

**Father Abraham:
Home study 3**



Day 1

Read John 8:33-58.

How is Jesus greater than Abraham?

Day 2

Read Romans 4:1-25.

How was Abraham saved?

Day 3

Read Hebrews 11:1-22.

What can we copy from Abraham's faith?

Day 4

Read Galatians 3:6-4:5.

What do the true children of Abraham have?

Day 5

Read Genesis 12.

Who will make sure Abraham is blessed (v. 1-3)

What do you think of Abraham's response (Rest of the chapter)?

Day 6

Read Genesis 15.

What does God do when Abraham doubts?

Day 7

Read Genesis 18:1-15.

What does Abraham do when Jesus calls?

Father Abraham: Group Study 3



In a passage which makes such sad reading, where the curse of the fall has affected every part of life (Genesis 3-11), comes not a curse but God's blessing. This is good news.

The Lord speaks out of the chaos of Babel to Abraham, just as he spoke out of the chaos (Genesis 1:2-3) to create the world. What is said is of enormous significance in understanding the rest of the Bible.

'God... preached... the gospel unto Abraham.'
(Galatians 3:8, AV)

- **The significance of the gospel preached to Abraham**
- **Understanding the promise given to Abraham**
- **Abraham's faith (and all who follow)**
- **The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**

The significance of the gospel preached to Abraham

Read Exodus 2:24. It is because of the gospel preached to Abraham that the exodus occurs.

Read 2 Kings 13:23. See also 1 Chronicles 29:18, & 2 Chronicles 30:6. It is because of the gospel preached to Abraham that David (and the godly kings that followed him) had great hope in prayer.

Read Isaiah 51 1-2 & Micah 7:19-20. It is the gospel preached to Abraham that is the great hope of the latter prophets.

Read Matthew 1:1. The New Testament starts with Abraham. In many ways Matthew's gospel is an explanation of the promise to Abraham (we will look at this later in the course).

Read Luke 1:72-73, 53-55. Both Mary and Zechariah understand Jesus' birth in the light of the gospel preached to Abraham.

Read Acts 3:25-26 & Matthew 8:11. Acts sees what was occurring in that time and ours as a fulfilment of the gospel preached to Abraham.

How we understand this incident will affect our whole understanding of the Bible. Everything from now on in the Old Testament is to be understood in the light of the gospel promise given to Abraham.

His life and faith relate to every believer. In fact he is described as the father of all who believe.

'...the father of all who believe...'
(Romans 4:11, NIV)

Understanding the promise given to Abraham

Read Genesis 12: 1-3 and Genesis 17:1-8.

- **A Seed and as many descendants as sand on the seashore**
- **A land which has God's blessing like the garden of Eden**
- **Blessing to all the nations of the earth**

Jesus comes and confirms his promise in person:

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. (Genesis 18:1, NIV).

When the Lord appears we have seen it can only be Jesus.

He is the image of the invisible God...
(Colossians 1:15, NIV. See also John 1:18).

Questions:

1. **Read Galatians 3:16.** Who is the Seed who will bring the blessings of the promise?

2. **Read John 8:39-44.** Why were the Pharisees wrong to claim Abraham as their father? Who was their father and why?

3. **Read Luke 19:9-10, Galatians 3:7 & Romans 4:11-16.** How can anyone become one of Abraham's descendants?

4. **Read Genesis 17:8 and Hebrews 11:8-10.** What was Abraham looking forward to in this promise?

A strip of land – Canaan – would foreshadow the new creation. Certainly the land is of great importance for this reason, but its reality is eternal.

Additional footnote

Circumcision was the outward sign that you belonged to God's people representing an inward work of God. It indicated you were part of God's people (Genesis 17) in Jesus.

5. **Read Acts 3:25-26, Galatians 3:8 & Matthew 8:11.** How are the nations blessed?

Abraham's faith (and all who follow)

So how do we understand this promise?

Jesus makes clear (three times) that Abraham is enjoying this promise now and will enjoy it forever.

'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.' (Matthew 22:32, NIV. See also Luke 20:37 & Mark 12:36-37).

He makes it very clear that Abraham's experience was ours.

Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56, NIV).

The theme of Romans is the only righteousness that can be known is found in Jesus. *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ Jesus to all who believe. There is no difference.* (Romans 3:22).

Abraham and all the Old Testament Christians found righteousness by trusting Christ to be the only way!

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (Romans 4:3)

So we see that he received righteousness from God by faith in Christ Jesus, just like us.

Further Questions:

6. Read **Joshua 24:2-4 & 1 Thessalonians 1:9**. How is Abraham's salvation the same as ours?

7. Read **Genesis 15:6 & Ephesians 2:8**. How is Abraham's salvation the same as ours?

8. Read **James 2:23 & John 15:15**. How is Abraham's salvation the same as ours?

Was there anything in Abraham that merited his salvation?

Genesis goes out of its way to show that Abraham wasn't saved by works, pointing out his sinfulness even after he believed – for example, he lies immediately after the giving of the promise, first to Pharaoh (chapter 12) then to Abimelech (chapter 20). He also did his best to help but caused havoc (still seen in the world today) by getting Hagar pregnant. But in all of this he doesn't fall from salvation. His salvation rests on what God will do for him. Note the 'I will' comments of Genesis 12 and 17.

He, like everyone else in the kingdom of God, had to repent and believe on Jesus. There is no other way to be saved.

Pause for thought

Have you ever written yourself off as a Christian because you failed (as Abraham did) only for God to bring you back in spite of yourself. How are we to approach our failures as believers?

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

The promise is repeated to **Isaac** (Genesis 26) and he commits exactly the same sin as his father – which emphasises this gospel is for sinners.

Jacob is then given the promise before his older, and better, brother Esau. This is a promise based not on natural descent but only on God's grace. Jacob is named Israel and has twelve sons – who then became the twelve tribes.

Abraham and the patriarchs show life is lived when trusting the gospel. They are examples of faith.

Pause for thought

Bible teachers and the book of Hebrews talk of types – a type is a picture, shadow, or sign of what is to come. God only saves through Jesus (Acts 4:12), everything must point to him. The shadow often shows how God saves, pointing to the fulfilment in how God saves through Jesus.

Joseph saves the people of God by suffering first himself. For the people to know salvation they must first see their sin.

Genesis ends with us seeing God is still on the throne and the exodus is coming. *By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.* (Hebrews 11:22, NIV).

Jesus – the Angel (the Sent one) is the only Saviour at the end of the patriarchs. *Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm – may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth."* (Genesis 48:15-16, NIV).

God always works all things together for good for those who trust in him only.

Conclusion

Abraham's promise helps us understand the picture of redemption in exodus, and how the land might be enjoyed. Abraham never enjoyed the physical land but he saw its reality.

Read Genesis 15:12-21. In the next study we will come to this and see our salvation in Christ.

Summary Questions:

9. What did this study teach me about Jesus?

10. What did this study teach me about the Bible?

11. What did this study teach me about myself?

Jesus



