

ABRAHAM, THE SPIRITUAL PILGRIM

Part 1

INTRODUCTION:

[Genesis 11:31, 32](#) Abraham is one of the most central figures in the Old Testament. He left an affluent and ungodly culture to begin a God-directed pilgrimage that would be characteristic of the Christian life. His native land was Ur of the Chaldees. Gross idolatry was being practiced there. Perhaps Abraham had observed people offering their children in the fire to Molech. His father, Terah, made an attempt to remove he and his family from this influence, but for some reason settled in nearby Haran where he died. It is possible that Abraham received the call that was originally given to his father.

[Genesis 12:2, 3](#)

* Abraham believed in the veracity of God's initial call to him. This opened the door for a growing covenant relationship with God.

APPLICATION: It is so important that we respond to God's written and spoken commands. God is utterly sincere about His promises. To disbelieve one portion is to nullify the whole. God stakes His character on His Word. We must believe in the goodness and faithfulness of God and not in our abilities or worthiness.

[Genesis 12:4, 5](#)

* Abraham acted in obedience by beginning a pilgrimage that would separate him unto God and His purposes. He actually began a new people to be known as the Hebrews. 'A 'Hebrew' is identified as one who has crossed over.

APPLICATION: The call of God will bring, if not physical, a spiritual separation from our former sinful influences. This is known as sanctification.

[Luke 14:26](#). The Lord identifies us as 'new creatures.' [II Cor. 5:17](#)

[Hebrews 11:8-10](#)

Abraham left the destination to God. His duty was to follow the leading of the Lord. His faith went far beyond an earthly homeland. He 'saw' heaven as final resting place.

APPLICATION: Can we trust God for guidance and identify ourselves as pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. Do we have a heavenward vision or are we materially motivated?

[Genesis 12:7, 8](#)

Because of his faith and obedience, notable spiritual experiences took place in his life. He built altar as memorials of these times. He also built altars of worship as he pursued the will of his God.

APPLICATION: We must be careful that our experiences arise out of a heart of obedient faith to God's word. Experiences, in themselves, will not keep you in the difficult times. In the spiritual pilgrimage there are joyful times and there are dry times. We must learn to worship God in every station of the journey.

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[Genesis 12:10-20](#), [Gen. 20:1-3](#), [Gen. 26:7-8](#)

It was Abraham's faith that notarized him among men, and not that he had impeccable character. He succumbed to fear of famine by going to Egypt. Fear of what people might do to him caused him to fabricate a half truth about his wife, Sarah. This happened twice with detrimental consequences to his hosts. It was a ruse that his son, Isaac used even more blatantly.

APPLICATION:

The saying is true; "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." Abraham is the prime example of a truth well established in the New Testament; "the just shall live by faith." It is faith in God that justifies in spite of our own shortcomings. But beware, our children often carry on our character flaws.

[Genesis 13:8-17](#)

Abraham was not a self-made man, he was a blessed man. He could afford to be gracious to his nephew because he had been shown much grace from God. He was a peacemaker. By showing grace he received an even greater assurance of God's promises to him. He sacrificed the short term privileges, for the long term blessings.

APPLICATION:

[Matthew 5:9](#); Are we willing, for the sake of peace, to prefer our brothers and sisters in matters that pertain to this life? If we acknowledge that some have the ability to be troublemakers, insisting on their own way, cannot we give ourselves to the great task of making peace? Someone has said, "If something is meant to be yours, let it go. If it returns to you, then it is truly yours. If it doesn't, then it was never meant to be."

[Genesis 14:14-24](#)

In the spirit of love and concern for his nephew, Abraham organized a remarkable military feat by rescuing Lot and many others from the king of Elam. He did not become indulgent in victory, but was careful to guard God's glory. He paid tithe of the spoils to Melchizedek whose priesthood he acknowledged, and he received yet another blessing.

