

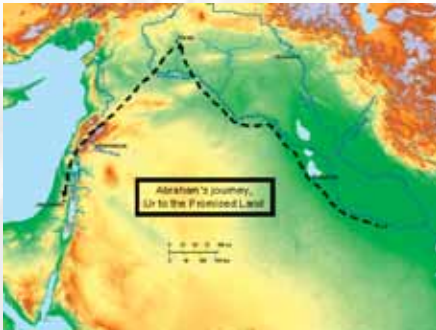
God's Word and You

In the last article, Peter Moore took Abraham as an example to show the importance of Bible study. God asked him to leave Ur and to go on a journey of discovery. In this article, Peter explains what it was that Abraham discovered, because of his willingness to believe God.

Name Change

Because of the many promises that God made to this faithful man, He changed Abram's name to "Abraham", meaning "father of many nations". Abraham was one of three children who were sons of Terah. He lived in Ur of the Chaldees and was called by God to leave everything behind and take his household on a journey to a land that God would give him. The journey was to take him over 1,000 miles from Ur, near the Persian Gulf, to the Promised Land.

He probably travelled along the



banks of the River Euphrates and then went north to Haran where he stayed until his father Terah died. When he set off, he did not know the destination, but he believed that God would care for him and keep him safe.

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. 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 (Hebrews 11:8-9).

Man of Faith

God's promise to Abraham of a land in which he and his descendants would live was made at a time when he had no children (read Acts 7:5). Because of his willingness to believe, even against the odds humanly-speaking, Abraham is frequently mentioned in the Bible as a man of faith. Using a Bible Concordance we can discover that references to Abraham occur 175 times in the Old Testament and 75 times in the New Testament.

He is mentioned more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament character. After Abraham, the most frequently named Old Testament characters are King David (59 times), Jacob (27 times) and Isaac (20 times). Why does Abraham feature so frequently in the New Testament record? Galatians chapter 3 provides the answer to our question, and is well worth reading if you're not familiar with it.

Abraham's faith was demonstrated by his life of obedience to God's commands. Only through faith, obedience and baptism can we inherit the same promises that God made to Abraham over 3,500 years ago. This is a key passage:

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

Special Descendant

↘ **The first two verses of the New Testament tell us that Jesus is related to both Abraham and King David:**

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of

Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers... (Matthew 1:1-2).

The promises that God made to Abraham are very important elements in the unfolding purpose of God. They concern the blessings that would come, the land he would one day possess, the descendants he would have, and the special descendant who would take control of all his enemies,

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' (Galatians 3:8).

New Testament record of God in the life of Abraham

Bible chapter references	No.	Other Bible connections
Matthew 1, 3, 8, 22	7	2 Sam.7:12-13; 2 Chron.30:6-7
Mark 12	1	Exodus 3:15
Luke 1, 3, 13, 16, 19, 20	15	Gen. 17:19; 2 Chron.36:14-16
John 8	11	Ezek.33:24-26; Gen.22:4,13
Acts 3, 7 ,13	8	Acts 3:25-26; Acts 7:2-8
Romans 4, 9, 11	9	Gen.15:5-6; Gen.17:15-19; Gen.21:5-7; Psa.94:14; Jer.30:10-11
2 Corinthians 11	1	Acts 9:16
Galatians 3	8	Gen.12:4; 13:15; 18:18; 22:17-18
Galatians 4	1	Gen.21:1-21
Hebrews 2, 6, 7, 11	11	Gen 14:13-24; 22:1-19; 25:7-10
James 2	2	Gen 15:5-6
1 Peter 3	1	Gen 18:19

➤ **God promised that a descendant of Abraham will be the Saviour of mankind. We know from Bible teaching that the Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ.**

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 (Galatians 3:16).

➤ **Abraham's great faith is an example which we are encouraged to follow. If we trust God then we can be blessed with Abraham.**

... just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'. Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham." (Galatians 3:6,7)

➤ **Abraham looked forward to the coming of Jesus.**

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" (John 8:56-57).

➤ **God tested Abraham's faith but did not allow him to slay his son Isaac.**

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided" (Genesis 22:13-14).

God's Word and Us

God has provided Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. We have not been called, like Abram, to pack our bags and leave our homes. However, God is calling us to forsake the attractions and the desire for the possessions of this world and follow him in the way we lead our daily lives. This requires faith on our part.

Like Abraham, we must trust God and believe that what He has promised, He will do. The promises to Abraham have been extended to all who understand God's purpose with the earth. The New Testament record gives us more information about what we must do to be saved. If we are faithful, God has promised us a place in His Kingdom on earth. Abraham demonstrated his faith by his actions, we must do the same.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? (James 2:21-22)

The impact of the King James Bible

The value of the Bible has been recognised by many people in past generations as a guide for life. The publisher's preface to editions of the King James Bible makes this point.

Many of the 19th Century King James Family Bibles contained these words in the Preface;

...The Word of God is within reach of every one, and neither the reading nor circulation of it is by authority proscribed. This sacred privilege, won for us by the toil and blood of our fathers is the prime element of our national



The King James Family Bible of 1858 Bible

greatness... Our Scriptures are the legacy of the Reformation ... in consequence of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and enterprise, the sun never sets on the English Bible."

During the Second World War, the King wrote this Preface to the King James text and authorised printing half a million copies for distribution to those on active service in the armed forces of Great Britain. This was the Royal message from King George VI.



New Testament with the Psalms 1943 King George VI

To all serving in my armed forces by sea, or land, or air, and indeed, to all my people engaged in the defence of the Realm, I commend the reading of this book. For centuries the Bible has been a wholesome and strengthening influence in our national life, and it behoves us in these momentous days to turn with renewed faith to this Divine source of comfort and inspiration.

Hope for the Future

We are living in days of unprecedented political and economic troubles. Do we recognise the value of the free access we have to the Bible? It is within reach of every one of us. It is only through this Divine source of God's Word that we can find comfort and hope for the future.

Through the labours of the translators many people throughout the world continue to be able to read God's Word in their own language. What impact does the Bible have in our lives? For Abraham and the men and women of faith listed in Hebrews chapter 11, God's promises meant more than anything this life can offer.

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. 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; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:8-10).

Peter Moore

Next month: Revisions and Printing of the King James Bible