn 8:56).

He heard the Gospel preached (Gal 3:8).

He was justified by faith (Rom 4:1-12).

His faith is seen in his obedience (Jas 2:21-23).

He is the father of all believers (Mt 8:11; Rom\ 4:11-25; Gal 3:7, 29).

He sees the eternal city (Heb 11:8-10, 13-16).
The Abrahamic covenant is still valid (Lk 1:73; Ac 3:25).
His two sons are illustrations of two covenants (Gal 4:22-31).
Tithing has a deeper meaning (Heb 7:9-10).
Headship in manage (1Pt 3:5-7).
Our home is in heaven (Lk 16:19-25).

References used in this study:

The teacher's commentary
The Bible exposition commentary (by Wiersbe)
Willmington's Bible handbook
The New Bible Commentary
The Epistle to the Hebrews (by BF Westcott)
Nelson's New Testament Survey:
Nelson's topical Bible