

## ~Hebrews~

## Lesson 26 – By Faith... Abraham

God chose the reconciliation of mankind to come through the most unlikely circumstances. God chose a pagan idolater. A worshiper of false gods from the land of Ur. He chose a man named Abram. It was in this man that He would bring forth **the Seed, who is Jesus**, into this world thus reconciling man back to God and rewarding the promise of everlasting life to all those who would have faith in Jesus.

Abraham first appears in Genesis 11:26 and from then on, he is mentioned over 300 times in all of Scripture, 75 times in the New Testament and 10 times in this Epistle to the Hebrews.

He is one the most essential Old Testament figures not only for Jews, but for us, Gentiles as well.

Galatians 3:7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

- The blessings that we enjoy as Christians today derive from the covenant God made with Abraham.

Abraham has many names in the Bible:

- Abram, Abraham
- Father of many nations, Gen 17:5
- Father of the faithful, Heb 11:8
- Faithful Abraham, Gal 3:9
- Abraham was even called the friend of God, James 2:23, 2 Chron 20:7, Is 41:8
  - This shows the close relationship Abraham had with God

God used Abraham to establish an everlasting covenant. Why is it everlasting? Because the covenant is with the everlasting **Seed** of Abraham, who is **Jesus Christ**.

- The covenant of Abraham is critical to understand because it connects all believers, Jews and Gentiles, to the promise of eternal life in Christ by faith.
- The promise is a promise of the resurrection and eternal life in Christ, Gal 3:21, 29, Acts 2:33
- This is why Paul uses Abraham in his examples. The premise of these exploits is of the future promise of new life in Jesus Christ, namely righteousness through faith.

We will be covering verses 8-16 in chapter 11 today

- I am going to read all eight verses together to get a flavor of the overall happenings, then we will come back and break it down verse by verse.
- As we study these verses, I going to point out every time God spoke to Abraham.
  - This is a fascinating study that helps us understand the walk of faith Abraham had in his life
  - You can reference the spreadsheet at the end of the lesson for the details

Hebrews 11:8-16 <sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

<sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

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<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- Abram was called to walk by faith and not by sight
- This is how God operates. He wants us to walk by faith. He purposely will not tell you the whole plan, only piece by piece, and we follow it by faith.

*It is only those who walk by faith that are allowed to enjoy His purpose for them.*

- Abram was called by God, bringing him out of Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, Neh 9:7, Acts 7:2-4, Gen 11:31
  - Abram and Terah his father were pagans who worshipped false gods, Josh 24:2-3

Lets read the account in Genesis of God calling Abram to the land of promise, Gen 11:31, 12:1

Genesis 11:31 And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD **had said** to Abram: "Get out of your country, **From your family and from your father's house**, To a land that I will show you.

- However, the martyr Stephen gives us some insight into this calling of Abram. And we discover that Abram was called when he was still in Ur, not in Haran.

Acts 7:2-4 <sup>2</sup> And he (Stephen) said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia (Ur), before he dwelt in Haran, <sup>3</sup> and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' <sup>4</sup> Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell.

- This is interesting because faithful Abraham didn't do exactly what God had said.
  - Instead, Abram travels with his father up the river to Haran. He settled there for about 5 years. His father dies and then he continues down to the land of Canaan, Gen 12:1, which he then settles in Shechem (near Samaria), Gen 12:6.



- God wanted Abram to leave his relatives, get out of his country, and leave his father's house in Ur and go to the land that he would show him.

I bring this up because for me, this shows God's mercy and patience.

- Abram took the step of faith to leave his country, but his father distracted him.
- Then finally the distraction passes when his father dies, and God is right there again to move Abram into the land of promise.
- None of this was a surprise to God. Through his foreknowledge, God chose Abraham.
  - Abraham wasn't predestined. Abram still had a choice, but God through His foreknowledge knew that Abraham would choose Him.
- God had already waited over 400 years since the flood to find the man whom He would make His covenant with to bring His Son into the world, namely Abraham.
  - Waiting another 5 years shows God's mercy and love working with imperfect humans.
- The most important thing to God is the condition of our heart.

Walking by faith involves many tests and trials. And it is the process of enduring these trials by faith that builds our character. It builds our dokimion, δοκίμιον, a proven genuineness, James 1:2-3; 1Pet 1:6-7; Rom 5:3-5.

