

## Study In Hebrews 11 – Our Father Abraham

**Rabbin Deborah Brandt**

**Abraham was pulled out of darkness by faith in the One True God of the Universe!**



### Abraham's Background:

**UR** (Ūr) Place-name meaning “fire oven.” An ancient city in lower Mesopotamia that is mentioned as Abraham’s birthplace. Ur, Kish, and Uruk were three important population centers in Sumerian and Babylonian civilization. Abraham’s family home is alluded to in Gen. 12:1 and Acts 7:2. The site associated with Ur is located in present-day Iraq, in the lower eastern portion of the Fertile Crescent. It is identified with Tell el-Muqayyar some 350 kilometers

(220 miles) southeast of Baghdad. The site had an oval shape with harbor facilities on the Euphrates River, until its course shifted 12 miles east from the city’s western limit. With the river’s shift the city lost both its population and prominence. Other sites have been proposed for the biblical Ur, such as Urartu (Turkey) or Urfa (northwest of Haran). Occupation of Tell el-Muqayyar began about 4000 B.C. and was important in Sumerian, Babylonian, and Neo-Babylonian cultures. The third dynasty of Ur was its most prosperous and highly developed period. Important remains discovered were a ziggurat (a three-stage, stepped pyramid) and royal tombs. This Sumerian site is most probably to be identified as Abraham’s city of origin. Yet, as with most identifications, such can be questioned. See *Abraham; Babylon; Chaldees; Mesopotamia; Sumeria*.

*David M. Fleming<sup>1</sup>*

Archaeological discoveries have shown unequivocally that Ur was a major urban center on the Mesopotamian plain. Especially the discovery of the Royal Tombs have confirmed its splendour. These tombs, which date to the Early Dynastic IIIa period (approximately in the 25th or 24th century BC), contained immense amounts of luxury items made out of precious metals, and semi-precious stones, all of which would have required importation from long distances (Iran, Afghanistan, India, Asia Minor, the Persian Gulf).<sup>[6]</sup> This wealth, unparalleled up to then, is a testimony of Ur's economic importance during the Early Bronze Age.<sup>[8]</sup>

Archaeological research of the region has also contributed greatly to our understanding of the landscape and long-distance interactions that took place during these ancient times. Ur was a major port on the Persian Gulf, which extended much further inland than it does today, and controlled much of the trade into Mesopotamia. Imports to Ur came from many parts of the world. The imported objects include precious metals such as gold and silver, and semi-precious stones, namely lapis lazuli and carnelian.<sup>[7]</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fleming, D. M. (2003). Ur. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (C. Brand, C. Draper,

A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler, Ed.) (1640–1642). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

It is thought that Ur had a stratified social system including slaves (captured foreigners), farmers, artisans, doctors, scribes, priests. High-ranking priests apparently enjoyed great luxury and lived in mansions.<sup>[7]</sup>

Tens of thousands of texts, including contracts, business records, and court documents, record the city's complex economic and legal systems. These texts have been recovered from temples, the palace, and individual houses.<sup>[7]</sup>

### **An interesting midrash about Abraham'**

A quote from the Judaism 101 website:

#### **Abraham**

According to Jewish tradition, Abraham was born under the name Abram in the city of Ur in Babylonia in the year 1948 from Creation (circa 1800 BCE). He was the son of Terach, an idol merchant, but from his early childhood, he questioned the faith of his father and sought the truth. He came to believe that the entire universe was the work of a single Creator, and he began to teach this belief to others.

Abram tried to convince his father, Terach, of the folly of idol worship. One day, when Abram was left alone to mind the store, he took a hammer and smashed all of the idols except the largest one. He placed the hammer in the hand of the largest idol. When his father returned and asked what happened, Abram said, "The idols got into a fight, and the big one smashed all the other ones." His father said, "Don't be ridiculous. These idols have no life or power. They can't do anything." Abram replied, "Then why do you worship them?"

Eventually, the one true Creator that Abram had worshipped called to him, and made him an offer: if Abram would leave his home and his family, then G-d would make him a great nation and bless him. Abram accepted this offer, and the b'rit (covenant) between G-d and the Jewish people was established. (Gen. 12). Eventually, the one true Creator that

Abram had worshipped called to him, and made him an offer: if Abram would leave his home and his family, then G-d would make him a great nation and bless him. Abram accepted this offer, and the b'rit (covenant) between G-d and the Jewish people was established. (Gen. 12).

