

Abraham in the New Testament

Studies to supplement the Sunday preaching on Abraham's life

Why Abraham?

A Bible search for “Abraham” in the New Testament brings up 83 hits.

Why do NT writers take him so seriously?

What do they know that we don't?

The aim of these five studies is to find out!

Study 1 Stephen & Abraham

At home: Read Acts 6:8 – 7:60 to get a clearer view of the story of Stephen. Give some thought to this question:

Why do you think Stephen's speech so enraged the Jewish leaders that they wanted to kill him?

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1. Warm-up Question: As a group, write down on one big piece of paper everything that you can think of about Abraham.

Speed through questions 2–6 so you can spend time on questions 7–9

2. In the group, read out **Acts 7:2-8 & 15-17.**

- a) According to Stephen (in vv3-8), what was God's “promise to Abraham” (v17)?

- b) What else does Stephen say about Abraham that you haven't already mentioned?

3. God's dealings with Abraham

a) In v5, what two things did God NOT give to Abraham?

1.

2.

b) In v8, what two things DID God give to Abraham?

1.

2.

4. Why do you think Abraham had so little in his life to show for all God's dealings with him?

a) Discuss what Abraham had received from God in vv3, 5-7.

b) Why does he only receive promises? Why do you think he does not receive much more?

5. Let's concentrate, now, on land.

a) How much land did Abraham get (v5)?

b) How much time, according to Stephen's way of telling the story, do Abraham's descendants spend in the land God promised Abraham (v8-15)?

c) Where do their dead bodies come to live (v16)?

d) One of the key promises of God to Abraham was about land. Why do you think Stephen seems to go out of his way to show that this promise was totally unfulfilled?

6. Read **Hebrews 11:13-16**.

If Stephen and the writer of Hebrews were on the same wavelength, what was Abraham REALLY expecting out of God's promises?

7. Abraham and us.

a) Explore which things about Abraham connect with our own lives, and which things are unique to him in his role as the “Father of the Promises”.

Connections with us:

Unique to Abraham:

b) If you had been Abraham how would you have felt about so few of God's promises being fulfilled during your lifetime?

c) Do you sometimes wish more of God's blessings were happening in your life? If you are willing, share some of these with the group.

d) What can we learn from Abraham to help us with these things?

8. Stephen's speech begins and ends with seeing God's glory (v2 & v55). Abraham sees it in v2, and Stephen himself sees it in v55. In the group read out **Acts 7:55-60**.

a) What did Stephen see in v55 that Abraham didn't see in v2?

b) In what way does the death of Stephen bring together what we saw of Abraham in Acts 7, and the verses we looked at in Hebrews 11:13-16?

9. In the old days people used to talk of "dying well".

Stephen saw, with his eyes, Jesus standing at the right hand of God. For Stephen this "vision" meant he was going to be received by God (v59); and it also meant that there was a route for his enemies to be forgiven (v60). And so, in v60, Stephen "died well".

We may not necessarily see Jesus like this with our eyes. But the promises we have are the same as the promises Stephen had.

Are you ready, like Stephen, to "die well"?