

Abraham, the Father of the Jews, Physical and Spiritual

(Genesis 11:27-25:8)

Abraham is the patriarch (father) of the Jews and the nation Israel, a friend of God (Jam 2:23), and, more importantly, the spiritual father of all who walk by faith in the promises of God (Rom 4, Gal 3:9, Heb 11:8-19).

Abraham's Life

- After the Tower of Babel debacle, God starts over with one man – **Abram**, the son of **Terah** (11:27)
- Called by Yahweh to the land of Canaan from the Ur of the Chaldeans, in faith, Abram obeys God (Heb 11:8)
- Married to **Sarai (Sarah)**, his half-sister, who was barren (unable to conceive all her life)
- Yahweh, God established a covenant with Abraham (12:1-3) (see Understanding the Abrahamic Covenant)
 - Yahweh promised him 1) land, 2) to be made into a great nation, 3) a great name, 4) he will bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who dishonor him, and 5) in Abram all the families of the earth will be blessed
- At 75 years old, Abram left his father in Haran and traveled to Canaan, the land God promised him
- Routinely, Abram built altars and worshipped (called upon) Yahweh (12:8)
- A famine in the land forced Abram to travel to Egypt, where he lied about Sarai being his sister, in fear for his life
- In Egypt, God blessed Abram with flocks, herds, donkeys, camels, and male and female servants
- **Lot**, his nephew, traveled with Abram until the land was not large enough for both of their livestock (13)
- After Lot and Abram separate, Yahweh reiterated the land promise and offspring as the dust of the earth to Abram
- Lot was captured during a local battle between tribal warriors, and Abram's 318-man army rescued him (14)
- **Melchizedek** blessed Abram, and Abram gave a tenth of the spoils of battle to him (see Melchizedek)
- Again, Yahweh promised Abram he would have offspring, this time like the stars of the sky
- Abram's faith in God's promise of offspring is counted to him as righteousness (15:6) (see Justification by Faith)
- At 86 years old, Abram slept with **Hagar**, and she bore **Ishmael**, outside of the promise (16) (Gal 4:21-28)
- At 99 years old, God Almighty told Abram to "walk before me," and God promised him Canaan for the third time
- Yahweh changed Abram's name to **Abraham** because he would be "the father of a multitude of nations" (17:5)
- Abraham, and every male among him, must be circumcised (17:10) (see Circumcision)
- Laughter was Abraham's reaction to God's promise that Sarah would give him a son – to be named **Isaac**
- God promised to make Ishmael a great nation; it is not known if Ishmael is the father of today's Arabs (17:20)
- Yahweh personally promised **Sarah** she would give birth to Isaac, and she also laughed at the promise (18:12)
- Abraham interceded on behalf of the righteous residents, including Lot of Sodom and Gomorrah (18-19)
 - Yahweh planned to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because their sin was very grave (sexual immorality, Jude 7)
 - Abraham pleaded with Yahweh not to destroy the cities if 50 righteous people could be found in the city
 - Beginning with 50, Abraham negotiated God all the way down to only 10 righteous people
 - Yahweh promised not to destroy either city if ten righteous people were present
 - Ten were not found, so God sent angels to rescue Lot, his wife, and two daughters
 - God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with sulfur and fire from the sky (Luke 17:9, 2Pe 2:6)
- Abraham once again lied about Sarah being his sister for fear of King Abimelech (20)
- Yahweh declared that Abraham was a prophet (20:7), and Abimelech blessed them with livestock and silver
- After waiting for 25 years, Yahweh visited Sarah (at 90 years old); she conceived and gave birth to Isaac (21)
- God tested Abraham's fear of God and love for his son (22)
 - Abraham must sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering at Moriah (2Ch 3:1)
 - In obedience, Abraham made the trip to sacrifice Isaac, confident that God would resurrect his son (Rom 4:17)
 - At the moment when Abraham was ready to end Isaac's life, the Angel of the LORD stopped him
 - Instead, a ram caught in the thicket was sacrificed (see Substitutionary Atonement)
 - Yahweh promised Abraham offspring as many as the sand on the seashore (22:17)
- At 127 years old, Sarah died, and Abraham (137) buried her in a tomb bought from the Hittites (23)
- At an old age, Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, the child of promise (Gal 4:28)
- Isaac married **Rebekah**, the sister of Laban, the daughter of Bethuel, a descendant of Terah (24)
- Abraham took **Keturah** to be his wife, with whom he had other children, yet Isaac was the only heir (25:5)
- At 175 years old, Abraham died and was gathered to his people, looking for God's city (25:8, Heb 11:10)