APPLICATION:

There are spiritual battles to be fought against spiritual powers that are wreaking havoc upon new and weakened believers. Will we engage ourselves in the battle? In victory will we acknowledge that we have been helped, and give God the glory? It should be enough that our brother has been 'saved.'

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Genesis 18:1-33

ABRAHAM'S HOSPITALITY

One of Abraham's virtues was his hospitality to others. In this setting, his generosity was immediately rewarded. These 'strangers' were sent from God with a very encouraging word for both Abraham and Sarah. They were going to be parents within a year. Was it too good to be true? Romans 4:19,20 tells us that Abraham didn't waver in his faith toward God. He truly believed.

APPLICATION:

It is important that we show kindness to the people God sends our way. Many times He uses 'strangers' to minister to us. Hebrews 13:2 tells us to be accommodating to strangers for some may be God's messengers known as angels. Is it possible that we have turned away angels, or better yet entertained them? We must not let the years of 'unproductive' prayers steal our ability to rejoice when the fulness of God's time has come for us to receive His promise.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION

Perhaps before Lot was even aware of his perilous situation, Abraham was warned of Sodom's coming judgment. It was only natural for Abraham to begin a series of intercessory prayers on behalf of the righteous in that condemned city. He pressed the issue of God's mercy until he was assured that the city would not be destroyed if ten righteous people could be found there. Sadly there were not ten. Lot had lost his extended family to the spirit of the world. Nevertheless, Abraham's prayer was instrumental in Lot's personal deliverance.

APPLICATION:

Entertaining God's presence gives us a perspective and warnings of the future that the world does not have. We are called to pray for the unsuspecting. God's mercies are great and our prayers make a huge difference in ways we cannot comprehend. Let us not fail in this closing hour to lift up our fellow believer, our friends and family in intercessory prayer. Eternity will reveal the difference.

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Part 4

Genesis 17:1-6, 15, 16

A NAME CHANGE

Abraham was known as Abram for ninety nine years. His wife's name was originally Sarai. The name Abram meant 'exalted father.' That is quite a name for a man who was childless most of his life. Before God brought the promise child to this couple, he changed their identity to better identify their blessed condition. A year before Isaac was born God appeared to Abram with new names for he and his wife. He would now be known as Abraham, which means 'a father of a Multitude.'

Sarai would receive the name Sarah which means 'princess.' Each step of faith took them further away from their disappointing past and closer to God's perfect will.

APPLICATION:

II Corinthians 5:17 tells us that if we are in Christ we are new creatures. It is important that we see ourselves as God does. Like Abraham we must receive the new identity for ourselves and fellow believers. In the Book of Revelation there is a promise to over comers that they would receive a new name. Revelation 2:17; Do you ever wonder what your new name might be?

Genesis 22:1-18

ABRAHAM IS TESTED

Abraham's faith comes to fruition with the long awaited birth of Isaac. He was the legitimate promise child in contrast to Ishmael who had been born thirteen years earlier by Sarah's servant girl, Hagar. A conflict began almost immediately as Ishmael despised and mocked the new child. Abraham was faced with a dilemma. Sarah demanded and God confirmed that Ishmael and his mother had to go. It was a difficult decision for Abraham for he loved Ishmael. But Ishmael represented faithless impatience, the natural man, and bondage. He could not coexist with the promise child. After their departure God then required Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. Would he place his beloved, his hope, his future on the altar before God? This is where Abraham's faith shines. He loves and trusts God so much that he would surrender everything to Him knowing that He would always do what was right. For this he received an unconditional and irrevokable assurance of God's continued blessings.

