

THE QUR'AN	THE BIBLE
<p>ABRAHAM</p> <p>Surah 2:135. And they say: Be Jews or Christians, then ye will be rightly guided. Say (unto them, O Muhammad); Nay, but (we follow) the religion of Abraham, the upright, and he was not of the idolaters.</p> <p>136. Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them. And unto Him we have surrendered.</p>	<p>Genesis 12:1-3. The LORD [Hebrew: I AM] had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Abraham).</p> <p>Genesis 22:18. And through your offspring [seed] all nations on earth will be blessed.</p> <p>Matthew 1:1. ...Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.</p>

Muslims, Christians, and Jews all claim Abraham as their "father." For this study, why is Abraham so important to Muslims and Christians? Why, according to the Qur'an, does Islam trace its roots back to Abraham? How is the Christian view of Abraham similar, yet different from Islam?

ABRAHAM
THE QUR'AN

Q: ACCORDING TO THE QUR'AN, WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM?

Abraham is the spiritual father of Muslims as he is the spiritual father of Jews and Christians. In Surah 2:135 of the Qur'an, the call of Allah and the call through Muhammad is to return to "the religion of Abraham." Abraham "was not of the idolaters." He did not worship idols. (Idol worship was common in Muhammad's day in the city of Mecca and among the desert tribes of Arabia). Each of the five daily prayers in Islam ends with a reference to Abraham. The Qur'an depicts Abraham as a child chiding his father for believing in idols (cf Surah 6:74).

Q: WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF ISLAM?

Islam, according to the Qur'an (Surah 2:136), is the religion "which is revealed unto us," that is to Muslims through the revelation given to Muhammad, and it is the religion "which was revealed unto Abraham." Its origin is the belief of Abraham in the unity and oneness of the one God. This belief in the God of Abraham was handed down from Abraham through Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes. It is also the religion that Moses and all the prophets "received from their Lord" (Surah 2:136). Islam is a call to monotheism, the worship of one God, and the return to belief in Allah. Muslims have "surrendered" "unto Him" (Surah 2:136).

Q: IS ISLAM A FORM OF JUDAISM OR CHRISTIANITY?

Since, according to the Qur'an, Islam is a return to the religion of Abraham, Islam has its own origin and is not an offshoot of Judaism or Christianity. According to Surah 2:135, when Muslims are urged by Jews or Christians to "be Jews or Christians" so that they might be "rightly guided," Muslims are to say, "Nay, but we follow the religion of Abraham"(Surah 2:135) and "we believe in Allah," and "unto Him we have surrendered"(Surah 2:136). Allah is "Lord of the Worlds: The Beneficent, the Merciful" (cf Surah 1, The Opening). Since Abraham "surrendered" to Allah, it is unequivocally stated in cf Surah 3:67, "Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian." Islam is not dependent on any other religion, but on the revelation given to Muhammad.

THE BIBLE

Q: HOW DOES THE BIBLE VIEW ABRAHAM?

The Lord God makes himself known to Abram. He calls him out of idolatry, to a new beginning, to a new land. The Lord [Hebrew: I AM] calls Abram to “Leave your country...and go to a land I will show you...I will make you into a great nation...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gn 12:1-3). Later, to reassure Abram that he has not forgotten his promise, the Lord [I AM] speaks to Abram in a vision and assures Abram that his descendents will be as numerous as the stars (cf Gn 15:5).

The true and living God reveals himself as the Lord [I AM]. This name is significant. The Lord [I AM] is the fountain and foundation of all being and of all reality. He is the Lord [I AM] who makes himself known to Abram in an act of unexpected love, while Abram’s family is still in idolatry. He is the Lord [I AM] of Noah (cf Gn 6:7,8); of Abel (cf Gn 4:4); and of Adam and Eve (cf Gn 2:7).

The promise to Abram is a gracious and generous promise that “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gn 12:3) and that he would have “a son coming from your own body”(Gn 15:4) This blessing is again specifically repeated in Gn 22:18 by the Lord [I AM]: “And through your offspring [your seed] all nations will be blessed.” The Lord [I AM] is the God of promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to all people of “all nations.”

In keeping with the promise made to Abram, the Bible affirms that this promise was fulfilled in the offspring [the seed] of Abraham, the Messiah: “and to your seed, meaning one person, who is Christ” (cf Gal 3:16). The Bible holds that Jesus, the Messiah, is by lineage and fulfillment the personification and embodiment of the promise to Abraham. The Bible states that the “blessing to all nations” (cf Gn 22:18) is transmitted through the person of Jesus who is “the son of Abraham” (Mt 1:1).

Note:

In Islamic and Arabic speaking countries Christians use “Allah” in their Bible to denote the person of God. For this study, we use “Allah” for the Qur’an section since it is preferred and revered by most Muslims. For the Bible section we use “Lord [I AM] God,” the name of the God of creation (cf Gn 2:4) and “Lord” [I AM] the name revealed to Abraham (cf Gn 15:1-6).

SUMMARY:

The Qur’an teaches Islam is a return to the belief of Abraham. Muslims trace their religion back to Abraham as the supreme example of belief in one God, Allah. Allah is the Lord of the worlds, the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the tribes, and of the Prophets.

According to the Bible the true and living Lord God, is the great “I AM.” The Lord [I AM] graciously makes himself known to Abram and calls Abram out of idolatry. The promise is given to Abram that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Christians believe in one God, the God of Abraham, who is the Lord, the great I AM. They look to the promise of the Lord God given to Abraham that “through your offspring (seed) all nations on earth will be blessed.” This promise is contained, centered, and culminated in Jesus, the “offspring” of Abraham. Jesus, the Messiah, in the fullest sense, is the “son of Abraham.”

In this study we will answer the questions, “Since both Muslims and Christians believe they worship the God of Abraham, is this God of Abraham the same for Muslims and for Christians, or is he given a different character and description?” “Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?”

