

# “IN SEARCH OF ABRAHAM”

The reception of Abraham in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

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~ORIGINAL SOURCES~

## 1. Abraham in the Hebrew Bible (New Revised Standard Translation)

### **The Call**

Genesis 12:1-9 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. 9 And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

### **Wife-Sister, Part I**

Genesis 12:10 - 20 Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account." 14 When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15 When the officials of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels. 17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her, and be gone." 20 And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had.

### **God's Reassurance, Part I**

**Genesis 13:12-18** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD. <sup>14</sup> The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land

that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

### **Abraham the Warrior**

**Genesis 14:8-16** Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim...So the enemy took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way; <sup>12</sup> they also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. <sup>13</sup> Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were allies of Abram. <sup>14</sup> When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his nephew Lot with his goods, and the women and the people.

### **God's Reassurance, Part II**

**Genesis 15:1-21** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." <sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." <sup>4</sup> But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup> He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness. <sup>7</sup> Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." <sup>8</sup> But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" <sup>9</sup> He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." <sup>10</sup> He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. <sup>11</sup> And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. <sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; <sup>14</sup> but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. <sup>16</sup> And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." <sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, <sup>19</sup> the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup> the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

### **Sarah's Solution to Infertility**

**Genesis 16:1-6** Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, <sup>2</sup> and Sarai said to Abram, "You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the

voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup> So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. <sup>4</sup> He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. <sup>5</sup> Then Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" <sup>6</sup> But Abram said to Sarai, "Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

### **God with Hagar I**

**Genesis 16:7-13** The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup> And he said, "Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai." <sup>9</sup> The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her." <sup>10</sup> The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude." <sup>11</sup> And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the LORD has given heed to your affliction. <sup>12</sup> He shall be a wild ass of a man, with his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; and he shall live at odds with all his kin." <sup>13</sup> So she named the LORD who spoke to her, "You are El-roi"; for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?"

### **God's Reassurance, Part III & The Circumcision Covenant**

**Genesis 17:1-14** When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup> And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." <sup>3</sup> Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup> "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup> No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup> I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup> I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup> And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God." <sup>9</sup> God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup> Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. <sup>13</sup> Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." ... **Genesis 17:23-27** Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. <sup>24</sup> Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup> And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup> That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; <sup>27</sup> and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

## Laughing at God

**Genesis 17:15-17** God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> 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." <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

## Ishmael v. Isaac, Part I

**Genesis 17:19-21** God said, "No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. <sup>20</sup> As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year."

## The Hospitality of Abraham

**Genesis 18:1-8** The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup> He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup> Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup> Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on-- since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." <sup>6</sup> And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup> Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup> Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

## Laughing at God, Part II

**Genesis 18:11-15** Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup> So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" <sup>13</sup> The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' <sup>14</sup> Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

## Negotiating with God

**Genesis 18:17-33** The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, <sup>18</sup> seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup> No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." <sup>20</sup> Then the LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! <sup>21</sup> I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know." <sup>22</sup> So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. <sup>23</sup> Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? <sup>25</sup> Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" <sup>26</sup> And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." <sup>27</sup> Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to

the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup> Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." <sup>29</sup> Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." <sup>30</sup> Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." <sup>31</sup> He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." <sup>32</sup> Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." <sup>33</sup> And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

## **Wife-Sister, Part II**

**Genesis 20:1-7** From there Abraham journeyed toward the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While residing in Gerar as an alien, <sup>2</sup> Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." And King Abimelech of Gerar sent and took Sarah. <sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "You are about to die because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a married woman." <sup>4</sup> Now Abimelech had not approached her; so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent people? <sup>5</sup> Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' I did this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands." <sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; furthermore it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup> Now then, return the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all that are yours."