APPLICATION:

If we cannot give up our Ishmaels (our degenerate past) we certainly will not be willing to give up our Isaacs. (the good things) We must be careful lest we let the good things and good times come between us and God. What did Jesus mean in Matthew 10:37-39? Passing the test of faith always brings a greater degree of glory. I Peter 1:7-9 Hebrews 13:16-18

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Part 5

Genesis 18:17-19, 24:1-9

FATHER ABRAHAM & HIS CHILDREN

Abraham's calling in life was to be a great father. He filled this role for his nephew, Lot, whose father had passed away. God gave him a fatherly name (Abraham; 'a father of a multitude') and a father's heart. God trusted him to convey spirituality to those around him. His influence has gone far beyond his earthly seed, although many nations proudly trace their ancestry back to him. He is also known in the New Testament as the 'Father of the Faithful.' (Romans 4:11)(John 8:56) Israel referred to their God as 'the God of our father, Abraham.' The covenants of both the Old and New Testaments find their human roots in him. Jesus Himself was of the seed of Abraham. What a man! What a father!

One of the great fatherly acts Abraham performed was soliciting an appropriate bride for his grown son, Isaac. He knew his son's spiritual welfare would be greatly effected by who his life-mate would be. It was of such great concern to him that he put his servant under oath that Isaac would not be introduced to a Canaanite woman, who would bring her pagan and idolatrous influence into the marriage. The bride must have a spiritual heritage and knowledge of the one true God. And yet Isaac must not go back to where Abraham had come from. The chosen one must be willing to come to Canaan and continue with Isaac the spiritual pilgrimage. Abraham was confident that God would provide the right companion for his son. The servant, who had observed Abraham's walk of faith, sought God for the success of his commission. Again, God proved Himself faithful by preparing the heart of a young virgin of Mesopotamia named Rebekah. She and Isaac, would be God's couple to continue the spiritual dynasty.

APPLICATION

* There is a spiritual aspect to being a parent. Example has a great bearing upon a young child. Children should learn to admire and respect the good people in their lives. I Corinthians 4:15,16

I Corinthians 11:1 Titus 1:8 I Timothy 4:12

* A Godly example will reach beyond our own four walls.

* Parents should stress to their children the importance of marrying a believer.

* As parents we can facilitate them finding a godly companion by placing them in good company and praying fervently and faithfully for them. Future generations will be effected.

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Part 6

Genesis 22:16 -18, Hebrews 11:33

ABRAHAM'S OBITUARY

Abraham, also known as Abram, died at the age of 175 years. He was born and raised in Ur of the Chaldees. His father's name was Terah. Terah, purposing to move the family to Canaan, settled Haran where he died. While there, Abraham was called by God to leave his native land and acquaintances and to go wherever the Spirit of God would direct him to go. He left Haran and became a spiritual pilgrim always listening for God's direction in his life.

He and his wife, Sarah, had no children for many years. But very late in life they were granted by the most generous hand of God a son named Isaac. He was very near and dear to them. Abraham was a godly father and wanted the very best for his son, but realized that everything indeed belonged to God. In a giant act of faith he surrendered his son completely to God. He received an irrevocable promise of blessing from the Lord for this act of obedient faith.

Galatians 3:11, Genesis 23:1,2

Abraham would be the first to admit that he wasn't perfect, but he left a spiritual legacy that 'the just shall live by faith.' He took great delight in his wife Sarah and was greatly effected by her passing. He was very concerned that Isaac would marry a good woman. After much prayer and a brief search, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, became that special blessing to the family.

Later in life, he married Keturah. They had six sons. Although he loved all his children, he was made to know by God that the promised blessings given to him would continue on through Isaac. He was survived by his sons, Esau, Isaac, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Many nations since have proudly claim him as their ancestor.

James 2:23

Abraham had obtained much wealth through the blessing of the Lord. He was known as the 'Father of Many Nations,' the 'Father of The Faithful,' but the title he cherished most was he was 'A Friend of God.' He died in good old age and was gathered with his people. He was buried next to his wife Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. He perhaps was the inspiration of Psalms 112. His legacy lives on through his special miracle seed Jesus, the Christ, and those who believe.

BIBLE STUDIES

[CHRIST CHURCH, POCATELLO](#)

Pocatello, Idaho

1245 N Arthur - 83202

PASTOR, STEPHEN R. YADON