

~**ABBA (90)**  
**(Ab'ba)**

- The word 'ab-ba' in **Aramaic** corresponds to the emphatic or definite form of 'av, literally meaning, **the father**, or **O Father**. It was the intimate name used by children for their fathers and combines some of the intimacy of the English word **papa** while retaining the dignity of the word **father**, being both informal and yet respectful. It was, therefore, an endearing form of address rather than a title and was among the first words a child learned to speak.
- This **Aramaic** word appears three times in the Scriptures. It is always in transliterated form in the original **Greek** and usually is transliterated in English translations. Each time the term is followed immediately by the translation *ho-pa-ter'* in **Greek**, which literally means **the father** or, used as the vocative, **O Father**. In each case it is used with reference to the heavenly Father, Yehowah.
- Mark records that Jesus used the term when praying to Yehowah God in Gethsemane shortly before his death, saying; *Abba*, Father, all things are possible to you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want.
- And he went on to say; *Abba*, Father, all things are possible to you, remove this cup from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want. (**Mark 14:36**)
- Here is the fervent appeal of a son to a beloved father, followed quickly by an assurance that, in any event, he would remain obedient.
- The two other occurrences are in Paul's letters, at;
- For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out; *Abba*, Father! (**Romans 8:15**)
- Now because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts and it cries out; *Abba*, Father! (**Galatians 4:6**)
- In both places the word is used in connection with Christians called to be spirit-begotten sons of God and indicates the intimacy of their relationship with their Father. While they are **slaves to God** and

**bought with a price**, yet they are also sons in the house of a loving Father, and they are made positively aware of this status by Holy Spirit through their Lord Jesus.

- However, now, because you were set free from sin but became slaves to God, you are having your fruit in the way of holiness, and the end everlasting life. (**Romans 6:22**)
- You were bought with a price, stop becoming slaves of men. (**1 Corinthians 7:23**)
- For you did not receive a spirit of slavery causing fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which spirit we cry out; **Abba**, Father! (**Romans 8:15**)
- Now because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts and it cries out; **Abba**, Father! (**Galatians 4:6**)
- Rather than as just a translation from **Aramaic** into **Greek**, some see in the use of both *'Ab-ba'* and **Father** together, first, the trust, confidence, and submissiveness of a child, followed by a mature appreciation of the filial relationship and its responsibilities. It seems evident from these texts that, in apostolic times, the early Christians made use of the term *'Ab-ba'* in their prayers to God.
- The word *'Ab-ba'* came to be applied as a title of honor to the Jewish rabbis in the early centuries of the Common Era. The one acting in the capacity of vice-president of the Jewish Sanhedrin already held the title of *'Av*, or Father of the Sanhedrin. In later periods the title was also applied to the bishops of the Coptic, Ethiopic, and Syrian churches and, more particularly, became the title of the Bishop of Alexandria, thereby making him the **papa** or **pope** of that part of the Eastern church.
- The **English** words **abbot** and **abbey** are both derived from the **Aramaic** *'ab-ba'*. Jerome, the translator of the **Latin Vulgate**, objected to the use of the title **abbot** as applied to the Catholic monks in his time and did so on the basis that it violated Jesus instructions at;
- Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. (**Matthew 23:9**)
- This still holds true today.