### **Abraham is called The Father of us All**

Abraham became the father of many nations (Gen. 17:4–5; Rom. 4:17); Abraham the patriarch (Heb. 7:4); Father Abraham! (Luke 16:24); look to Abraham your father (Isa. 51:2); Abraham is our father (John 8:39); our father Abraham (Luke 1:73); Abraham our forefather (Rom. 4:1–25); Abraham is the father of the circumcised who also believe (Rom. 4:12); Abraham is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16); your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day (John 8:56); the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham (Acts 7:2); do not say Abraham is your father (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8); you are our Father though Abraham does not know us (Isa. 63:16).<sup>2</sup>

### **Why? Because he is our example of Faith and Obedience to Yahweh's Torah/Teaching and Instruction.**

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb 11:9 By faith he migrated to the land of promise as if it were foreign, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob—fellow heirs of the same promise.

Heb 11:10 For he was waiting for the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb 11:11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive when she was barren and past the age, since she considered the One who had made the promise to be faithful.

Heb 11:12 So from one—and him as good as dead—were fathered offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and as uncountable as the sand on the seashore.

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith without receiving

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<sup>2</sup> Day, A. C. (2009). *Collins Thesaurus of the Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

the things promised—but they saw them and welcomed them from afar, and they confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.

Heb 11:14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

Heb 11:15 If indeed they had been thinking about where they had come from, they would have had opportunity to return.

Heb 11:16 But as it is, they yearn for a better land—that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. Yes, he who had received the promises was offering up his one and only son—

Heb 11:18 the one about whom it was said, “Through Isaac offspring shall be named for you.”

Heb 11:19 He reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead—and in a sense, he did receive him back from there.

Rom 4:16 For this reason it depends on trust, so that the promise according to grace might be guaranteed to all the offspring—not only to those of the Torah but also to those of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all

Rom 4:17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”). He is our father in the sight of God in whom he trusted, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence that which does not exist.

Rom 4:18 In hope beyond hope, he trusted that he would become the father of many nations according to what was spoken—“So shall your descendants be.”

Rom 4:19 And without becoming weak in faith, he considered his own body—as good as dead, since he was already a hundred years old—and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.

Rom 4:20 Yet he did not waver in unbelief concerning the promise of God. Rather, he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.

Rom 4:21 He was fully convinced that what God has promised, He also is able to do.

Rom 4:22 That is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Rom 4:23 Now not only for his sake was it written

that it was credited to him,

Rom 4:24 but for our sake as well. It is credited to us as those who trust in Him who raised Yeshua our Lord from the dead.

**Gen 15:1** After these things the word of Adonai came to Abram in a vision saying, “Do not fear, Abram. **I am your shield, your very great reward.**”

Gen 15:2 But Abram said, “My Lord Adonai, what will You give me, since I am living without children, and the heir of my household is Eliezer of Damascus?”

Gen 15:3 Then Abram said, “Look! You have given me no seed, so a house-born servant is my heir.”

Gen 15:4 Then behold, the word of Adonai came to him saying, “This one will not be your heir, but in fact, one who will come from your own body will be your heir.”

Gen 15:5 He took him outside and said, “Look up now, at the sky, and count the stars—if you are able to count them.” Then He said to him, “So shall your seed be.”

Gen 15:6 Then he believed in Adonai and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Abraham was human, born into sin because of the fall just like us. Yet, he was a man who sought out to please God even in the midst of Idolatry and left all that was familiar to him to go to a place he was unfamiliar with, but at God’s command he went.

He went from having a permanent home in a wealthy affluent area, to become a nomad, living in tents in order to follow Yahweh to a better place of promise and blessings that would be eternal, not temporal.

He became the Father of a multitude, the Father of a promised people called Israel! He became a Father as well to all who placed their faith and trust in Messiah Yeshua.

He trusted that all God has told him would come to pass, every detail, every promise!

## Hebrew – Reward

H7939

שָׂכָר

śâkâr

### BDB Definition:

- 1) hire, wages
  - 1a) wages
  - 1b) reward, pay
  - 1c) fare, fee, passage-money

**Part of Speech:** noun masculine

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** from H7936

### Building Strong Faith:

**Eph 6:10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

Eph 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm.

Eph 6:14 Stand firm then! Buckle the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Eph 6:15 Strap up your feet in readiness with the Good News of shalom.

Eph 6:16 Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Eph 6:18 Pray in the Ruach on every occasion, with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, keep alert with perseverance and supplication for all the kedoshim.

## You cannot be strong in YHWH without being Strong in the Word.

Heb 11:6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For the one who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Gal 3:14 in order that through Messiah Yeshua the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so we might receive the promise of the Ruach through trusting faith.

