

# *People of the Bible*

## Abraham

Abraham, originally Abram, is the first of the three biblical patriarchs. His story is told in chapters 11 through 25 of the Book of Genesis.

He was called by God to leave the house of his father Terah and settle in a land which was already inhabited by the descendants of Canaan, but God promised it to Abraham and his posterity. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot.

It took great faith to leave his family and go to a strange land. There were, however, moments when Abraham's faith was very much lacking. Some of those are listed below:

- There was a severe famine in the land of Canaan, so that Abram and Lot and their households, travelled south to Egypt. On the way, Abram told his wife Sarai to say that she was his sister (she was actually his half-sister), so that the Egyptians would not kill him. (Genesis 12:10–13)
- Abram and Sarai tried to make sense of how he would become a progenitor of nations since after 10 years of living in Canaan, no child had been born from Abram's seed. Sarai then offered her Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar so that he may have a child by her, as a wife.
- Abraham settled between Kadesh and Shur in the land of the Philistines. While he was living in Gerar, Abraham openly claimed that Sarah was his sister as he had earlier.

But in all of this, God remained faithful to Abraham and the promise He had made to Abraham.

When Abram was ninety-nine years of age, God declared Abram's new name: "Abraham" – "a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). God also declared Sarai's new name: "Sarah" and blessed her and told Abraham, "I will give thee a son also of her". (Genesis 17:15-16)

As had been prophesied in Mamre the previous year (Genesis 17:21), Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham. Abraham was "an hundred years old", when his son whom he named Isaac was born; and he circumcised him when he was eight days old. (Genesis 21:1–5)

Leaving his home country was a great show of trust in the Lord. However, probably one of the greatest faith stories is when Abraham was commanded by God to offer his son up as a sacrifice in the land of Moriah. The patriarch traveled three days until he came to the mount that God told him. He commanded the servants to remain while he and Isaac proceeded alone into the mount. Isaac carried the wood upon which he would be sacrificed. Along the way, Isaac asked his father where the animal for the burnt offering was, to which Abraham replied "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering". Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, he was interrupted by "the angel of the LORD", and he saw behind him a "ram caught in a thicket by his horns", which he sacrificed instead of his son. For his obedience he received promise of numerous descendants and abundant prosperity.