

## THE GREATNESS OF ABRAHAM

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1. Abraham was redeemed: “Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham...” (Isa. 29:22). “Abraham was born around 2166 B.C. We know nothing of his early life or how he was led to God. It has been speculated that either Job, Shem, or even Melchizedek showed him the way of salvation” (*Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 36).
2. He is the greatest person ever born except Jesus: “He is mentioned 308 times in the Bible; 234 times in the Old Testament; and seventy-four in the New Testament. These quotes came from twenty-seven books: sixteen in the Old Testament and eleven in the New Testament” (*Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 36). “The book of Genesis spans a period of about 2350 years. The first eleven chapters, which describe the Creation of the universe, the Fall, Flood; and Tower of Babel, cover a period of 2000 years. The last thirty-nine chapters concern themselves with Abraham and his seed, covering some 350 years. In other words, God gave us more detail about Abraham than about the origin of the universe!” (*Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, 37). He was called a prophet by God (Gen. 20:7).
3. He had great obedience (“now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” Gen. 22:12) and great faith (“through the righteousness of faith” Rom. 4:13; “he considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead” Heb. 11:19). His obedience and faith in testing earned great blessings for himself, for his descendants, and for all the nations of the earth (Gen. 22:15–18).
4. God made a covenant with Abraham—known as the Abrahamic Covenant (initiated in Gen. 12:1–3, reiterated in 13:14–17, ratified in 15:7–21, and reiterated again in 22:15–18). The Abrahamic Covenant is the most important covenant in the Bible. It “is the single most important event in the Old Testament. It governs God’s entire program for Israel and the nations and is thus determinative of God’s program in history... All subsequent revelation is the outworking of this covenant” (*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, 27). “The essence of God’s covenant with Abraham consists of three basic aspects: *land*, *seed*, and *blessing*. Each of the divine covenants that follow are the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant. The Palestinian covenant (Deut. 28–30) amplifies the *land* aspect of the Abrahamic covenant. The Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:8–17) amplifies the *seed* aspect, and the new covenant (Jer. 31:27–37; Ezek. 36:22–32) amplifies the *blessings* aspect. Thus, the Abrahamic covenant is the fountainhead from which the others flow” (*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, 27).
5. All the nations of the earth are either blessed or cursed because of Abraham: “And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse” (Gen. 12:2–3b; cf. 18:17–18). “And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen. 22:18). This is fitting for someone who will inherit the world in the next life (Rom. 4:13).
6. All the families of the earth will be blessed because of Abraham: “And in you (אָבְרָם) all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3c). This is a reference to the coming of Jesus as Savior of the world (Matt. 1:1; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Gal. 3:8–9, 14).
7. God promised him a great reward: “After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great (אֲשֶׁרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד)” (Gen. 15:1). This great reward is delegated authority from Jesus to rule the world as vicegerent in the Millennial and Eternal Kingdoms (see #12).
8. Abraham identifies with God in his willingness to sacrifice his only son (Gen. 22:1–19). Both had only sons who were (1) born miraculously, (2) beloved, (3) willing to be sacrificed on the same spot, (4) received back with great joy, and (5) inherited everything (“Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac” Gen. 25:6; “heir of all things” Heb. 1:2). And both procured a bride for their sons.
9. God calls him “My friend” (2 Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). Hebrew (אָבְרָם) and Greek (φίλος) both indicate he loved God more than anything else in the world (cf. Gen. 22:2).
10. He is not only the father of the Jews but “the father of all who believe” (Rom. 4:9–12).
11. He never owned any land in this life except a field and a burial cave in Canaan (Gen. 23:9, 17, 19; 25:9; 49:30; 50:13). Nor did he receive any land in this life as an inheritance from God: “And He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground; and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that He would give it to him as a possession, and to his offspring after him” (Acts 7:5). Ephron’s field and the burial cave of Machpelah were purchased in full and not given to him by God. His sacrifice of all land in this life results in the possession of all land in the next life; he was denied any inheritance of land here to inherit all land there. This is a huge return on his spiritual investment; it’s much greater than a hundredfold return in this life (Mark 10:30).
12. Abraham will inherit the world in the millennial and eternal Kingdoms: “For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world (τὸ κληρονόμιον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου) was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). Since Jesus is the “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2), apparently Abraham will rule the world for Jesus just as Joseph ruled Egypt for Pharaoh. His reward is world rulership from the beginning of the millennium through all eternity (see #7).
13. His name is great not only in this life (Gen. 12:2) but also in the next. He will enjoy the perks of fame, honor, and popularity in the Kingdom: “many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 8:11). He will be among the first or greatest in the Kingdom—if not the greatest (save Jesus). Is he greater than John the Baptist: “among those born of women, there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28)? I believe so: if the least in the Kingdom is greater than John, reference must be to John’s mega-talent or greatness in this life (attractiveness and magnetism)—surely he will be not one of the least but one of the greatest in the Kingdom. In other words, he who is least important in the Kingdom will have a greater ministry than he who had the greatest ministry on earth in this life. Comparison is between the future ministry of the least and the past (not future) ministry of the Baptist. Though the least will bear his own punishment and shame (cf. Ezek. 44:10, 13), his millennial service will be greater than the most powerful preacher who ever lived!