

QUESTIONS:

- Who is the person this study focuses on most?
a. Moses b. Matthew c. Abraham
- What is the name of his son?
a. Elijah b. Isaac c. Paul
- What is the name of his wife?
a. Sarah b. Ruth c. Rachel
- How old was he when his son was born?
a. 22 b. 42 c. 100
- What promise did God make to Abraham that was also a promise to you and me?
a. To make him a great nation
b. To protect him
c. To bless the whole world through one of his descendants.
- Who fulfilled that promise?
a. Isaac b. David c. Jesus
- How was that promise fulfilled?
Through his:
a. Death b. Burial c. Resurrection
d. All of the above
- In what way is Abraham the father of the Jews?

- In what way is Abraham the father of the faithful?

- How is baptism connected with the Christian hope?

- Why is this hope different from the hope of Judaism?

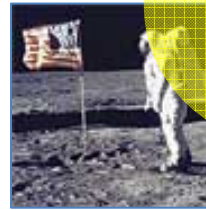
- Will we still need hope when Jesus comes back?
YES / NO

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:13

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But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 4:29

A LOOK INTO THE HEART OF GOD THROUGH THE STUDY OF HIS WORD

Part Three

The Power of Promise — **Abraham**

It is not enough to just get up in the morning. A person needs to have hope and hopes come from promises. If I awaken in the morning knowing there is hope for my life then I know it is a good day. Because I know I have a promise from God that is completely secure I can live a full life every day. I get out of bed with the hope that I will never return to it. Jesus has promised to come back for me and when He does I will not need that bed or that hope again. In the meantime I can end each day with at least as much hope as when I began the day.

The question we are looking into in this discussion is:

What is the hope of Christianity and is it any different from the hope of Judaism or any other religion?

If you ask what the most important name is that is mentioned in the New Testament, it would have to be Jesus. If we ask that same question about the Old Testament the answer might not seem as clear. In lesson one we made the case that Jesus is the preeminent person of the entire Bible but His name is never mentioned in the Old Testament. There are several names that we do see in both Old and New Testaments, however.

Eg. Adam, Abraham, Moses, David and Elijah.

Bible knowledge is incomplete without knowledge of each of these historical characters but for this discussion we will be focusing on Abraham as we consider the **power of promise**.



Abraham enters Bible history in Genesis 11:27 where he is listed as a descendant of Shem (Genesis 11:10-26). Shem was one of the three sons of Noah. See also Matthew 1:1-17 where Jesus is shown to be descended from Abraham. So Abraham is the father of all Jews. God literally took that one man and made a great nation out of him.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3.

In Genesis 12:4,5 we read that Abraham (Abram) obeyed God and left with his wife Sarah (Sarai). The two of them began an adventure that would change their lives forever. It would also affect the lives of every other person who came before and after them. Later in Genesis 22:18 God will say the same thing with these words:

...and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

*****In the New Testament we find Paul writing to the Galatians about how God kept that promise.*****

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. Galatians 3:16

Paul talked about Abraham a lot. The reason Abraham features so prominently in Paul's teaching is because he wants people to understand that the Law of Moses, which God had used to guide His people, was a part of the promise but it was not THE PROMISE. He explains this in his letter to the Romans.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. Romans 4:16

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, Romans 4:20
In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." Romans 9:8,9

Here is where we learn about Abraham's hope. God promised him that he and Sarah would have a son and that it was through this son that Abraham's offspring would become innumerable. That is quite a promise, but when you realize that Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 then you see why God was truly calling on Abraham to trust Him. Abraham's faith enabled God to bless him with a son whose name was Isaac (Genesis 21:1-7). Abraham's faith also enabled God to bless the whole world through the birth of His one and only Son, Jesus.

In Romans 4:18 Paul says this about Abraham:

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."

And for the benefit of people like you and me Paul will show how the hope of all mankind, including Abraham, is bound up in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of all mankind.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Romans 5:1-5

...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 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 offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:26-29

God is still keeping His promise. All over the world people are still being baptized into Christ and receiving the promised Holy Spirit, which is a guarantee of eternal life (Ephesians 1:11-14). A Christian enjoys the full assurance of the hope of Eternal Life. This hope is based upon the solid historical rock of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is why Paul calls the gospel God's power for salvation for Jews and Gentiles (Romans 1:16). That is why we can trust Jesus when He says He will come again to take all the faithful to His home in Heaven (John 14:1-3). That is why you can live a good life filled with hope until then. Maybe today is the day when none of us will return to our beds.