- This was the first calling of Abram, to separate himself from this world and chose God.
- This is the sanctification process, a purification that gets rid of the hinderances that can block our avenue of faith to God.
- Abram may not have been perfect, but he had a heart for God. Once he left his hometown, he never looked back, Heb 11:15-16

Genesis 12:1-3 <sup>1</sup> Now the LORD **had said** to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And **in you** all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Paul expands on this in his epistle to the Galatians saying that even the Gentiles would enjoy the blessing of Abraham

Galatians 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "**In you** all the nations shall be blessed."

Abraham leaves Haran when he is 75, Gen 12:4

<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- About five years pass, Abram being about 80, God shows up and speaks a Word again.

Genesis 13:14-15 <sup>14</sup> And the LORD said to Abram, ... "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land which you see I give to you and your **descendants forever**.

- In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul gives us an extraordinary insight to this covenant of promise.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his **Seed** were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your **Seed**," **who is Christ**.

- This covenant was **promised to the Seed, who is Christ**. It is an everlasting covenant to Abraham and the **Seed**, Gal 3:19
  - It is promised to Abraham because it is through him that the **Seed** would come into the earth
- Through the spoken Word of God, Abraham is gaining concept that the purpose of the promise is unto a future hope in the Messiah.

This covenant of promise has a twofold meaning, temporal and eternal:

- We see a temporal, earthly manifestation of this promise
  - The promise of a physical nation- Israel
  - The promise of a physical land for the nation of Israel
  - The promise of physical descendants of Abraham
    - It was the physical manifestations of this promise that God used as the vehicle to bring the eternal Messiah into the world



- The eternal, future hope in this promise is far superior to the physical (this is the promise that Abraham latches onto and places his hope on this foundation of faith, Heb 11:9)
  - The promise of a royal priesthood, a holy nation, 1 Pet 2:9
  - The promise of an eternal heavenly land or country, Heb 11:16
  - The promise of **The Seed, who is Christ**, Gal 3:16-19
    - This is the hope of the Messiah **in Whom** all nations will be blessed, Gal 3:8
- Abraham fixes his hope on the future promise of the Messiah, a heavenly country *whose builder and maker is God*, Heb 11:10.

Another five years pass, Abram being around 85, receives another Word from God confirming and His promise.

Genesis 15:1, 4-5, 17-18

<sup>1</sup> the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

<sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “...one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” <sup>5</sup> Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your **descendants** be.”

<sup>17</sup> ... and there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. <sup>18</sup> On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your **descendants** I have given this land...”

There is a 13 year gap where we don't have record of God speaking to Abram.

- During this time Abram tries to take matters into his own hands and produces Ishmael with Hagar
- The last Word Abram had was that the heir would come through his own body, Gen 15:4
- But there was no specific Word on who the mother would be
  - Now, 13 years later, when Abram is 99, God gets very specific as we will read below.

<sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

The Greek in verse 11 literally says, “she received the ability to have seed deposited unto her.”

- The word conceived is katabole, καταβολή, which means to intensely throw
  - implying it was still Abraham's faith,
  - but the text in verse 11 tells us Sarah was faithful too.

So, let's look at the account in Genesis to see the Word of God that gave Abraham and Sarah life through faith to conceive Isaac.

- God changes Abram's name, and pronounces the blessing on him and his **Seed** again, Gen 17:1-8

“Your name shall be called Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations, and I will establish my covenant with you and your **Seed** after you, for an everlasting covenant.”

- At the same time God also changes Sarah's name from Sarai to Sarah and says she will be the mother of the promised child, (Isaac) Gen 17:15-22

Genesis 17:15-16 <sup>15</sup> Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> And I will bless her and also give you a son by her...”

<sup>19</sup> Then God said: “...Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his **descendants (Seed)** after him. (this is crucial to understand verse 17 next week)

Jesus again appears in human form with two angels and speaks to Abraham (while Sarah was listening) and tells him the promised child will come through Sarah.

