

Abraham

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God's Third Communication

[Genesis 13:14-17](#)

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. 17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

Abraham receives the title deeds to the land, for his himself and for descendants, all Abraham had to do was take it, *"walk through the land.... I will give it unto thee.."*.

Consider [1 Peter 1:3-9](#)

First war recorded in the Scriptures.

In [Genesis 14:1-12](#) we have the record of four kings fighting five other kings. Because Lot and his family had now moved into Sodom they were taken prisoners. It appears that because Abraham was still living as a nomad, in a tent, he was ignored, they probably thought that he had no possessions. We must also note that Abraham was living under the protection of God.

[Genesis 14:13-16](#) records that Abraham had great concern for Lot and his family, he could have thought "his fault for choosing to live in Sodom," but on hearing of the capture, Abraham collected and armed his men and went after the armies. He attacked them during the night. God was with him and rewarded his courage and faith with his 318 men,

*"16 And he brought back **all** the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."*

You might consider what Paul wrote to Corinth, [1 Corinthians 1:26-29](#),

"26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Or to the Philippians [Philippians 4:13](#),

"13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

With God nothing is impossible.

The king of Sodom goes out to meet the returning Abraham and his armed men and wants to reward them with all the possessions returned. Abraham may have thought this was the next stage of God's promise,

[Genesis 13:15](#),

"15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Abraham refused and was prepared to wait on God's will. Look at

[Philippians 4:11,12](#);

"11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

[Hebrews 13:5.](#)

"5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

The writers are saying, "only from God."

Melchizedek. [Genesis 14:18-20](#)

Suddenly a person appears on the scene, Melchizedek king of Salem. We are told that "he was the priest of the most high God." He brings wine and bread "and he blessed Abram, and said, 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:'" God sent Melchizedek with a message from God for Abraham.

Melchizedek was the king of Salem or "peace". The bread is used to indicate the Word of God, the wine is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The message also include a reminder that God was in control, "*God, possessor of heaven and earth.*"

[Genesis 15:1.](#)

"After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

[Returning to the story of the man called "Lot."](#)

God's Promise and Prophecies.

[Genesis 15:1-20:](#)

[Genesis 15:1-6](#)

Abraham is concerned about the future, how will God fulfill His promise? God now makes a more detail promise.

As part of the promise God reminds Abraham that He had brought him from Ur and into the promised land, and that God always finishes what He begins. Abraham still had no children at this time, but Abraham still believed in the promise of God, verse 6 of Genesis 15.

[Genesis 15:9-18](#), God also included the future in His promise, the descendent's would be strangers in a land not theirs, Egypt, they will be under suffering for 400 years.

Note [Genesis 15:18](#), the size of the promised land.

Sarah's idea to help God along.

A further 3 years pass, still no child, Abraham seems to have great patience as it is now 10 years since the promise made by God.

Now we see Sarah and Abraham want to help God along with His promises. It is interesting to note that God had not indicated who would be the mother of the future child so Sarah makes a suggestion. "Have a child through my maid Hagar." The Egyptian woman had become Sarah's maid while they were in Egypt, a time of failure for Abraham?

It appears that the long delay was causing Abraham to lose his faith, so he decides to help, so takes up Sarah's offer.

See [Genesis 16:3,4](#)

Not relying on God caused Abraham problems immediately. "*Hagar, conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.*"

Consider [Galatians 6:7,8.](#)

"7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Abraham tells Sarah to deal with it herself, this means that he has given up control as the 'head of the house.'

International future

Sarah makes life so hard that Hagar runs away to the wilderness, there an angel tells her to return to Sarah. God gave her the name to give to the son she was about to have. The angel also prophesied he would have a great number of descendants and would be against man and would suffer from the world being against them, [Genesis 16:6-16](#)

This was not the end of the problem, for, 14 years later, when Isaac was born, the older Ishmael mocked, [Genesis 21:9](#).

The Arab nations are the descendants of Ishmael. The conflict between Arab and Jew is still happening, because Abraham tried to help God along!!!

The all powerful God.

Thirteen years pass with no communication from God, Abraham has now reached 99 years of age, his body is now way past the power to have children, Sarah, 89 years old, had been unable to have children for some years. Abraham has to now depend totally upon the Lord. It has been 24 years since God made the first promise. The time was now right for God to fulfill the promises,

[Genesis 17:1,2](#)

"I And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

Almighty God moves. The promise was greater than any before, [Genesis 17:4-8](#). God has also made sure that no abilities of the flesh would glory in the power, plans and presence of God.

We have been using the name "Abraham" throughout but in fact his name was "Abram" up to this point when God renamed him, [Genesis 17:5](#). This also applied to "Sarah", she had been previously called "Sarai." God now tells Abraham that Sarah was involved in the promise, she would be the mother of nations. It was following this statement that the faith of Abraham fails, [Genesis 17:17](#)

"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? "

The Walk of a Believer.

God instructs Abraham, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." [Genesis 17:1](#).

Abraham is told to walk "in front" of God. However, for the Believer we have a greater truth, we are now able, through Jesus, to "walk in," [Colossians 1:27](#); [Colossians 2:6](#); "lives in," [Ephesians 1:23](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19,20](#);

We are to be a living sacrifice, [Romans 12:1](#).

