

**CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH, SURREY DOCKS DISTRICT
SOLUTION CENTRE
47-49 HIGH STREET, SWANSCOMBE, KENT, DA10 0QA
Wednesday 30th May 2018 Bible Study**

The Life And Character Of Abraham: A Friend Of Faith

Brethren, by the grace of God, for the next few months, the Ministers have been led by the Holy Spirit to be studying Bible characters on our Wednesday Bible Study classes as well as our House Fellowships. The theme of the month shall be reserved for Sunday preaching and possibly Friday Night Prayers only. The reason is that, we want to study the Bible more, to avoid monotonous repetition and to encourage more attendance. In view of this, we shall be starting this Bible Characters Study series with the "***Life And Character Of Abraham: A Friend Of Faith***"

Meaning of name: Abram means "exalted father". Abraham means "father of a great number".

Ancestry and family life: Abraham was the tenth generation from Noah. He was descended from Shem and his father was Terah. Abram had two brothers and married his half-sister, Sarai. From Joshua 24:2 we know that Abraham's father and grandfather worshiped false gods. Abraham was quite wealthy and had many servants. Abraham is the ancestor of the Hebrews, Arabs, Edomites, and many other tribes like the Midianites.

When and where he lived: Originally Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldeans. This was where God originally called Abram (Acts 7:2-3). This was a "wealthy, populous, and sophisticated pagan center of southern Mesopotamia. Abraham and his family stopped at Haran for a while. Finally they arrived in Canaan, where Abraham sojourned the rest of his life. The route from Ur to Canaan was about 2400 km.

Abraham's Occupation: Some say that Abraham was a merchant. He evidently had great wealth. He was probably familiar with shepherding since he had many flocks and herds (Gen. 13:2). From his actions, it seems that Abraham is wise and learned.

Abraham's Weaknesses:

1. **Deceptive** (Gen. 12:12-20, 20)- Abraham was deceptive about his wife Sarah. Two times he said that she was his sister in order to avoid the possibility of being killed. This was a lie. Can you see any other possible character problems shown by this lie. I believe it showed a lack of love for Sarah. He didn't protect her as he should have and it seemed he valued his own life more than her own.

2. **Abraham exhibited a lack of trust in God's promise** to give him a son through Sarah, and was easily talked into something that was not God's will, that is taking Hagar as a wife (Gen. 16). He wanted to do things his own way and "help God out". The result was devastating and is lasting even till now.

Abraham's Strengths:

1. **Faith** (Heb. 11:8-12, Gen 12:1-4) – This was Abraham's most outstanding quality. Although he failed at times, he often showed amazing faith. What are some examples from his life where he showed great faith? He left his home. He took the ugly land and let Lot have the good land even though he was the elder. He was willing to sacrifice Isaac. He believed God that God would provide a son for him. What about where he lacked faith?

2. **Unselfishness** (Gen. 13:9) - How did Abraham show himself to be unselfish? Although he was older than Lot and probably could have chosen for himself which land to settle in, he gave Lot the first choice. Through this selfless act God's will was accomplished and Abraham went to Canaan, where God greatly multiplied him. Later Abraham risked his life to save Lot.

3. **Worshiped/depended on God** - Abraham continually was building alters to God and giving him the glory and praise. This showed his dependence upon God for everything in his life.

4. **Tithing** (Gen. 14:20, Heb. 7:4, Mal 3:7-12, 1 John 3:17) – Abraham honoured God with his money. He wasn't greedy and didn't want to receive spoils or money from the king of Sodom. He instead gave 10% to Melchizedek. Again, God blessed Abraham and multiplied his possessions all the more.

5. **Hospitality** (Gen. 18) - Abraham was very hospitable to strangers. He invited the three men to eat and killed a calf for them.

6. **Perseverance in prayer/mercy** (Gen. 18, 20:17) - Abraham pleaded earnestly with God for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. He "stood in the gap" so to speak. We should also pray with this kind of boldness and concern for others.

Lessons To Learn From Abraham's Life:

1. **We should all be willing to leave our "comfort zone" in order to follow God.** Abraham left his country, his friends, and many of his relatives in order to follow God's call to him. It wasn't nearly as easy as it was today. The end was unknown. The land was unknown. It was a more unstable world and far more dangerous. But Abraham was obedient. What was the result of his obedience? God may ask us to leave our comfort zone in order to follow him. This could take many forms. He may ask you to leave your family and country in order to serve Him. He may ask you to quit your job. He may tell you to share the gospel with somebody when it makes you nervous. He may ask you to befriend another believer or unbeliever and therefore spend less time with your own circle of friends. Are you ready to make sacrifices, to go into the unknown, to put complete faith in God and obey His call? It starts with the small things (Luke 16:10). What do you think is an area where God is calling you to have faith in Him and leave your comfort zone?

2. **God is a God of many chances.** He does stand to destroy us the minute we make a mistake. Even when Abraham failed, God looked out for him and kept His promise to him and gave him several chances to again and again to make sure He fulfilled His promises to him.

