

## What God Said about Abraham

Abraham is given significant attention in God's word. He is mentioned in 27 of the 66 books of the Bible. The Jews revered Abraham as their ancestor (John 8:33), and the New Testament writers identified him as a man of tremendous faith (Heb. 11:8-13; James 2:21-24). Consider some of the amazing and intriguing things that God Himself says about Abraham:

**“Father of a Multitude” (Gen. 17:5)** – Originally called, “Abram,” meaning, “Exalted father,” God changed his name to, “Abraham,” meaning, “Father of a multitude.” Abraham was 99 years old when God changed his name, and even at that time Isaac had not been born. How mighty is our God, who calls the things which are not as though they are (Rom. 4:17)!

**“The Hebrew” (Gen. 14:13)** – Abraham is the first man in Scripture called a, “Hebrew” – a term that later came to designate God's covenant people in the Old Testament. The word “Hebrew” is of uncertain origin – it either refers to one who had descended from Eber (Gen. 11:14), or as some Bible scholars believe, it might have referred to one who is a, “foreigner from beyond the River” (cf. Gen. 14:13; 39:14). Either way, the term fits Abraham well.

**“My Servant” (Gen. 26:24)** – Happy and blessed are those whose faith is such that God refers to them as, “My Servant.” Abraham is in good company here, for he shares this distinction with faithful individuals like Moses (Num. 12:7), Caleb (Num. 14:24), David (2 Sam. 3:18), Job (Job 1:8), Isaiah (Isa. 20:3), Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:23), and Jesus Himself (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 12:18). It matters not so much whether **we** claim to be God's servants, but rather whether **God** claims that we are His servants.

**“My Friend” (Isa. 41:8)** – Abraham is known as the man whom God called, “My Friend” (Jas. 2:23). No one can be a friend of God without trusting God (Prov. 3:5-6), walking with God (cf. Amos 3:3), and loving God supremely (Matt. 22:37).

**“Justified” (Rom. 4:2)** – To be “justified” means that one is made right (in a legal sense) before God. Scripture affirms that God justified Abraham on the basis of Abraham's faith (cf. Hab. 2:4). When an individual humbly and submissively trusts and obeys God for salvation, that individual will find himself justified (Rom. 4:5-8).

**“One who listened to truth” (John 8:40)** – Perhaps the highest commendation given to Abraham was from Jesus Himself. Jesus told the hard-hearted and unrepentant Jews that they were unlike their father Abraham, who listened to and obeyed the truth. Even today, the truth will still set the listening and obedient person free (John 8:32).

**“In Paradise” (Luke 16:22)** – The New Testament affirms that Abraham still lives (Matt. 8:11; 22:32; John 8:56), and that he is presently in a place called Paradise (Luke 16:22). Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would soon be in Paradise with the

Lord (Luke 23:43). Paul spoke of departing this life to, “be with Christ” (Phil. 1:23). Thus, the New Testament teaches consistently that Paradise awaits those who, like Abraham, die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13; Psalm 116:15).

**“A stranger on the earth” (Gen. 23:4; Heb. 11:13)** – After he left his home in Ur, Abraham dwelt in tents in a foreign land for the rest of his days. Abraham is something of a prototype of faithfulness to God, for everyone who desires to follow Jesus must likewise confess that he is a stranger and pilgrim on the earth (1 Pet. 2:11-12).

May God help us to have a faith more like that of Abraham!

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