

HEROES OF THE FAITH

Topic: Abraham

Scripture: Hebrews 11:8-19

Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:8

Lesson 4 Abraham - *The Man Who Was Called "The Friend of God"*

INTRODUCTION: Abraham is the fourth HERO OF THE FAITH listed in Hebrews 11 and is one of the most important men in all of human history. The first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis in the Bible record the activities of God as they relate to the entire human race. Then, in Genesis 12, Abraham takes the center stage, and he and his family fill the last 38 chapters of the book of Genesis. Most of the remainder of the Old Testament concerns the descendants of Abraham who became the nation of Israel. Abraham became the father of the Jews and is commonly called the "*Father of the Faithful*." (James 2:21; John 8:53; Galatians 3:9) Even the home of the departed saved of the Old Testament, which was called "*Paradise*," also became known as "*Abraham's Bosom*." (Luke 16:22-23) This man called Abraham is so important in God's plan for the ages that he has the great distinction of being the only man in the Bible to be called "*the friend of God*." (James 2:23) Abraham stands out among the heroes of the faith as **THE MAN WHO WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD.**

I. THE OBEDIENCE OF ABRAHAM

Hebrews 11:8 - "*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. . .*"

- A. The partial obedience of Abraham
 - 1) Abraham was originally named "*Abram*" at birth which means "*father of height*." (Genesis 11:27) God would later change Abram's name to "*Abraham*" which means "*father of a multitude*." (Genesis 17:5)
 - 2) Abraham came from a family that did not worship the true and living God. (Joshua 24:2) His father was a man named Terah which means "*wanderer*." Abraham was the oldest son followed by two younger brothers named Nahor ("*slayer; snoring*") and Haran ("*strong*"). Even though Abraham's father did not serve the Lord, Abraham determined that he would serve God in spite of his dad's bad example.
 - 3) Abraham married his half-sister whose name was Sarai which means "*contentious or argumentative*." God would later change her name to Sarah which means "*princess*." (Genesis 17:5) Abraham and Sarah had the same father but different mothers. (Genesis 20:12)

- 4) Sarah was barren and could have no children. (Genesis 11:30) When Haran, Abraham's little brother, died it made sense that Abraham would raise Haran's son who was a young man named Lot which means "*concealed or dark colored.*" (Genesis 11:31)
- 5) Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees in about 2161 B.C. Ur is in the area called Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2) and is located about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. The city of Ur was known for its worship of Nannar the moon god. The ruins of a tower or "*ziggurat*" dedicated to the moon god have been discovered along with other buildings which prove that Ur could have had as many as 360,000 inhabitants.
- 6) One day, God commanded Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and his kindred to go into a land which God would show him. Abraham immediately packed up all his belongings and headed northwestward along the Euphrates River and settled along the border of Canaan land in a town called Haran. (Genesis 11:31) Abraham had only partially obeyed the Lord. He had left Ur as God commanded, but had not left his kindred behind for Terah his father traveled with him as well as his brother Nahor at a later date. (Genesis 24:10) Also, Abraham had not left his own country but still lived along the border at Haran. Partial obedience is disobedience. As a result of his partial obedience, Abraham dwelt at Haran for at least the next 25 years of his life. These were simply wasted years for Abraham.

B. The complete obedience of Abraham

- 1) Abraham left Haran after the death of his father, Terah, and went in to the land of Canaan. (Acts 7:2-4) This was a huge step of faith for Abraham had no idea where he was going. All he knew was that he was going where God had commanded him to go. (Hebrews 11:8-10; Genesis 12:4-5)
- 2) God appears to Abraham as he traveled in the land of Canaan. While Abraham had delayed his journey for all those years at Haran, God had never appeared to him. But, when he, by faith, completely obeyed the Lord, God once again appears to him in the "*Plain of Moreh*" which means "*teaching.*" (Genesis 12:6-9)

II **THE OVERCOMING OF ABRAHAM**

Hebrews 11:9 - "*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country. . .*"

A. By faith Abraham overcame the trials of life

- 1) Abraham had to overcome FAMINE. (Genesis 12:10-20) When famine came to the land of Canaan, Abraham failed to trust God to take care of him. Instead, he fled into Egypt seeking help from