## **The Birth of Isaac**

**Genesis 21:1-6** The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup> Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. <sup>4</sup> And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup> Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

## **Trouble at the Weaning Party**

**Genesis 21:8-14** The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. <sup>9</sup> But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. <sup>10</sup> So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." <sup>11</sup> The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. <sup>12</sup> But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. <sup>13</sup> As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring." <sup>14</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

## **God with Hagar II**

**Genesis 21:15-21** When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. <sup>17</sup> And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where

he is. <sup>18</sup> Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. <sup>20</sup> God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. <sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

### **The Binding of Isaac**

**Genesis 22:1-19** After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." <sup>3</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. <sup>5</sup> Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." <sup>6</sup> Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. <sup>7</sup> Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. <sup>9</sup> When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." <sup>13</sup> And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. <sup>14</sup> So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." <sup>15</sup> The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup> and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, <sup>18</sup> and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice." <sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba;

### **Abraham's Golden Years**

**Genesis 23:1-2** Sarah lived one hundred twenty-seven years; this was the length of Sarah's life. <sup>2</sup> And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her...**Genesis 25:1-2** Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah...**Genesis 25:7-9** This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,

## **2. Abraham in the New Testament** (New Revised Standard Translation)

### **John the Baptist**

**Luke 3:7-9** John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up

children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

### **Abraham in Heaven**

**Luke 16:20 - 17:1** And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' <sup>27</sup> He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house-- <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' <sup>30</sup> He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

### **The Debate About Abraham**

**John 8:31-44** Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." <sup>33</sup> They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. <sup>38</sup> I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father." <sup>39</sup> They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, <sup>40</sup> but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup> You are indeed doing what your father does." They said to him, "We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself." <sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. <sup>44</sup> You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

### **Recounting the Story of Abraham in a defense by Stephen, the first Christian martyred for his belief**

**Acts 7:2-8** And Stephen replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, <sup>3</sup> and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.' <sup>4</sup> Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. <sup>5</sup> He did not give him any of it as a heritage, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as his possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. <sup>6</sup> And God spoke in these terms, that his descendants would be resident aliens in a country

belonging to others, who would enslave them and mistreat them during four hundred years. <sup>7</sup> 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' <sup>8</sup> Then he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs...

### **The Apostle Paul I: Abraham as example of Faith before the commandments of Torah**

**Romans 4:1-17** What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup> But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. <sup>6</sup> So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; <sup>8</sup> blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin." <sup>9</sup> Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." <sup>10</sup> How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup> He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, <sup>12</sup> and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised. <sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. <sup>16</sup> For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")-

### **The Apostle Paul II: Abraham as example of Faith before the commandments of Torah**

**Galatians 3:5-18** <sup>6</sup> Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," <sup>7</sup> so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." <sup>9</sup> For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. <sup>10</sup> For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith." <sup>12</sup> But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, "Whoever does the works of the law will live by them." <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"-- <sup>14</sup> in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. <sup>15</sup> Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, "And to offsprings," as of many; but it says, "And to your offspring," that is, to one person, who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

### **James: Abraham justified by works not faith alone**

**James 2:18-24** But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-- and shudder. <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? <sup>21</sup> Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. <sup>23</sup> Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

## **3. Abraham (Ibrahim) in the Qur'an** (translated by M.H. Shakir)

### **Ibrahim, the first Muslim and the builder of the Ka'ba**

[2.124] And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He. [2.125] And when We made the House a pilgrimage for men and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim. And We enjoined Ibrahim and Ismail saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves. [2.126] And when Ibrahim said: My Lord, make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the last day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the fire; and it is an evil destination. [2.127] And when Ibrahim and Ismail raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing: [2.128] Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. [2.129] Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. [2.130] And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. [2.131] When his Lord said to him, Be a Muslim, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds. [2.132] And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and (so did) Yaqoub. O my sons! surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims.