"I I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Ishmael

God included Ishmael in the promise, [Genesis 17:20](#).

"20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

"12 princes shall come from him and he will also be a great nation" is prophesied. But God's covenant will only be with Isaac and his descendants when he is born the following year.

Paul, in [Galatians 4:30,31](#), compared the situation between Isaac and Ishmael as a parallel with Christians, the freedom of the Spirit and the bondage of the law.

See also [Galatians 5:16,17](#)

[Galatians 6:8](#).

It has now become necessary for a further separation for Abraham, as required for the promises to be fulfilled by God, the presence of Ishmael must be removed. This occurred at the birth of Isaac, [Genesis](#)

[21:9,10](#), Ishmael mocked the baby, Sarah wanted Ishmael and his mother, Hagar the Egyptian, sent away. Abraham was very sad, but God spoke to Abraham, he was told that both boys would become great nations, [Genesis 21:12,13](#). Though it was a sad event for Abraham, as a result, the separation eventually resulted in the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Unfortunately Ishmael's descendants would be continually at war with the descendants of Isaac.

For the Believer there must also be separation from the "flesh" to please God, [Romans 6:11](#).

God's personal visit.

[Genesis 18](#)

This chapter records an event which results in a more closer relationship of God with Abraham. It starts with Abraham sitting in the door of his tent while on the plains of Mamre, when three men approach the tent. The Bible text indicates that this is the Lord (Jesus) and two angels. Abraham offers them hospitality, food and drink. While they eat, we are told that the Lord speaks, asking the location of Sarah and then promises that the child will be born in nine months, *"according to the time of life"*. Sarah, on hearing these words, laughs in her mind for she knows they are both past child birth age, but the Lord knows her thoughts, and responds with a reminder, verse 14 *"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"* See [Mark 11:22-24](#).

The Believer must think upon the fact that God knows all of our thoughts and our personal situations.

Sodom and Gomorrah.

[Genesis 19](#).

The three men, as they leave, also tell Abraham of the coming punishment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham now offers a prayer to God on behalf of the "good" living in these cities, "there may be good and righteous people in the cities, God, will you destroy the good because of the bad." Abraham then realized that perhaps there may not be that many "good." Abraham now suggests various numbers of "good people," to God, from 50 down to 10. However, Abraham does not go low enough, the cities are so evil. God sends the angels to the city, the evilness of the people showed straight away as they attempt to have a sexual relationship with the angelic visitors. Lot attempts to turn the evil away but the angels had to blind the people to stop their evil desires.

Abraham's faith fails again.

[Genesis 20](#)

Abraham had just had a wonderful spiritual experience, the promise of a child in one year. He had spoke personally with the Lord, then seen the power of God over the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now in chapter 20 we have a sad and terrible fall in his faith,

Why?

We are told that Abraham journeyed south, away from his place of worship and towards Egypt, to a place called Gerar. He now pretends that Sarah is his sister again, he is prepared to give away the honour of Sarah, prepared to give away the mother of his promised family. The king of Gerar wanted Sarah.

She must have been very attractive even at her 89 years of age.

See [Genesis 12:11-13](#) for previous similar failure.

Abimelech the king did not know that Sarah was Abraham's wife, until it was revealed to him by God, [Genesis 20:3-7](#).

This event in the life of Abraham shows that even those who appear close to God can fail. By telling us of this event God is showing our weakness without Him.

See [Romans 7:14-25](#).

Read [Genesis 20:9-13](#),

Abraham's sin, which concerned Sarah, had now been committed twice, in each case resulted in God using non believers to stop Abraham's failure.

If you examine the response of Abraham to the challenge by Abimelech we see that Sarah was actually Abraham's step sister, same father but different mother. We can trace the problem back to the beginning of the marriage, *'in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother."*' This therefore could be considered a premeditated sin from his younger days.

Today, that kind of close relative marriage is not recommended due to possible genetic problems.

From this let us today consider our own position, [1 John 1:9](#); [Romans 6:1-14](#); [Romans 8:13](#); [Galatians 2:20](#).

God will test and try His children, to expose any sin in their life which needs to be confessed. Prayerfully

read [Psalm 139](#), the Lord knows everything, but He will forgive and wipe away the sin, if we confess, [2 Timothy 1:12](#)

Abraham had failed badly as follows:-

- 1) By his lack of faith he had stopped at Haran.
- 2) He left the promised land during problems to go down to Egypt instead of relying upon God.
- 3) He took Hagar to have his child, trying to "help" God along.

Even though Abraham failed in his life, God did not depart from him or let the world deal with his failure. Note that Abraham did not get all this care from God because he deserved it, it was simple due to the grace of God, [Ephesians 2:8,9](#), Abraham was part of the plan of God for the future Saviour.

Even though Abraham had these failures, the record of Hebrew 11 listed him as a "man of faith", three times the words "by faith" are used to describe the life of Abraham, [Hebrews 11:8,9,17](#). Abraham was on the receiving end of the love of God, Abraham failed but God never left him, read again [Romans 8:1-39](#), see what God has promised the Believer, especially verses 35-39.