

Part 3 Abraham

Abraham is a central figure in God's story, recognised as the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He was originally named Abram and lived in the ancient city of Ur before God called him to leave his homeland and journey to Canaan (**Genesis 12:1-5**). Abraham is celebrated for his unwavering faith in God, who promised to make him the father of a great nation (**Genesis 12:2-3**). He and his wife Sarah had a son, Isaac, in their old age, fulfilling God's promise (**Genesis 21:1-3**). Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac demonstrated his obedience and trust in God (**Genesis 22:1-18**). His story also includes a covenant with God, establishing that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan and become a multitude of nations (**Genesis 15:18-21**; **Genesis 17:1-8**).

Abraham and Islam

Abraham, known as Ibrahim in Islam, holds great significance as a prophet and a patriarch. He is revered for his unwavering faith in God and his willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to divine command, a story commemorated annually during Eid al-Adha. Ibrahim is regarded as a model of submission to God, and his legacy is deeply embedded in Islamic teachings, marking him as a key figure in the lineage of prophets and a spiritual ancestor of Muslims.

Abraham and Jewish faith

Abraham holds a central place in Jewish tradition as the founding patriarch. He is regarded as the first to recognise and worship a single God, marking the beginning of monotheism. God made a covenant with Abraham, promising that his descendants would become a great nation and inherit the land of Israel.

This covenant is foundational to Jewish identity and faith, as it establishes the Jewish people as chosen and sets the stage for their unique relationship with God. Abraham's unwavering faith and willingness to follow divine guidance, even under challenging circumstances, serve as a model of trust and obedience for generations of Jews.

His story is commemorated in prayers, rituals, and readings, and he is often invoked as a symbol of hope, perseverance, and spiritual integrity within Jewish life and practice.

Abraham a Leader?

Under Abraham, Israel did not exist as a formal nation, but Abraham is traditionally regarded as the patriarch who established the foundations for the Israelite people. He achieved the founding of a covenant with God, which promised that his descendants would become a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan (**Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 17:4-8**). Abraham's leadership set the stage for the later development and identity of Israel, as described in the Hebrew Scriptures. The covenant and promises made to Abraham are considered central to the history and destiny of the Israelites (**Genesis 22:17-18**).

Name Change

God changed Abram's name to Abraham to signify a new purpose and identity.

The name Abraham in Hebrew is אַבְרָהָם (Avraham), which is traditionally understood to mean "father of many" or "father of a multitude." This interpretation reflects the biblical story, where Abraham is promised to be the ancestor of many nations. The name combines "av" (father) and "hamon" (multitude), highlighting his significance as a patriarch and future blessing.

Sarah, Abraham's wife

Sarah laughed when she overheard God's promise that she would have a child in her old age. She found the idea unbelievable because both she and her husband, Abraham, were well past the usual age for having children (**Genesis 18:10-12**). Her laughter reflected her surprise and doubt, but ultimately, the promise was fulfilled and she gave birth to Isaac (**Genesis 21:1-3**).

Sacrifice of his son 22:1-18

The significance of Abraham being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac lies in his demonstration of absolute faith and obedience to God. This act is often seen as a test of Abraham's trust, showing he valued his relationship with God above all else—even his own family. The story is also considered a foundational moment in the Abrahamic traditions, symbolising the importance of faith, and is cited as an example of unwavering commitment and trust in divine promises.

Additionally, the incident marks a turning point where God provides a ram as a substitute, reinforcing the idea of mercy and the notion that faith can lead to divine intervention. This narrative continues to influence religious thought, ethics, and cultural practices across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Note that the word worship here, first mention of the word signifying sacrifice.

Also to note Jesus becomes the sacrificial Lamb for the atonement of sins. Again God provides.

Ishmael first born son

Ishmael is a significant figure in the Bible, known as the first son of Abraham. His mother, Hagar, was an Egyptian servant to Abraham's wife, Sarah (**Genesis 16:1-4**). Due to Sarah's initial inability to have children, she gave Hagar to Abraham, and Ishmael was born (**Genesis 16:15**). However, after Sarah later bore her own son, Isaac, tension arose between the families (**Genesis 21:1-10**). Ishmael and his mother were eventually sent away, but God promised Hagar that Ishmael would become the ancestor of a great nation (**Genesis 21:12-18**). Ishmael is recognised as the patriarch of many Arab tribes (**Genesis 25:12-18**), and his story highlights themes of faith, promise, and perseverance.

The Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic covenant refers to a series of promises made by God to Abraham (particularly in Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 17). These promises include the assurance that Abraham would become the father of a great nation, that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan,

and that through him, all nations of the earth would be blessed. The covenant is considered foundational to the beliefs of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and it represents a pivotal moment in the development of these faiths.

The question of whether God fulfills the covenant with Abraham is central to the beliefs of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. God's promises began to come to fruition during Abraham's own lifetime, as he received a son, Isaac, and began to see his family grow. The book of Genesis records that Abraham's descendants did inherit the land of Canaan, most notably during the era of Joshua and the formation of ancient Israel (**Genesis 21:1-3; Joshua 21:43-45**).

The covenant's fulfillment is both immediate and ongoing. For example, God promises in **Genesis 17:7** an "everlasting covenant" with Abraham and his descendants, interpreted by later generations as a commitment that continues through history. Even during times of exile or hardship, biblical prophets reminded the people of God's faithfulness to this promise (**Leviticus 26:42; Nehemiah 9:7-8**).

In Christian tradition, the covenant is believed to reach deeper fulfillment through Jesus Christ, regarded as a descendant of Abraham and as the one through whom "all nations will be blessed" (**Galatians 3:16-29**).

The Abrahamic covenant is seen as fulfilled in part and continually unfolding, as Abraham's legacy endures among nations and faiths worldwide.

Abraham strengths and weaknesses

Abraham's strengths included his unwavering faith and obedience to God, as demonstrated when he was willing to leave his homeland (**Genesis 12:1-4**) and later prepare to sacrifice his son Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-18**). He was also known for his hospitality and compassion, welcoming strangers (**Genesis 18:1-8**) and interceding for others, such as when he pleaded for Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 18:23-33**).

However, Abraham had weaknesses as well. At times, he showed hesitation and fear—such as when he lied about Sarah being his sister to avoid danger (**Genesis 12:10-20, Genesis 20:1-18**). He also struggled with patience, occasionally trying to fulfil God's promises through his own means, like fathering Ishmael with Hagar (**Genesis 16:1-4**).

Abraham in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Abraham is often referenced as an example of faith and righteousness, with his belief in God's promises cited as a model for Christian believers. For instance, Romans 4:3 says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," highlighting his faith. Galatians 3:7-9 emphasises that those who have faith are children of Abraham: Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" Additionally, Hebrews 11:8-12 recounts Abraham's obedience and trust: "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." His story emphasises the importance of faith, obedience, and the fulfilment of God's covenant, connecting the Old Testament narratives to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.