Genesis 18:10-14 <sup>10</sup> And He said, “I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, **Sarah your wife shall have a son.**” ...<sup>14</sup> **Is anything too hard for the LORD?** At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and **Sarah shall have a son.**”

It was at this point that Abraham and Sarah lay hold of the promise and receive it into their spirit:

Romans 4:18-22 <sup>18</sup> who, contrary to hope, **in hope believed**, so that he became the father of many nations, **according to what was spoken**, “So shall your descendants be.” <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, **he did not consider his own body**, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), **and the deadness of Sarah’s womb**. <sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and **being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform**. <sup>22</sup> And therefore “**it was accounted to him for righteousness**.”

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off were **assured of them, embraced them** and confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims on the earth**. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. (there is no attempt to return) <sup>16</sup> But now **they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country**. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **He has prepared a city for them**.

*These all died in faith not having received the promises...*

Paul repeats this in verse 39 saying... *these did not receive the promise...*

- But I thought Noah received the promise of a new life after the flood
- didn't Enoch received the promise when he was taken to be with God?
- or Isaac being born to Abraham in his old age?
- or, as we will read in the coming weeks, women received their dead raised to life again

These all sound like people who received the promise. But Paul is telling us they didn't. So if not, what is the promise?

**The Promise is the promise of the Spirit unto the Resurrection and Eternal life.**

Isaiah 44:3 ... I will pour My Spirit on your **Seed**...

Galatians 3:19 ... till **the Seed** should come to Whom the promise was made...

Acts 2:33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

The Promise was to the **Seed, who is Christ**, in which He received the promise of the Spirit unto resurrection and eternal life, by whom we can now be partakers of this covenant through inheritance.

We now have access to the Promise through Jesus

Galatians 3:14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles **in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive the **promise of the Spirit through faith**.

Romans 4:16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Ephesians 1:13-14 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

The Promise of the Spirit brings resurrection life. We now have the earnest of the Spirit in Christ unto a future hope of being resurrected and glorified in Him.

Jesus said: John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

*These all confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...  
seeking a heavenly, eternal country. Whose builder and  
maker is God.*

The Heavenly Country they were seeking is Jesus. And we, like them, need to be seeking Jesus.

Being fully persuaded in the Promise of our Resurrection and Glorification in Him.

To live with Him and in Him

FOREVER

Timeline of Abraham's Life					
Date BC	Age	Event	Biblical Ref	God's Words	Biblical Ref
2007	0	Abram is born	Gen 11:26		Gen 11:26
1937	70	God calls Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans to the promised land. Abram leaves Ur and moves up the river to Haran with his father and family. Abram lives in Haran for about 5 years until Terah his father dies, then God moves him to the land of promise.	Gen 12:1-3, Acts 7:2-4	1 From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."	Gen 12:1-3
1932	75	Abram leaves Haran and goes to the land of promise	Acts 7:4	God moved him to the land	Acts 7:4
1927	80+	After being in the land of Canaan, Abram and Lot separate because their possessions were so great they couldn't live together anymore	Gen 13:6	15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.	Gen 13:15-16
1922	85	Lot is captured and Abram is victorious over the battle of the kings	Gen 14:1-16	1 "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 4 the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "...one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."	Gen 15:1, 4-5
1922	85	Abram believes God and it is accounted unto him for righteousness	Gen 15:6	17 ... passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land	Gen 15:17-18
1921	86	Abram has Ishmael through Hagar	Gen 16:15	No Word from God about Hagar bearing the child of promise	
1908	99	Abram's name is changed to Abraham and confirms His promise	Gen 17:3-7	3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.	Genesis 17:3-7
1908	99	Isaac is promised thru Sarah	Gen 17:15-19	15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" 19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.	Genesis 17:15-19
1908	99	Sarah hears the promised son by word of the Lord and receives it by faith	Gen 18:9-15	14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."	Genesis 18:14
1907	100	Isaac is born	Gen 21:1-3	1 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.	Genesis 21:1-2
1877	130+	Abraham offers Isaac - type of Jesus' sacrifice	Gen 22:1-18	2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."	Genesis 22:2
1877	130+	Abraham is faithful and doesn't withhold his son. God confirms His promise	Gen 22:16	18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."	Genesis 22:18
1867	140	Abraham finds a bride for Isaac by faith in God's promise	Gen 24:7, 25:20	7 The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.	Genesis 24:7
1832	175	Abraham dies			Gen 25:7-8