



Goahead Theological Seminary & College

9 East Homestead Ave. Palisades Park, NJ 07650 in USA
1-201-852-3600 / 1-917-530-1991 / gts theology@gmail.com

Abraham

Meaning: Father of many nations

His father was Terah, and his brothers were Nahor and Haran (Genesis 11:26). His original name, Abram, was changed to Abraham by the Lord (Genesis 17:5). He was a descendant of Noah, twelve generations removed, and was born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Sometime later, while living in Haran in Mesopotamia, he experienced the death of his father. The Lord commanded him to go to the land He would show him, promising to make him a great nation and a source of blessing. Obeying this command, he took his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot and went to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:). Due to a famine, Abraham temporarily went to Egypt, where he lied about his wife, claiming she was his sister (Genesis 12:13). When he returned to Canaan, he had many servants and livestock. Hearing that a war had broken out in the region where Lot lived and that Lot had been taken captive, Abraham pursued the enemy, rescued Lot and recovered his possessions. During this time, he received a blessing from Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of God, and gave him a tenth of his possessions, establishing the practice of tithing (Genesis 14:9-20).

Later, God appeared and prophesied that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the dust of the earth, and that they would suffer hardship in Egypt for 400 years (Genesis 13:16, 15:5, 22:17, 15:13). Since Sarah was unable to bear children, Abraham took his servant Hagar, who bore Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs and the ancestor of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. God promised Sarah that she would bear a son and that his name would be Isaac, and He established the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:8-10, 19). Abraham unknowingly entertained angels and saved Lot from the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 18:1-8, 20:32). He fathered Isaac at the age of one hundred (Genesis 21:1, 14).



The painting depicts, in the upper left corner, Abraham instructing his wife Sarah to prepare a feast. To the right of that, it shows him offering meat and bread to the angels at a table under an oak tree. In the upper right corner, only the central figure among the three angels is surrounded by divine light, likely due to the biblical account in Genesis where the one speaking with Abraham is simultaneously Yahweh and one of the angels. These three angels have become symbols of the Holy Trinity, but there is also speculation that the central figure represents Christ, and that the halo was



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added to distinguish him specifically from God the Father or the Holy Spirit. The depiction of the individual figures and their clothing show a strong classical influence, and it is presumed that it was modeled after a contemporary sarcophagus. The treatment of the figures' eyes in two fragments, and the detailed depiction of their expressions, demonstrate truly exceptional skill. (Mosaic, 432-440, 1.9 x 1.9 m, Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica, Rome, nave side wall).

Abraham's hospitality: Based on the account in Genesis 18:1-10, Abraham meets three angels.

The Lord tested Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19). After Sarah's death, he acquired Rebekah as his daughter-in-law and passed away at the age of 175. Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the Cave of Machpelah, where his mother Sarah had been buried (Genesis 24:67, 25:7-10).

Abraham means "father of many nations." His hometown was Ur of the Chaldeans, and his wife was Sarah. His faith in and love for God were a testament to and an example of faith that ordinary people could not easily follow. God called Abraham His friend and made him the ancestor of the chosen people (Genesis 12:2), and he was chosen to be in the lineage of the Messiah (Genesis 12:3, 22:18).

Notable events include receiving a blessing from Melchizedek, the king of Salem, and giving a tenth of his income after returning victorious from battle (Genesis 14:9-20), and fathering a son at the age of 100, when his and his wife's reproductive capabilities had ceased.

Abraham established the rite of circumcision as a sign of God's chosen people (Genesis 17:8, 10), and his diligence in showing hospitality led him to entertain three angels. The fact that he then heard the angels' prophecy and offered intercessory prayers, specifying the number of righteous people six times, provides us with valuable lessons. Finally, the most decisive expression of Abraham's faith and obedience to God was the event of offering his only son to God.

Lessons and Applications: First, let us each apply Abraham's unique faith and complete obedience to our own faith. Second, Abraham didn't know where he was going, but he knew who was leading him. How much do you depend on God? Third, Abraham became the father of faith for all people, encompassing both the law and the gospel, and both the chosen people and the Gentiles.

The Book of Genesis, the source of blessings, records the creation of the heavens and the earth and the history of all nations from chapters 1 to 11, and the history of the Israelite nation from chapters 12 to 50. When God



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chose His chosen people from among all nations, He first called Abraham. The history of the chosen people began with this command: "Leave your country, your relatives and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."

