

ABRAHAM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lessons and doctrinal points established by references to Abraham in the New Testament.

GENEALOGY: KINGSHIP AND HUMANITY

Matthew records the lineage beginning with Abraham and working forward. Establishes the kingly lineage of Jesus.

(Mat 1:1-2) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers;

Luke records the lineage beginning with Jesus and working backwards to Adam. Establishes the human lineage of Jesus (God in the flesh).

(Mat 1:17) Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ fourteen generations.

(Luke 3:34) the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,

VAIN RELIANCE ON PHYSICAL LINEAGE

Being a direct descendant of Abraham has no bearing on the character of his descendants.

(Mat 3:9) and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

"Fruits of repentance"— Having a faith like Abraham is what's important, not blood lines.

(Luk 3:8) "Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Their actions were inconsistent with Abraham's. Abraham believed God, they did not believe Jesus: God-in-the-flesh.

(Joh 8:39-40) They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do."

OTHER NATIONS TO HAVE PART IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Having a part in the kingdom of God is determined by one actions, not lineage. Many of his physical descendants find themselves on the outside because of their lack of faith and obedience, while others are inside because of their faith and obedience.

(Mat 8:11) "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

(Luk 13:28) "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.

All nations are blessed by Abraham's "seed" not just the physical descendants of Abraham.

Not the "innumerable descendants" (nation of Israel) but one particular descendant.

Inheritance is based on a promise given long before and separate from Moses and the Law.

(Act 3:25) "It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

(Gal 3:16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

(Gal 3:18) For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

BLESSINGS WHILE VIEWED AS GOD'S APPROVAL, WERE TO BE SHARED

Being part of the "chosen people" (Israelites) was viewed by some as an indication that they, as individuals, were better than those of other nations ("dogs"). However, God promised to bless "all nations." God chose to bless those who believe in His Son, regardless of their nationality.

(Luk 16:23-25) "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.'"

Being part of the "chosen ones" did not insure perfect obedience. Nor does it ensure perfect obedience on the part of those who are the offspring of Abraham by faith. (Gal.3:26-29)

(Luk 16:29-30) "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'"

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Some of the Jews (Sadducees) did not believe in life after death. They thought they had an unanswerable objection to the resurrection (Matthew 22:23-31).

(Mat 22:32) '*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

They felt that what was irrational to their way of reasoning could not be true.

(Luk 20:37) "But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord *the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*.

Jesus said they didn't understand the Scriptures and the power of God.

(Mar 12:26) "But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, Saying, '*I Am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*'?"

DEITY OF CHRIST

Jesus was greater than Abraham and all of the prophets. They were human instruments of God used in carrying out His will. Jesus also came to “do His Father’s will”— but as His “only begotten Son.” Unique in that he received his fleshly body from Mary, but He existed before taking on the form of man, *“who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”* Phi.2:6-7

(Joh 8:52-53) The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death.’ “Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?”

(Joh 8:56-58) “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” The Jews therefore said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

(Act 3:13) “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

GOD’S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM’S OFFSPRING

God’s promise, once made, will be kept. Our assurance of this is based on His oath that He swore by Himself. The promise preceded the Law by hundreds of years. The Law could not nullify or amend the promise. It is based the righteousness of faith and covers the whole world, not just the nation of Israel.

(Luk 1:55) As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever.”

(Luk 1:73) The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

(Rom 4:13) For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

(Heb 6:13) For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.

STEVEN’S BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ABRAHAM’S LIFE

God chose Abraham to be the father of a great nation and his descendants became the nation of Israel.

(Act 7:2) And he said, “Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran

God established a covenant with him and his descendants (though not all descendants, only Isaac and Jacob.) Abraham had other children by Hagar and Keturah. Isaac had another son, Esau. These had no part in the covenant.

(Act 7:8) “And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

Abraham didn't live to see the fulfillment of the promise of possessing the land (He only had a burial plot which he had purchased.)

Their fathers' treatment of the prophets showed no respect for God's messengers, and he said they were acting just like them.

(Act 7:16-17) "And from there they were removed to Shechem, and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt.

(Act 7:32) 'I Am the God of Your Fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' And Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.

RIGHTEOUSNESS SEPARATE FROM THE LAW

Abraham was reckoned as righteous because of his faith, prior to the Law and Covenant with Israel. Thus, today righteousness is based on faith in Jesus Christ, the one who brings salvation to all men. He is the one who fulfilled the promise and the Law.

(Rom 4:9) Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness."

(Rom 4:12-13) and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

TESTING OF FAITH

To have a faith like Abraham and be called "Abraham's children" one's faith must be able to pass whatever test or trial may be encountered. Jam.1:2-4

(Heb 11:8) By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

(Heb 11:17) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Justification is based on one's faith—not just mental acceptance, but actions consistent with belief. This verse complements the reference in James 2:21 "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*"

(Rom 4:1-3) What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

JUSTIFIED BY WORKS OF FAITH

To stand just before God our faith must be perfected (made complete) by works consistent with our belief. Jam.2:22

(Jam 2:21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

(Jam 2:23) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God.

FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

“Son of Abraham” because of his faith.

(Luk 19:9) And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

“Children of Abraham” describes those who have a faith like Abraham, not those who are the fleshly descendants.

(Rom 4:16) For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, 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,

This opens the door to all mankind to become children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.

(Gal 3:6-9) Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations shall be blessed in you.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

This included the Gentiles, which the Jews had a difficult time accepting.

(Gal 3:14) in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM

God did not reject the fleshly descendants of Abraham. They, too, could be “children of Abraham” by faith. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was a Jew as were the Apostles.

(Rom 11:1) I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God chose Isaac over Ishmael. (This the Jews relished). God also made a choice to save those who had faith like Abraham and not his descendants. (This they needed to accept as well.)

(2Co 11:22) Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

(Gal 4:22) For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.

The gospel was first preached to the Jews. Rom.1:16, 2:8-9

(Heb 2:16) For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

JESUS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM

Melchizedek, priest and king, was greater than Abraham.

Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb,5:1-6

Tithes are paid to one greater.

The priests under the Law were from the tribe of Levi, a descendant of Abraham. Thus Jesus is of an order greater than the Levitical priesthood.

Jesus is greater than Abraham for He existed before Abraham was born. The words "I am" denotes his eternal existence.

(Heb 7:1-2) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

(Heb 7:4-6) Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises.

(Heb 7:9) And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes.

(Joh 8:56-58) "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."