

The Great, The Greater, The Greatest

Abraham was not the greatest man living on earth during his days!

Hebrews 7.4

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • January 2, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2022

Scripture Reader and Reading:

Song Leader and Song Suggestions:

Prelude:

I. Just how great was the man Abraham?

A. You hear in the news often that three religions claim him:

1. Judaism
2. Christianity
3. Islam

B. Without reading the Bible a person could conclude Abraham was special

II. Listen to what the Bible says about him

Persuasion:

I. The Great – Romans 4.16–24a

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, 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, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things *which do not exist as though they did*; **18** who, *contrary to hope, in hope believed*, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” **19** And *not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.* **20** He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, **21** and being *fully* convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. **22** And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” **23** Now it was not written for *his* sake alone that it was imputed to him, **24a** but also for us...

A. vv. 16b–17a • Abraham is the father of us all.

1. Hence he is the father of many nations

- a) (whereas George Washington is the father of America)
- 2. Does that not make him great?
- B. vv. 17–18 • Abraham believed in something before it existed:

5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

– Genesis 15.5

- 1. Contrary to hope, in hope he believed.
 - a) God promised nations through a son not yet born.
 - b) First, when Abraham was 75 years old!
- 2. Does that not make him great?
- C. v. 19 • Abraham did not become weak in faith by:
 - 1. Considering his own body as already dead – not able to beget
 - 2. Considering the deadness of Sarah’s womb – not able to conceive
- D. vv. 20–21 • Abraham did not waver through doubt but:
 - 1. Became strong in faith,
 - 2. Believed that God could do what he had promised, and
 - 3. Regardless of how grand it appeared.
- E. v. 22 • Abraham’s belief showed him to be righteous:

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

– Genesis 15.6

- F. vv. 23–24a • These things written for our sakes
 - 1. We have to read his story in Genesis.
 - 2. We cannot be informed Christians without reading the Old Testament.

G. Abraham was a great man, but

1. he was not the greatest man living on the earth.
2. Why did God not use this other greater person instead of Abraham?
 - a) Why use the second greatest man when someone greater lived then?
 - b) God has his own purposes and uses for each person.

II. The Greater – Hebrews 7.1–7

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. [ESV: “inferior is blessed by the superior”]

A. v. 1 • Melchizedek was both king and priest.

1. No other man who ever lived on the earth had both simultaneously,
 - a) at least in the religion or religions of God.
 - b) Even Egypt had separate offices for kings and priests,
 - (1) although with some of their kings or pharaohs,
 - (2) they believed they were gods.
2. The Law of Moses did not allow for it.
3. This made Melchizedek greater than Abraham
 - a) who only functioned as a priest!

B. vv. 1, 7 • Melchizedek blessed Abraham

1. Abraham was not a king.
2. He functioned as a priest,
 - a) though the Bible never names him as such.
 - b) Therefore, Melchizedek could bless Abraham in ways
 - (1) that Abraham could not bless Melchizedek!
3. Genesis 14.19–20 reveals the blessing of Melchizedek:

19 And he blessed him and said:

**“Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
20 And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.”**

And he gave him a tithe of all.

4. This made Melchizedek greater!
- C. vv. 2, 4–6 • Melchizedek received a tithe from Abraham.

1. Gen 14.20:

And he gave him a tithe of all.

2. Why did Abraham give Melchizedek a tithe?
 - a) Abraham recognized something in Melchizedek.
 - b) Abraham saw that something which he himself was not.
 - c) He saw Melchizedek as both a king and a priest of God.
 3. This made Melchizedek greater!
- D. v. 3 • Melchizedek’s priesthood did not depend upon the flesh:
1. That is the essence of Hebrews 7.3.
 2. The beginning of the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham
 - a) depended upon the flesh

- b) with the birth of Isaac
 - (1) However, all nations would come through the spirit.
 - (2) That is how Abraham is our father as Romans 4 stated.
- 3. This made Melchizedek greater!
- E. Yet, here is the thing,
 - 1. someone surpassed Melchizedek!
 - 2. Someone then was greater than even Melchizedek.
 - a) Someone now is greater than Melchizedek
 - b) This is the heart of Hebrews 7.

III. The Greatest

- A. Someone superseded all who went before Him,
 - 1. including Abraham and Melchizedek.
 - 2. Hebrews 7.11–13

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

- 3. Hebrews 7.15–17

15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies:

**“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”**

4. Hebrews 7.23–27

23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

5. Hebrews 8.1–2

1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

B. The writer identified him for us – Heb 7.14, 20–22, 28

1. Hebrews 7.14

14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

2. Hebrews 7.20–22

20 And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

**“The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
'You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek'”),**

22 by so much more *Jesus* has become a surety of a better covenant.

3. Hebrews 7.28

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

C. Do you understand the greatness of Jesus the carpenter/teacher?

1. 7.14 • Jesus is the Lord, our Lord.
2. 7.21 • Jesus is the priest forever.
3. 7.28 • Jesus is the Son of God.
4. 8.1 • Jesus is the High Priest by the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.
5. 8.2 • Jesus is the Minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle the Lord erected.

Exhortation:

I. Do you know what all this means for you?

- A. As the Lord, he is in charge of the world and of your life.
- B. As the perpetual, priest he will always be available for you.
- C. As the Son of God, you have no one closer to the Father who can speak for you.
- D. As the High Priest, he offered a single sacrifice that can remove all your sins.
- E. As the Minister of the temple in heaven, he fills all your needs.

II. However, we have to be one of his disciples,

- A. which means we have to have the same faith as Abraham.
- B. Has God made a promise?
 1. Accept it.
 2. Build your life on it.