3. **He was unselfish.** Are we the type of people who always want to pick first, or do we give others the first pick and look out for their interests? Abraham gave Lot the first pick of the land, but we often quarrel and fight and have wrong motives even over simple things. How can you show an unselfish heart towards others? The point is that we should be more concerned with others' well-being than our own. The best thing about this is that when we are concerned about others, God is concerned about us and multiplies our joy and blessings all the more. Compare the later result of Lot and Abraham.

4. **We need to give tithes and offerings to God.** This is commanded in the Bible (Heb. 7:4, Mal 3:7-12, 1 John 3:17). Our money is not our own. It is God's. This is another example where we need to have faith and be obedient to God's command. If we hold back then God will hold back from us and may allow the "devourer" to use up all of our money. If we give freely, then God will give even more in return. This is a principle seen in Abraham's life and throughout the Bible. Right after this event God told him, "I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

5. **We need to do things God's way, instead of our way.** We do things our way when we don't have complete trust in God or His promises. When this happens we botch things up and make a mess. The result of Abraham's sin still lives today. Don't try to come up with a better plan than what you read in the Bible. Don't try to "help God out". Do things His way.

6. **We should be hospitable** and be free with our home, time, possessions, skills, and money to help others.

7. **We should never doubt God.** It would have been easy for Abraham to doubt when God told him to sacrifice Isaac. God will never lead us the wrong way. Even when we don't know why God wants us to do something and even if we don't know where it will lead, we should follow in faith.

The Summary Of Abraham's Life And Events By Chapter

1. **The Call of Abraham** (Gen. 11:27-12:9). Abraham moved from being a moon-worshipper to following the Lord. He learned to hear, believe, and act on God's voice.
2. **Sarah's Abduction** (Gen. 12:10-20 and 20:1-18). Famine struck and they moved to Egypt, where Sarah was abducted and Abraham deceived to save his own life. But God delivered Sarah and honored Abraham.
3. **Abraham Rescues His Nephew Lot** (Gen. 13-14). Abraham's promise to Abraham was renewed, even though he didn't get the choice land like Lot. Lot was enslaved but was rescued by uncle Abraham's private army. Abraham paid tithe to Melchizedek, one of his allies in the battle - and a type of Christ.
4. **God's Covenant with Abraham** (Gen. 15). Abraham had a vision from God in which his call was renewed and the promise spelt out more clearly. Abraham's belief in the Lord was reckoned to him as righteousness.
5. **God Speaks to Hagar, Abraham's Other Wife** (Gen. 16). Abraham had a son by Sarah's servant Hagar. When Ishmael was born, Hagar received promises of God's blessing on Ishmael, patriarch of the Arab tribes and Islam's tie to Ibrahim (Gen. 17:19-20).
6. **The Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham** (Gen. 17). Abraham's and Sarah's names were changed and God's promises to them confirmed and Abraham circumcised those in his household.
7. **Abraham Intercedes for Sodom** (Gen. 18). Three visitors made promises to Abraham of a son to be born to Sarah the following year, Sarah overheard it and laughed. Abraham interceded with one of the angels for the deliverance of Sodom and Gomorrah where his nephew Lot was living.
8. **The Destruction of Sodom** (Gen. 20). Here are important lessons for the Christians trying to live too close to the boarder line between righteousness and unrighteousness.
9. **Isaac Born, Ishmael Banished** (Gen. 21). Isaac was born as promised. Though Hagar and Ishmael were sent away, God provided for them and renewed his promise to Ishmael. Abraham moved to Beersheba and called on the name of the Lord.
10. **Abraham Offers Isaac on Mt. Moriah** (Gen. 22). Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice him to the Lord on Mt. Moriah. God provided a sacrifice and Abraham called him Jehovah-Jireh, the God Who Provides. God renewed his promise to Abraham once again.
11. **Death of Sarah and Abraham** (Gen. 22:20-25:11). Sarah died at the age of 127 in Hebron. Abraham purchases a burial plot from Hittites at Machpelah, the only property he owned in the land God has promised to his descendants. Abraham took another wife, Keturah, who bore him six more sons. Abraham dies at age 175 years and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael at Machpelah.

In conclusion, let us emulate the life, the character and the obedient lifestyles of Abraham who God Himself called "my friend (Isa. 41:8) and other Bible Writers affirmed him as a "friend of God" (Isa. 41:8, 2Chro. 20:7, Jam. 2:23). He was a Patriarch, a hero, a legend, he was wealthy, he was godly, a good example of character, a man of faith and at the end of his life, he inherited eternity (Luke 16:24). He started as nobody, he was not perfect, he failed few times, but ended up achieving all these accolades to the extent that three major world religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) traced their origins back to him. Therefore, there's hope for everyone of us well. Where you are now is not your end, there's glorious future for you in Christ. Remain blessed!