Rom 1:17 In it the righteousness of God is revealed, from trust to trust. As it is written, “But the righteous shall live by emunah.” (Trust Faith)

2Co 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Rom 3:26 Through God’s forbearance, He demonstrates His righteousness at the present time—that He Himself is just and also the justifier of the one who puts his trust in Yeshua.

**Rom 3:27** Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what principle? Of works? No, but by the principle of faith.

Rom 3:28 For we consider a person to be set right apart from Torah observance.

Rom 3:29 Is God the God of the Jewish people only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.

Rom 3:30 Since God is One, He will set right the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Rom 3:31 Do we then nullify the Torah through faithfulness? May it never be! On the contrary, we uphold the Torah.

**Rom 5:1** Therefore, having been made righteous by trusting, we have shalom with God through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

**Rom 10:8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the

word of faith that we are proclaiming:

Rom 10:9 For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation.

Rom 10:11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame.”

Rom 12:3 For through the grace given me, I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think—but to use sound judgment, as God has assigned to each person a measure of faith.

2Co 1:24 Not that we lord it over you in matters of faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy—for in the faith you are standing firm.

Rom 14:23 But the one who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because it is not of faith. And whatever is not of faith is sin.

**Eph 6:16** Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Col 2:6 Therefore as you received Messiah Yeshua as Lord, so continue to walk in Him—

Col 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in your faith just as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.

**1Pe 1:8** Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And even though you don’t see Him now, you trust Him and are filled with a joy that is glorious beyond words,

1Pe 1:9 receiving the outcome of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

1Pe 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may lift you up at the appropriate time.

1Pe 5:7 Cast all your worries on Him, for He cares

for you.

**1Pe 5:8** Stay alert! Watch out! Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, searching for someone to devour.

1Pe 5:9 Stand up against him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being laid upon your brothers and sisters throughout the world.

1Pe 5:10 After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace—who has called you into His eternal glory in Messiah—will Himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

1Pe 5:11 All power to Him forever! Amen.

**Rom 4:19** And without becoming weak in faith, he considered his own body—as good as dead, since he was already a hundred years old—and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.

Rom 4:20 Yet he did not waver in unbelief concerning the promise of God. Rather, he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.

Rom 4:21 He was fully convinced that what God has promised, He also is able to do.

Rom 4:22 That is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.

2Th 1:3 We ought to always thank God for you, brothers and sisters, as is appropriate, because your faithfulness grows wonderfully, and the love of each one of you for one another continually increases.

Mat 18:18 “Amen, I tell you, whatever you forbid on earth will have been forbidden in heaven and what you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven.

Mat 18:19 Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in heaven.

Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”

## MUST BE FED THE WORD TO GROW

### Jewish Thoughts on Faith

1. "With faith, there are no questions; without faith there are no answers. " ~~ The Chofetz Chaim
2. "Faith is not a series of theorems but a way of life." ~~ Shmuel Hugo Bergman
3. "With faith, there are no questions; without faith there are no answers. " ~~ The Chofetz Chaim
4. "Faith is not a series of theorems but a way of life." ~~ Shmuel Hugo Bergman
5. "Man can never be happy if he does not nourish his soul as he does his body." ~~ Rebbe Manachen Schneerson
6. "Faith is the root and foundation of all holiness." ~~ Nachman of Bratslav
7. "Faith is the essence of Torah." ~~ Mivchar Hapeninim
8. "There is no love without total faith." ~~ No'am Hamiddot
9. "The righteous man shall live by his faith. " ~~ Habakkuk (Chabakuk) 2:4
10. "Faith is beyond intelligence and perception." ~~ Shneur Zalman, Tanya

11. "There is nothing greater than faith." ~~

Mivchar Hapeninim

12. "No man is rewarded because God owes it to him, but God grants reward out of His grace." ~~ Moshe Ben Ezra

**Mat 4:4** But He replied, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

**1Pe 2:1** So get rid of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all lashon ha-ra.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, long for pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow toward salvation—

1Pe 2:3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Mar 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree shriveled from the roots.

Mar 11:21 Peter remembered and said to Yeshua, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed has shriveled up!"

Mar 11:22 And Yeshua answered, saying to them, "Have faith in God!

Mar 11:23 Amen, I tell you, if someone says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but trusts that what he says is happening, so shall it be for him.

Mar 11:24 For this reason I say to you, whatever you pray and ask, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mar 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your transgressions."

