



Abraham

“In the Beginning”

“Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him. I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.” Genesis 18:18,19 KJV (Selected portions)

Abraham is called the father of Christianity and Judaism. He was born as Abram but God called him and changed his name to Abraham “Father of Multitudes”. Both Jews and Arabs are descendants of Abraham.

How can this be? Before we put God in the Proverbial box like we so often do, we have to realize that God can use us in many ways just as Abraham was used, if we allow ourselves to be used or guided. We may not be the father of multitudes, or live to be 175 years old, but we can be part of God’s people.

Abraham was favored by God many times. It seems that each time God blessed him, he did something wrong! He was just so human! God promised that he would be the father of nations, but Abraham wasn’t willing to wait for God’s work, so he and his wife decided to muddy up the waters by having him sleep with her maid. The child born of that affair was Ishmael. According to some histories, Ishmael is the founder of the Ishmaelite tribes that spread from Egypt and the Arab peoples today claim to be descendants of Ishmael. God took care of Ishmael and Hagar, but he continued to bless Sarah and Abraham. Three angels appeared to Abraham and told him that he would have a son by Sarah. That son was Isaac. God said to Abraham "As for Sarah your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Twice, Abraham didn’t tell the whole truth to Kings when he was on his journeys. He told them that Sarah was his sister. Well, in fact she was his half-sister, but she was also his wife. He told her not to tell that part of the relationship. It was just a little half truth or white lie! Both times, God turned it around and Abraham was favored.

God promised Abraham he would become the father of the nations, but not before God tested him. God led him to an altar where Abraham thought he was to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Again, Abraham had not totally listened to what God had planned for him. Just before the time for the sacrifice, God spoke to him and gave him an acceptable sacrifice to spare his son.

Whatever he did, God was always there. When Abraham died, he was buried by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Abraham’s life also gives promise to the Jews who claim the land of Israel is theirs by divine right, while the Muslims who are identified with Ishmael claim it is theirs because they are also descendants of Abraham. Since this controversy has been going on centuries, it is doubtful that we will ever see it settled in our lifetime.

Abraham was so much like us. We do something really good, and then something else that is wrong. It may even be in opposition to the good we have just done. God knows we are human. God created us and gave us that wonderful gift of free will. Sometimes, life would be much easier if God told us what to do. God will, if we pray, but we are always given the chance to do it our way.

We learn from Abraham that God has a plan for each of us. And, most important that whatever we choose to do, God is always with us. God may not like what we choose, but God will always love us, and always forgive us if we ask. What a blessing for Abraham, and what a blessing for us.

Our children sing a song that says we are all descendants of Abraham. It is called Father Abraham. The writer is unknown but children sing it and do motions to it. I don’t think they realize what they are saying, but do you know that you are a descendant of Abraham?

“Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.”

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we know that you have made each of us in your own image. We thank you for the free will you have given us so that we may choose how to live our lives. Help us to seek your will and then to follow your plan for our lives through your amazing grace and forgiveness. Amen

1. Have you ever been chosen to do something that you really did not comprehend?
2. Have you ever been challenged to tell the “little white lie” to help protect yourself?
3. How does God help us to see His plan for us? Does God test us?
4. Are there times when you want God to do His will, and not involve you?
5. Did the apostle Paul refer to Abraham, because of his faith, as the “Father of us all” in Romans 4:16? Are you a child of Abraham?

Abraham: Abraham, originally called Abram, is introduced to us as Abraham in Genesis 17:5. His story continues through Genesis 17 until his death in Genesis 25, but his influence is mentioned throughout the book of Genesis and the entire Old Testament. Some of the New Testament references to note include Matt 1:1, 2 and 17; Matt 8:11; Mark 12:26; Luke 3:8 and 34; Luke 13:16 and 28; Luke 16: 22-25, 29-30; John 8: 33-58; and numerous references in Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews.

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