

Christmas With Abraham

Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew's gospel and chapter 1, v.1, **Matthew 1:1** *The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:* ² *Abraham was the father of Isaac,* (Matt. 1:1-2 NAU).

We saw last week that Jesus' genealogy begins with Abraham, not Adam. Adam was the first man and Eve's name means "the mother of all living," but when it comes to the birth of the Messiah, they don't even get an honorable mention. And that begs the question,

"Whatever happened to Adam"

This week I saw an article on FoxNews online that was about how celebrities look now and how they looked when they were beginning their acting careers as teenagers or in their early twenties. The article said "you won't believe what they look like now," like we're supposed to be shocked that these celebrities who are now in their 90's don't look like they did when they were young and just getting started. It told us where they are now as well. Whatever became of Hal Holbrook and what does he look like now? Whatever became of Julie ? I have never heard of her.

In the entirety of the word of God, Adam's name occurs only 21 times. Abraham's name occurs a total of 302 times with large sections of the Bible dedicated to Abraham. And what is kinda sad about all this is that in Luke's gospel, chapter 3 and v.38, Adam is called "the son of God." We're given his lineage and his descendants but we're never told other than that what became of him. What did Adam do after he was kicked out of the garden? We know how old he was when he died, but that's obituary kind of knowledge, not exactly biographical.

Abraham is now called "the father of us all." Adam never is and never was. **Adam** forfeited his right to anything and everything when he deliberately listened to Eve and not God. Adam was like the spouse who cheated on his/her spouse and forfeited every right he or she may have had to expect respect and loyalty from his spouse and his children. Matt Lauer comes to mind. Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and just recently young pastor Carl Lentz of Hillsong Church in New York. That's

mankind's legacy inherited from Adam and Eve. Reconciliation is possible. But respect will have to be earned if there is to be healing. Francis Swaggart may sit on the platform while her husband plays the piano, sings and preaches, but she is visibly a bitter woman.

Adam is only referred to thereafter as the man who brought sin and death and suffering into the dark world he helped create.

Abraham the idol worshipper was the man hand-picked by God to be the father of many nations, not Adam. **Joshua 24:2** *Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. (Jos. 24:2 NAU).* Adam was mentioned as one of their fathers, it was Abraham. It would be Abraham's seed, not Adam's, that the Messiah would be born.

Jesus is the Man who made it all right with God.

Jesus is the Man who brought light and life and truth and grace and mercy and the love of God.

Jesus is the Man who transferred us from the kingdom of darkness to His kingdom of light.

In all my years preaching the word of God and preaching many sermons on Christmas, I never once saw the essential role Abraham plays in the Christmas story. It's kind of like my never focusing on Santa Claus. I never saw any reason to preach on the myth. I honestly never saw how Abraham figured into the Christmas story. Without Abraham, there would be no Christmas story.

Jesus is the reason for the season, so don't get me wrong. But even His genealogy begins with Abraham.

³ *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Rom. 4:3 NAU)*

¹³ *For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Rom. 4:13 NAU)*

¹⁶ For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

¹⁹ Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

²¹ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

²² Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

²³ Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

²⁴ but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

²⁵ He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Rom. 4:16-25 NAU)

Jesus is the Seed of Abraham, ¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (Gal. 3:16 NAU)

Read this, talking about that "seed,"

⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because **His seed** abides in **him**; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 Jn. 3:9 NAU)

"But, Pastor Johnny, I sin. Does that mean I'm not saved?" No it doesn't, beloved. If you are born of the Spirit, if you're born again, you

still live in the body of this death, but your inner man is alive because of the Seed of God, the Holy Spirit, who has given your spirit eternal life and that is the part of every disciple of Christ that is made alive forever. And that's what Christmas is all about. New life in Christ.

We still sin, of course, and as much as we may hate it, we will continue to sin until the day we die, but if we focus on our sins rather than on the gifts of faith and mercy and love and our new life in Christ, we will be miserable until the day we die.

Here is the role model you and I are to follow. ¹⁹ *Without becoming weak in faith he **contemplated his own body**, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;*

²⁰ ***yet**, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,*

²¹ *and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. (Even though we live in these bodies as good as dead)*

²² *Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

²³ *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,*

²⁴ ***but for our sake also**, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

²⁵ *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Rom. 4:16-25 NAU)*

When I sin, and I do sin, I sometimes if not most of the time beat myself up emotionally. But, beloved, that's why Abraham is our role model and not Adam. Abraham knew where to look when he considered his physical situation, not to his body but to his Lord. ¹⁹ *Without becoming weak in faith he **contemplated his own body**, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;*

²⁰ ***yet**, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,*

And that, beloved, is why Jesus' genealogy begins with Abraham, not Adam. And that is precisely why Abraham is called "the father of us all."

Romans 4:1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? (Rom. 4:1 NAU)*

¹² *and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. (Rom. 4:12 NAU)*

¹⁶ *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,*

¹⁷ *(as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") (Rom. 4:16-17 NAU)*

⁷ *Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.*

⁸ *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel beforehand** to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."*

⁹ *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. (Gal. 3:7-9 NAU)*

No one knows what became of Adam and Eve after they were kicked out of the garden except the birth of their children and how old Adam was when he died. But we do know all about Abraham and Sarah and what becomes of all who have the kind of saving faith they exercised. ⁸ *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."*

⁹ *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

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Our faith in the Lord Jesus is God's Christmas present to us.
He didn't give us this gift under a tree, but nailed to a tree.
Merry Christmas, beloved of God.