

# Abraham: The Start of God Reconciling Humanity to Himself

When we read the first words in the New Testament [the New Covenant that God has made with humanity], there is no doubt about the importance of Abraham.

**Matthew 1:1** [NIV] *“A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.”*

We have the physical origins of the two great rolls that Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Son of Man plays out in His life.

**David** – physically depicting Jesus Christ as King of Kings.

**Abraham** – physically depicting Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, the One who reconciles us to God the Father.

**John 8:56, 58** [NIV] *“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” ... “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”*

Abraham is named in the New Testament more frequently than any other Old Testament character.

**Romans 4:7-11** [NIV] *“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.” Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, **he is the father of all who believe** but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.”*

Abraham is the father of all who believe in what Jesus Christ has done for us to reconcile us to God the Father.

**Abraham is the starting-point of everything that is redemptive in the plan of God.**

Adam was **not** the starting-point of God’s redemptive plan.

Adam was the starting-point of human sin that caused humanity to be cut off from God’s presence.

**Genesis 3:23-24** [NIV] *“So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

Humanity cut off from God.

**Genesis 3:21** [NIV] *“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”*

Only an indication of **how** reconciliation would be brought about in the future.

Between Adam and Abraham there were humans who shone in an ever-darkening world, but none of these great men were chosen to initiate the plan of redemption. **Abel, Enoch, Noah all walked with God and worshipped the true God but were not used to introduce God's plan of redemption.**

**To recover the relationship between God and the humans He had created, which was there before the first sin was committed.**

**Abraham who was called to introduce this plan of redemption did not worship the true God.**

**Joshua 24:2 [NIV]** *“Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshipped other gods.’”*

**Abraham followed in his physical father's footsteps and worshipped pagan gods.**

**By nature Abraham was on the same level as Adam after his fall, or as Cain.**

**Yet God chose Abraham as the starting-point of divine recovery.**

**Such a choice by God gives me a, similar sinner, great encouragement.**

Redemption is completed and perfected in Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ is the centre and the heart of God's redemptive purpose.**

**Jesus Christ is the centre of what will be fulfilled throughout the Kingdom of God in the end.**

**But Abraham, a pagan sinner, was the starting-point.**

Abraham was called and chosen **not** for his own sake alone but for us, his descendants.

**Right at the beginning of Abraham's call by God we see God's purpose clearly stated.**

**Genesis 12:1-3 [NIV]** *“The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the **land** I will show you. “I will make you into a great **nation** and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a **blessing**. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

This purpose was triune.

**Land** – was involved.

**People** – a special people, God's people.

**Blessing** – all other nations blessed through Abraham and God's people.

## **Land**

**This is a central thought of the Old Testament, all of God's work for His people was connected with land.**

**When under the Old Covenant the people were faithful they possessed the promised land, when unfaithful they lost the land.**

**Remember Adam lost the Garden of Eden and the full power of the land to produce, because of being unfaithful to God's Word.**

Today God still has “*a land*” on the earth although it is now in scattered small portions.

In the Old Testament it was the whole Kingdom of Israel, in the New Covenant it is the Church.

The local church at Antioch, Thessalonica and Ephesus, is now God’s land because the body of Christ stands there.

**The place where every believer worships, lives and works is territory on earth held for God.**

The wording of scripture in the Old Testament followed the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of God’s chosen people.

**Genesis 14:22** [King James] “*But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath”*”

When the people were faithful and remained in the land, God was titled as “*the God of heaven and earth.*”

**Nehemiah 1:4** [King James] “*And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.*”

**When the people rebelled and lost the land, God’s title in scripture was “*the God of heaven.*”**

The New Testament parallel to “*the land*” is the expression we find in the gospels, “*the kingdom [rule] of heaven [or God].*”

**We need to constantly ask the question, ‘Does God rule in our lives individually and in the Church collectively?’**

**When God rules in our lives and the church He is “*the God of heaven and earth.*”**

**Matthew 6:9-10** [NIV] “*This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

**God will answer this prayer if we yield to Him and allow the Holy Spirit to rule in our lives and in the Church.**

**The gospel we are to preach is two-fold.**

**A gospel of grace.** This is the good news for sinners that salvation is available for them through Jesus Christ.

**The gospel of the Kingdom of God,** is to win back for God the earth which is His by right of being its Creator.

**Each Christian and church needs to make a stand for God where they live and worship, so that God will possess that part of the earth.**

## People

Part of Abraham’s call involved people.

*“I will make of you a great nation.”*

Conditions have changed in the world since Adam’s day.

**Adam was judged and punished, but God then took a “hands off” attitude towards humanity for it to learn what happens without God’s direct influence on our way of life.**

Individual godliness occurred in the lives of a few people but this was a personal choice.

With the generation of **Noah** God introduced His law to influence society.

**Genesis 9:3-6** [NIV] *“Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”*

People were given the personal opportunity to co-operate together under the Law of God.

**Individual choice was still paramount, but within an organised society.**

**Babel was the result of humanity following its own idea of organising society under law, but this was a set of man-made laws, not God’s laws.**

**Babel gave birth to Babylon, the counterfeit body of Christ.**

With **Abraham** God began to choose a people through whom He would reconcile all of society back to Him.

**From Abraham onwards God has concentrated on a small group of people leaving the rest of humanity to continue to “do their own thing,” live by their own laws.**

**This small group of people were called “Israel”, the children of Abraham, a people of God.**

**What is the Church of God today?**

**Acts 15:14** [King James] *“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”*

We are *“a people for his name.”*

## **The Blessing**

**The Commission for the Church is twofold**

a) **Matthew 28:18-20** [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptising** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

To preach individual salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ their Saviour.

b) To gather *“a people for His name”* and teach them God’s Word and His way, by bringing Christ into their lives to be their Lord as well as their Saviour.

**Galatians 3:8** [NIV] *“The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’”*

**Eventually all humanity will be blessed by the Church, the children of Abraham.**