

Abraham

“Father of Multitudes.”



“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

Many children grew up singing:

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

I wonder how many children had any idea what that meant when they sang it and today it is hard to comprehend for any of us just exactly what that means even today. So often we sing songs, but don't pay any real attention to the words we are singing and their meanings.

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 chooses us every day to serve just as Abraham, if we allow ourselves to be guided by His will. We may not be the father of multitudes, or live to be 175 years old, but we can be part of God's people and seek to do His will while we are here on this earth.

Abraham was favored by God many times. It seems that each time God blessed him, he did something wrong! He was just so human! We are all blessed every day, and we all continue to sin. But through God's amazing grace we are forgiven just as was Abraham.

God promised that he would be the father of nations, but Abraham wasn't willing to wait for God's time. He and his wife decided to muddy up the waters by having him sleep with her maid, Hagar. According to what we read in the Bible, Abraham and Sarah were older and probably thought that God had forgotten His promise. 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

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

James 1:1-3



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.”*

This wasn't the only time that Abraham doubted God's guidance. 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 tested Abraham many times. When Isaac was a youth, God led Abraham to an altar where Abraham thought he was to sacrifice his 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 Isaac.

Whatever Abraham did, God was always there to bail him out. 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. I think 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 well, 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.

In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

Theodore Roosevelt

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. It is important for us to learn from Abraham that God doesn't make us do anything. He guides us when we ask. He allows us to make our own way. We choose the path we want to take in life.

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

Charles R. Swindoll

There is a beautiful poem by Robert Frost that tells about those decisions.

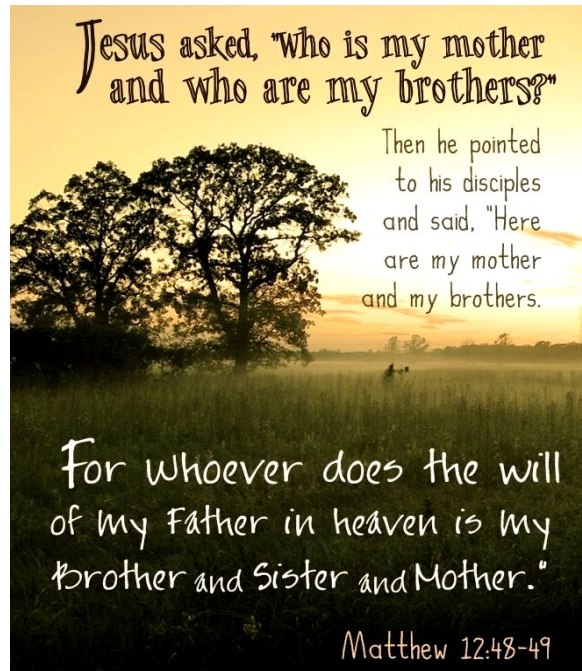
The Road Not Taken

*“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”*



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?
6. Are you a child of Abraham? What does that mean?

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"So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit." Galatians 6:9
The Message

Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.
Carol Burnett