### **Ibrahim on Faith**

[2.260] And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: What! and do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

### **Ibrahim and the idolatry of his father, Part I**

[6.74] And when Ibrahim said to his sire, Azar: Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error. [6.75] And thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure. [6.76] So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; said he: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: I do not love the setting ones. [6.77] Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: Is this my Lord? So when it set, he said: If my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people. [6.78] Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? So when it set, he said: O my people! surely I am clear of what you set up

(with Allah). [6.79] Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists. [6.80] And his people disputed with him. He said: Do you dispute with me respecting Allah? And He has guided me indeed; and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases; my Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind? [6.81] And how should I fear what you have set up (with Him), while you do not fear that you have set up with Allah that for which He has not sent down to you any authority; which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know? [6.82] Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright. [6.83] And this was Our argument which we gave to Ibrahim against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing.

### **Ibrahim and the idolatry of his father, Part II**

[19.41] And mention Ibrahim in the Book; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet. [19.42] When he said to his father; O my father! why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least: [19.43] O my father! truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me, I will guide you on a right path: [19.44] O my father! serve not the Shaitan, surely the Shaitan is disobedient to the Beneficent God: [19.45] O my father! surely I fear that a punishment from the Beneficent God should afflict you so that you should be a friend of the Shaitan. [19.46] He said: Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrahim? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you, and leave me for a time. [19.47] He said: Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me: [19.48] And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord; may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord. [19.49] So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave to him Ishaq and Yaqoub, and each one of them We made a prophet. [19.50] And We granted to them of Our mercy, and We left (behind them) a truthful mention of eminence for them.

### **Ibrahim and the idolatry of his father, Part III (new translation)**

**Sūra 21: 51-68:** Before that, we granted Abraham his guidance and understanding, for we were fully aware of him. He said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are devoting yourselves?" They said, "We found our parents worshipping them." He said, "Indeed, you and your parents have gone totally astray." They said, "Are you telling us the truth, or are you playing?" He said, "Your only Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, who created them. This is the testimony to which I bear witness. I swear by GOD, I have a plan to deal with your statues, as soon as you leave." He broke them into pieces, except for a big one, that they may refer to it. They said, "Whoever did this to our gods is really a transgressor." They said, "We heard a youth threaten them; he is called Abraham." They said, "Bring him before the eyes of all the people, that they may bear witness." They said, "Did you do this to our gods, O Abraham?" He said, "It is that big one who did it. Go ask them, if they can speak." They were taken aback, and said to themselves, "Indeed, you are the ones who have been transgressing." Yet, they reverted to their old ideas: "You know full well that these cannot speak." He said, "Do you then worship beside GOD what possesses no power to benefit you or harm you? You have incurred shame by worshipping idols beside GOD. Do you not understand?" They said, "Burn him and support your gods, if this is what you decide to do." We said, "O fire, be cool and safe for Abraham." Thus, they schemed against him, but we made them the losers. We saved him.

### **Ibrahim's Relation to Muslims**

[22.78] And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you an hardship in religion; the faith of your father Ibrahim; He named you Muslims before and in this, that the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be bearers of witness

to the people; therefore keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper!

### **Ibrahim and the Fire**

[37.83] And most surely Ibrahim followed his way. [37.84] When he came to his Lord with a free heart, [37.85] When he said to his father and his people: What is it that you worship? [37.86] A lie-- gods besides Allah-- do you desire? [37.87] What is then your idea about the Lord of the worlds? [37.88] Then he looked at the stars, looking up once, [37.89] Then he said: Surely I am sick (of your worshipping these). [37.90] So they went away from him, turning back. [37.91] Then he turned aside to their gods secretly and said: What! do you not eat? [37.92] What is the matter with you that you do not speak? [37.93] Then he turned against them secretly, smiting them with the right hand. [37.94] So they (people) advanced towards him, hastening. [37.95] Said he: What! do you worship what you hew out? [37.96] And Allah has created you and what you make. [37.97] They said: Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire. [37.98] And they desired a war against him, but We brought them low. [37.99] And he said: Surely I fly to my lord; He will guide me. [37.100] My Lord! grant me of the doers of good deeds. [37.101] So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance. [37.102] And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; consider then what you see. He said: O my father! do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones. [37.103] So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, [37.104] And We called out to him saying: O Ibrahim! [37.105] You have indeed shown the truth of the vision; surely thus do We reward the doers of good: [37.106] Most surely this is a manifest trial. [37.107] And We ransomed him with a Feat sacrifice. [37.108] And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations. [37.109] Peace be on Ibrahim. [37.110] Thus do We reward the doers of good. [37.111] Surely he was one of Our believing servants.

