

Genesis 12-20
Spiritual Lessons
from the Life of
Abraham

Introduction

In our last message we looked at the 7 passages that contain God's promises to Abraham. We call these promises the "**Abrahamic Covenant.**"

To refresh our memories, we learned that God promised Abraham the following:

God's Promises to Abraham

- To make Abram a great nation (2x)
- To bless Abram and make his name great (5x)
- Through Abram to bring blessing to all the families of the earth (3x) (in Christ)
- To give the land of Canaan to Abram's descendants (8x)

God's Promises to Abraham

- **God covenant with Abraham is an everlasting covenant (4x)**
- **The sign of the Abrahamic covenant is circumcision of males (1x)**

Introduction

- In today's message we take an overview of Abraham's life and ask ourselves, what are some of the lessons we may learn from his life?

Facts about Abraham

- Abraham is one of the most popular OT spiritual giants in the Bible -- a man of great faith.
- God reveals to us that Abraham is the father of the faithful (Romans 4:11) and the friend of God (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23).

Facts about Abraham

- The NT places great emphasis on Abraham as the prime example of how to get right with God.
- His story covers a good portion of the book of Genesis (Gen. 11:27 – 25:11)

Facts about Abraham

- To this day, his impact is so big that three of the major religions today (Jews, Muslims, Christians) claim him as important to their religion.

Lessons from Abraham

- **Gen. 11-12** -He was willing to leave his home, relatives, and friends to obey God's call to go to Canaan. (faith)
- **Gen. 12** - God makes promises to Abraham to bless him, multiply him, give him the land of Canaan, and bless the whole world through him.

Lessons from Abraham

- In Canaan, He worships God faithfully and builds altars for worship (and sacrifice) at many of his encampments in the land. (Shechem, Bethel/Ai, Mamre, Hebron, Beersheba).
- **Gen. 12-13** – lack of faith in the face of a famine? Goes to Egypt – lies – damages his and God's reputation.

Lessons from Abraham

- **Gen. 13-14** – Returns to Canaan; has difficulties with Lot – rescues Lot from his captivity – pays tithes to Melchizedek, the King of Salem, who is a priest/king of God.

Lessons from Abraham

- **Gen. 15** – After separating from Lot, God repeats His earlier promises to Abram and enacts a solemn sacrificial pledge to keep His promises to Abram.
- God declares Abram, who exercises faith in what God said to him about his future offspring, to be justified (right with God) because of his faith (**Gen 15:6**).

Lessons from Abraham

- By this act, Abram becomes the example to all future peoples (both OT and NT) of how to get right with God.
- **Salvation is by grace through faith, not of works.**

Lessons from Abraham

- **Gen 16** – Abram grows weary of waiting on God to give him a child and tries to answer God's promise through his and Sarah's own misguided ideas.
- **Gen. 17** – The sign of the Abrahamic covenant enacted – is circumcision. Also Abram and Sarai's names are changed to Abraham and Sarah.

Lessons from Abraham

- **Gen. 18-19** – Destruction of Sodom and the surrounding wicked cities; the shameful origin of Moab and Ammon
- **Gen. 20** – Abraham, because of fear, agrees with Sarah, again, to lie to Abimelech, the king of Gerar.

The Primary Lesson

Abraham is used by the NT as the example of how God expects everyone to be saved from their sins.

- One is saved by God's grace (mercy, love) through faith (Heb. 11:1,6 = Believe what God says; Obey what God requires; Trusts in and rests on what God promises).

What the NT Says (Romans)

^{NLT} **Romans 4:1-3:** Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? ² If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. ³ For the

What the NT Says (Romans)

Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."

^{NLT} **Romans 4:9-13:** Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for uncircumcised Gentiles? Well, we have been saying that Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith.

What the NT Says (Romans)

¹⁰ But how did this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

What the NT Says (Romans)

¹¹ Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous-- even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith.

What the NT Says (Romans)

¹² And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law,

What the NT Says (Romans)

but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith.

Romans 4:16: So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe.

What the NT Says (Galatians)

^{NLT} **Galatians 3:6-11:** In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." ⁷ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. ⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles

What the NT Says (Galatians)

to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

What the NT Says (Galatians)

¹⁰ But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." ¹¹ So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying

What the NT Says (Galatians)

to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

Gal. 3:14-16: Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the

What the NT Says (Galatians)

promised Holy Spirit through faith. ¹⁵ Dear brothers and sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ God gave the promises to Abraham and his child. And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his

What the NT Says (Galatians)

children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"-- and that, of course, means Christ.

Faith is both believing and doing

The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

On the other hand, James said, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

Faith is both believing and doing

- Did Paul and James contradict each other?
- **NO!** A thoughtful look at these passages will tell us that they did not.
- As a matter of fact, Paul and James were complementing each other. They were in agreement. Both Paul and James used Abraham to explain their point.

Faith is both believing and doing

- Abraham both believed God but did not just let that belief remain in his mind. He acted upon his belief.
- Paul and James included in their letter that “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3 and James 2:23).

Faith is both believing and doing

- We have taught well that we are not saved by our good works.
- **Eph. 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Faith is both believing and doing

- We have not taught equally well that Ephesians 2:8-9 is followed by verse 10.
- **Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- **Saving Faith always produces obedient works which proves our faith is living.**

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