



Interesting Men in the Bible: Abraham

Who is the greatest man to ever live? The Christian, Jew, and Muslim all put Abraham on that list. This is the only man that the three major religions can agree on. Now the Christian will pick Jesus. The Jew would pick Moses or King David. Then there is the Muslim picking, Mohamed. All three would reject the other as the greatest. Yet, they would all give respect to one man equally: Abraham.

It's fascinating that half of the Bible timeline is found within the first eleven chapters of Genesis. That means we have the other half found in 1,178 remaining chapters. The so-called second half of the Bible timeline begins with one man named Abram. From Adam to Noah, we find chaos and tragedy within the human race. There was expulsion from Eden, murder, and a great flood. Humankind was scattered all over the earth by God in the Tower of Babel incident. Men of old lived for hundreds of years. As the dust settles from these events, we are introduced to one man who God chose to be the father of three religions. The only man to live 120 years from that moment on.

A promise was made to Abram (exalted father) by God. It was a covenant stating that Abram seed would fill the earth. God consummated this covenant by changing Abram's name to Abraham (Father of multitude). From this point on two nations were forged that would forever change the world. We have Israel (Isaac) and the Muslim world (Ishmael). Yet, it's Abraham that

is the focal point. This man came from a barbaric pagan culture. A culture that had many Gods. Yet, Abraham listened to one God tell him to pack up his family and leave all he knew.

Abraham is an amazing man. I feel that God tested him through the pagan practices of his homeland. To follow one God instead of many. God provided a way for Abraham to stop the use of child sacrifice by providing an animal instead. Even God making Sarah, Abraham's wife, barren must have challenged the faith of this man. Yet, Abraham followed God. He stumbled and fumbled through poor decisions, yet the Lord blessed this man by his growing faith. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son and he would have if God had not stopped it. God allowed Abraham to negotiate the saving of his nephew Lot in Sodom.

Then we have the mess. Abraham let Sarah talk him into sleeping with the hand maiden Hagar to bear him a child. At ninety years old God then told this couple that they would have a child of their own. Sarah laughed but Abraham believed. Although Abraham failed with the birth of Ishmael, he was blessed by God with Isaac. This man rescued his nephew Lot from God's wrath. He rescued Lot yet again from the hands of five kings. Abraham made a mistake by giving his wife Sarah away to a king. Yet, God delivered her back to him. This man lived an interesting life by meeting the great Priest Melchizedek. Abraham talked with God. He gained land and flocks and herds. Abraham was blessed mightily with the birth of two nations that have survived over 4000 years.

Yet, Abraham made mistakes. His decision to sleep with Hagar changed history. He almost lost his wife in a lie. This man did listen to God most of the time. He is quite a bit like all men. We follow our hearts while trying to find God. As Abraham negotiated with God so do, we in prayer. God has promised to bless us "if" we follow him. God made an unconditional promise to Abraham to bless him. The Bible is a snapshot of man. We are fallen like Adam. We make

mistakes like Abraham. I would even say that we have pride and jealousy like Eve and Cain. We are Abraham's descendants in so many ways.

For the most part, religion and our heritage begins with one man called Abraham. The line that God promised Abraham gave us Jesus. It gave us Moses and David. Throughout the Bible is a saying like in Exodus 3:6 *"Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."* Jesus then boldly states *"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."* Abraham lives on through his lineage. Jesus is stating we are the children of Abraham. This man had faith enough to believe in a God that he probably did not know personally in the beginning. Genesis 15:6 says *"Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness."* When I was in the Middle East the guides all talked about Abraham. We toured many sites that the Muslims cherish by Abraham. This man called Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only Son just as God did thousands of years later. We all have just a little bit of Abraham in us. That's why he is an interesting man of the Bible.