God chose Abraham from among all people, making him a source of blessing and intending to establish a chosen people and a nation of priests. This is a word of God's blessing and promise. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). For Abraham to become a source of blessing, the following preparations were necessary:

Firstly, it's a work of separation. The medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas said that God's creation of the world in Genesis chapter 1 consisted of two parts: the first three days were a history of God's separation, and the last three days were a history of adornment. That is, in the first three days, God separated light from darkness, heaven from earth, and land from sea. When God chose Abraham, He first told him to leave his homeland. This meant leaving behind his parents and relatives who had raised him, abandoning familiar customs and traditions, and boldly casting aside old habits. "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires" (Ephesians 4:22). Even today, when God calls and chooses us, He first separates us from the world before adorning us as His children.

This is a prerequisite for being called a child of God. Christians must be completely separated from their past lives of unbelief; from the life they lived in the world. Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? Come out from among them (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

Abraham became a source of blessing because he left the idolatrous city of Ur of the Chaldeans without question, following God's command. He transitioned from polytheism to the belief in one true God. A person of God must clearly separate their past life from their present life.

Secondly, Abraham built an altar to the Lord. When Abraham left Haran at the age of 75, he led his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot into the land of Canaan. The Lord appeared to Abraham and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." Abraham then built an altar there for the Lord. This



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was a beautiful act of faith on Abraham's part.

God's people, wherever they go, should first build an altar and call upon the name of the Lord. This is an act of faith and the very spirit of worship. Christians should worship God wherever they go. Noah, after the flood, when he came down to dry land, first built an altar for the Lord and offered sacrifices (Genesis 8:20). Today, we too are God's chosen spiritual people, and the center of our lives as God's chosen people is worshipping God. God seeks those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). Our worship, which even the angels admire, is the greatest glory and blessing for God's children. The Bible says, "Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds fast to it, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it and keeps his hand from doing any evil" (Isaiah 56:2).

Third, Abraham received a new name (Genesis 17:5). Abram's name was changed to Abraham, and his wife Sarai also received a new name, Sarah, meaning "mother of nations." Abraham means "father of nations," a noble name that aligns with Abraham's mission as the source of blessing. The Bible recounts the story of God giving the name Israel to Jacob, a descendant of Abraham. However, this name change was not initiated by a human being but was given by God himself.

It is significant that God gives a new name to the person He will use. Today, if we are to be true servants of the Lord and true Christians, we too must receive a new name, abandon our old habits and past wrongdoings, and start a new life. Having a new name means becoming a new person.

Fourth, Abraham demonstrated his devotion by offering his only son. Abraham had faced many difficulties throughout his life, but being asked to sacrifice Isaac, the son he had at the age of one hundred, was like a bolt from the blue. This test was the greatest challenge Abraham ever faced. It was a test to determine his worthiness to be the source of blessings. He would have readily obeyed if he had been asked to sacrifice thousands of his livestock, but sacrificing his only son was something that, from a father's perspective, was unbearable. This was a test to determine his worthiness to be the source of blessings. He would have readily obeyed if he had been asked to sacrifice his thousands of sheep and cattle, but sacrificing his only son was something that his fatherly love could not bear. God was testing Abraham to see which he loved more: God or his son.

However, Abraham offered the most precious thing he had. He offered his only son something that could not be replaced by tens of thousands of sheep and cattle. This demonstrates Abraham's obedience. He obeyed unconditionally without any resentment or complaint. He showed faith in absolute obedience to God. Truly, it was a sacrifice of everything Abraham



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had. God demands everything a person possesses. Today, we are often stingy, not only with our sons but even with offering material possessions. "You are mine" (Isaiah 43:1). We belong to God. We came into this world with nothing. We didn't bring nothing with us. Therefore, nothing is truly ours. Everything belongs to the Lord.

Our possessions are entrusted to us by God, who has made us stewards of His resources. Therefore, if we have been entrusted with God's things, we should readily and generously give them when needed for God's kingdom. Today, we see that many believers are too stingy when it comes to giving. God will see their sincerity and repay them with something even more precious. God blessed Abraham as a source of blessing. Abraham became the father of faith and the father of many nations. Abraham's entire life was one of faith and obedience. It was precisely because of this that God's blessings were bestowed upon him. Today, we too should emulate Abraham's life of faith and receive the blessings that Abraham received.

Abraham, following God's guidance, left his homeland without hesitation, and wherever he went, he built altars, offered sacrifices, and called upon the name of the Lord. He always forgot what was behind him and made a fresh start.

Today, if we emulate Abraham's faith and life of absolute obedience, we too will receive the blessings that Abraham received. As Christians, we must set an example of faith for others and fulfill our mission as sources of abundant blessings. @