Pharaoh. This experience proved to Abraham that it was God and not man who would take care of him. (Philippians 4:19)

- 2) Abraham had to overcome STRIFE. (Genesis 13:5-13) Lot's herdsmen and Abraham's herdsmen began to quarrel with one another. By faith, Abraham sacrificed his right to demand the best grazing areas for his herds. Lot chose the well-watered plains of Jordan while Abraham dwelled in the rugged hills of Canaan. God took care of Abraham while Lot finally lost all that he had. (Genesis 19:30)
- 3) Abraham had to overcome WAR. (Genesis 14:1-24) Sodom and Gomorrah were conquered by Chedorlaomer and the kings of the East and Lot was taken captive. Abraham was not a man of war, but he could not let his nephew, Lot, be taken into captivity by these wicked eastern kings. Abraham formed an army and trusted God to give him the victory. Once again in Abraham's life, faith had been the victory that overcame the world. (1 John 5:4)

B. By faith Abraham overcame the barrenness of his wife

- 1) Abraham failed to trust God when Ishmael was born. (Genesis 16:1-16) Abraham and Sarah had a handmaid named Hagar whom they probably obtained when they had gotten out of God's will and gone down into Egypt. (Genesis 12:10-20) Rather than wait for God to give him a son, Abraham listened to Sarah and took Hagar to have a child with her serving as the surrogate mother. The boy that was born to Abraham and Hagar was named Ishmael. ("*God shall hear*") Abraham had to send this son away for he was not the promised seed of Abraham. (Genesis 21:12-21) Ishmael became the father of the Arab tribes who, to this day, still threaten the peace of the world. (Genesis 16:12)
- 2) Abraham trusted God when Isaac was born. (Genesis 21:1-8) God blessed Abraham and Sarah with a baby boy just as He had promised them. (Genesis 18:9-15) This boy was the seed which God had promised to Abraham and they named him "*Isaac*" which means "*laughter*." Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety when Isaac was born. Abraham had learned that by faith all things are possible. (Genesis 18:14; Hebrews 11:12)

III THE OFFERING OF ABRAHAM

Hebrews 11:17 - "*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. . .*"

- A. God commands Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering
Abraham loved his son Isaac more than anything in the entire world. God had asked Abraham to give up his family, his country, his son Ishmael, his right to the first claim of the land to Lot and many other things he enjoyed in life. Now, Abraham is called upon to surrender the dearest thing to his heart - - his son Isaac. (Genesis 22:1-2)

- B. Abraham obeys the Lord and offers Isaac as a burnt offering. God had been preparing Abraham for this test for the last fifty years of his life. The Lord wants to know if Abraham truly loves Him more than anything else; even more than his son, Isaac. Abraham does not even question the Lord at all concerning this strange command. He knows that God has promised that Isaac will produce a great nation. (Genesis 18:18) Therefore, if he were to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, God would have to raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promise. (Hebrews 11:17-19) Abraham passed the greatest test in his entire life and was victorious. (Genesis 22:3-19) THIS WAS ABRAHAM'S SCHOOL OF FAITH GRADUATION DAY!

CONCLUSION: Abraham believed God's promises and became the father of the nation of Israel which brought forth the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Abraham was justified **before God** by **faith** (Romans 4:1-4) and was justified **before men** by his **works**. (James 2:21-24) Abraham obeyed God's commands and became THE MAN WHO WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD. (John 15:14)

TEACHERS' TIP: NEVER PUT A QUESTION MARK WHERE GOD HAS PUT A PERIOD!

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: Hebrews 11:11

Study Questions

Match the following.

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ Abraham | a. “princess” |
| _____ Sarah | b. conquered Sodom and Gomorrah |
| _____ Isaac | c. Abraham’s father |
| _____ Ishmael | d. called the “Friend of God” |
| _____ Abram | e. one of Abraham’s brothers |
| _____ Sarai | f. her father was Terah |
| _____ Haran | g. Lot’s father |
| _____ Nahor | h. Abraham’s birthplace |
| _____ Terah | i. Ishmael’s mom |
| _____ Chedolaomer | j. father of the Arabs |
| _____ Ur of the Chaldees | k. “laughter” |
| _____ Hagar | l. “father of height” |

BONUS: Besides being husband and wife, how were Abraham and Sarah related?