### **Ibrahim in Islam versus the People of the Book (Jews and Christians)**

[3.65] O followers of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrahim, when the Taurat and the Injeel were not revealed till after him; do you not then understand? [3.66] Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows while you do not know. [3.67] Ibrahim was not a Jew nor a Christian but he was (an) upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists. [3.68] Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrahim are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe and Allah is the guardian of the believers. [3.69] A party of the followers of the Book desire that they should lead you astray, and they lead not astray but themselves, and they do not perceive. [3.70] O followers of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the communications of Allah while you witness (them)? [3.71] O followers of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with the falsehood and hide the truth while you know? [3.72] And a party of the followers of the Book say: Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe, in the first part of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps they go back on their religion.

### **Concordance of Ibrahim in the Qur'an**

- Ibrahim's attributes: 2:124, 11:75, 16:120, 16:121, 16:123
- Ibrahim and his father
  - Ibrahim preached his father: 6:74, 19:42, 19:43, 19:44, 19:45, 21:52, 26:70, 37:85, 43:26
  - His father's idolatry: 6:74, 19:46, 26:71
  - Ibrahim asked forgiveness for his father: 14:41, 9:114, 19:47, 60:4
  - Arguing the people: 21:62, 21:63, 21:65, 21:66
  - Ibrahim moved away from the people: 19:48, 19:49, 29:26, 37:99, 43:26, 60:4
  - Ibrahim's warnings for the idols: 21:57, 21:58, 21:60, 37:93

- Thrown into fire: 21:68, 29:24, 37:97
- Saved from the fire: 21:69, 21:70, 29:24, 37:98
- Islam as a religion ‘of Ibrahim’: 2:130, 2:131, 4:125, 6:83, 6:84, 6:161, 9:114, 11:73, 12:6, 16:120, 16:121, 16:122, 16:123, 19:41, 19:47, 21:51, 26:83, 26:84, 26:85, 29:27, 37:84, 37:88, 37:104, 37:105, 37:108, 37:109, 37:110, 37:111, 37:113, 38:45, 38:46, 38:47, 43:28, 53:37, 57:26, 60:4
- The Testing of Ibrahim: 2:124, 37:102, 37:103
- Ibrahim as Allah's friend: 4:125
- Arguing Namrud: 2:258
- The preaching of Ibrahim: 2:130, 2:131, 2:135, 2:136, 2:140, 3:67, 3:68, 3:84, 3:95, 4:125, 4:163, 6:74, 6:76, 6:77, 6:78, 6:79, 6:80, 6:81, 6:83, 6:161, 14:35, 14:36, 14:37, 14:40, 21:52, 21:54, 21:56, 21:57, 21:67, 22:26, 22:78, 26:69, 26:70, 26:71, 26:72, 26:73, 26:75, 26:78, 26:79, 26:80, 26:87, 29:16, 29:17, 29:25, 37:83, 37:85, 37:86, 37:87, 37:89, 37:91, 37:92, 37:93, 37:94, 37:95, 37:96, 43:26, 43:27, 43:28, 60:4
- Development of Ka'bah: 2:127
- Ibrahim's pilgrimage: 2:128, 22:27
- Moving to Syam: 21:71, 29:26
- Ibrahim, Hagar, and Ishmael: 14:37, 37:101