### When You Really Believe You Will Act On The Word

Heb 5:12 For although you ought to be teachers by

this time, again you need someone to teach you the basics of God's sayings. You have come to need milk, not solid food.

Heb 5:13 For anyone living on milk is inexperienced with the teaching about righteousness—he is an infant.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who through practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.

**Jas 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.

### **Faith in the life of Abraham and the Patriarchs.**

#### **1. (Heb 11:8) Abraham's obedience by faith.**

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

**By faith**, Abraham obeyed: Abraham did step out in faith, going to a new place God had promised him.

#### **2. (Heb 11:9-10) Abraham's sojourning life of faith.**

**By faith** he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

**By faith**, he dwelt in the land of promise: Abraham lived as a "sojourner" in the land God had promised, never owning any of it except the plots that he and Sarah were buried on. Dwelt is the ancient Greek word paroikos, describing a "resident alien" - one who lives somewhere, but doesn't have permanent status there.

A resident alien or a sojourner is evident. The way they talk, the way they dress, their mannerisms, their entertainment, their citizenship, and their friends, all speak of their native home. If someone is the same in

all these areas as the "natives," they are no longer sojourners - they are permanent residents.

Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob: Because they had no permanent home, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in tents instead of houses. They looked forward to a better city - the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

#### **3. (Heb 11:11-12) Sarah's faith and its results.**

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude; innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

Because she judged Him faithful who had promised: Faith boils down to judging that God is faithful to and able to keep His promises. It was this faith that enabled Sarah to receive strength to conceive seed. God gave the strength, but Sarah had to receive it by faith.

Were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude: Because of the faith of Sarah and Abraham, thousands - millions -of descendants were born. Their faith had an impact on more lives than they ever dreamed of.

#### **4. (Heb 11:13-16) What the faith of Abraham and Sarah teaches us.**

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises: The promise of the Messiah was made to Abraham and Sarah, and they believed the promise.

Yet they died having never received it, only seeing it in faith.

They saw the promises afar off, willing to look at and consider the promise of God, even though it seemed so far away.

They were assured of them: They carefully considered the promise, and assured themselves that the promise had to be valid because it was God making the promise.

They embraced them: They took the promise and embrace it in faith. How many times in a day do you think Abraham and Sarah thought of the son God promised had them? Many, many times - they embraced the promise.

They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims: Abraham and Sarah always took the promise with the understanding that this world was not their home; that God had a better and more enduring home for them in heaven.

If these examples of faith endured through difficulty and discouragement without having received the promises, how much more should we who have received those promises?

They seek a homeland ... they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Walking in faith is easier when we remember that this world is not our home. It is easier when we remember that on this side of eternity, not everything is settled and every wrong is not righted. That is why they seek a homeland and a better ... heavenly country.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: But for those courageous enough to believe in God, and to believe in Him as real, and heaven and eternal life as real, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

We may speak of the fact that we cannot be ashamed of God; but do we often consider that God may be ashamed of us? When we do not regard God and heaven and eternity as real, there can be a sense in which God is ashamed to be called our God!

## **5. (Heb 11:17-19) Abraham's faith was great enough to know God was able to raise the dead, and that God was able to keep His promises no matter what.**

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac: The verb tense for offered up indicates that as far as Abraham was concerned, the sacrifice was complete. In his will and in his purpose, he really did sacrifice his son.

Offered up his only begotten son: Though Abraham had another son (Ishmael, the son of his fleshly attempt to fulfill God's promise), God did not recognize the other son (Genesis 22:1-14) - so Isaac could be called his only begotten son.

Accounting that God was able: Accounting means in the ancient Greek just what it sounds like in English. It is a term from arithmetic expressing "a decisive and carefully reasoned act." (Guthrie) This means that Abraham calculated God's promise worthy of confidence.

From the dead, from which he also received him: As far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was as good as dead, and it was from the dead that he received him back, in a manner that prefigured the resurrection of Jesus.

Bruce wonders if this is not the incident that Jesus referred to in John 8:56: Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.

When Abraham was confronted with a promise and a command from God which seemed to contradict each other, he did what we all should do: he obeyed the command and let God take care of the promise - which God was more than able to do!



**START IN FAITH**

**STAY IN FAITH**

**FINISH IN FAITH**

**ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE YES AND AMEN**

**2Co 1:20 For in Him all the promises of God are “Yes.”** Therefore also through Him is the “Amen” by us, to the glory of God.

2Co 1:21 Now it is God who establishes us with you in Messiah. He anointed us,

2Co 1:22 set His seal on us, and gave us the Ruach in our hearts as a pledge.