**THE THREE FAITHS**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**ABRAHAM**

* Abraham lived about 3,700 years ago in the Middle East.
* He was a shepherd who traveled from place to place caring for his flock of animals. How is it possible that a shepherd who lived 3,000 years ago changed the world**? He did it with an idea.** One that was unusual for the period.
* Abraham placed his faith in a **single God** at a time when people all over the world believed in many different gods. **THIS IS CALLED MONOTHEISM.** The story of Abraham’s faith and obedience explains why he is honored by three major world religions today.
* Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all able to trace their roots back to Abraham. For Jews, Abraham is the first of the Patriarchs, a direct ancestor of the “Children of Israel” in the Hebrew Bible and of the Jewish People to the present day.
* Christians trace the family tree of Jesus back to Abraham through both Mary and Joseph.
* Muslims trace the ancestry of the Prophet Muhammad through Abraham’s (Ibrahim in Arabic) eldest son, Ishmael (Isma’il in Arabic).
* ***According to the Hebrew Bible, God commands Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. After Isaac is bound to an*** [***altar***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altar)***, the angel of God stops Abraham at the last minute, saying "now I know you fear God." At this point, Abraham sees a***[***ram***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram_%28sheep%29) ***caught in some nearby bushes and sacrifices the ram instead of Isaac.***

**JUDAISM**

* Judaism, the oldest of the three Abrahamic faiths, traces its birth to ca. 2000-1500 BCE (Before the Common Era), when Abraham made a covenant with God. Abraham introduced the belief in one true God (monotheism) and serves as the predecessor for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
* For Jews, Abraham is the first of the Patriarchs, a direct ancestor of the Jewish People to the present day.
* Moses, who is believed to have lived in the 13th–12th centuries BCE and is considered the great lawgiver, received the Torah — the collection of divine commandments and regulations — from God on Mount Sinai.
* The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) is the sacred text in Judaism.

**CHRISTIANITY**

* Christianity dates from the first century CE (Common Era), when the faith was formed after the death of Jesus (ca. 33 CE).
* Christians believe this Jewish preacher from Nazareth was the Messiah.
* Messiah - **a leader or savior of a particular group or cause**.
* The New Testament accounts of his miraculous birth, the numerous miracles he performed, and his crucifixion by the Romans and subsequent resurrection further demonstrated to his followers Jesus' divine status as the Son of God.
* The sacred text in Christianity is the Christian Bible, both the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament.

**ISLAM**

* Islam, the youngest of the three Abrahamic faiths, was established in the 6th century CE by Muhammad.
* Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad received God's message through the angel Gabriel.
* Muhammad is revered as the Messenger of God and as the final Prophet. Islam's sacred text is the Qur'an ("pronounced KORAN which means recitation" in Arabic), which contains the messages revealed to Muhammad over a 22-year period.
* Recitation or *To Recite* means to say aloud.
* The ancient scribal practice of writing sacred texts by hand flourished far longer in Islam than it did in Judaism or Christianity, both of which embraced the advent of printing in the West in the mid-15th century.
* The printed Qur'an became popular only in the early 20th century.

**SCRIPTURES**

* Jews, Christians, and Muslims all possess a book they regard as the Word of God. That Word — and the way it has been written, copied, and illustrated over the centuries — is the basis of their faith.
* These sacred Scriptures are the most widely spread and influential texts ever recorded.
* Abraham’s decision to place his faith in a single God, thousands of years ago, impacts the world today.
* 11/11/2018 The Story of Abraham and Sarah

**The Story of Abraham and Sarah – READ THE STORY AND FIND THE FAILS:**

Once there was a man named Abram. One day the Lord came to talk to Abram, and Abram asked, "Who will have all my things when I dye".

God promised Abram and his wife Sarai that one day they would be parents, even though they were old and had no children.

God wasn't sure that Abram understood. So that night He took him outside, and said, "Do you see all the stars that are in the sky"? When Abram looked up, the whole night skye was full of stars, so many in fact that he would never be able to count them. Then God said, "That is how many children you will have".

Quite a few years later when Abram was ninety-nine years old (older than even your grandparents) the Lord decided to change Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many." He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah.

God told them again that they would be patents and that they would have a boy. This time Abraham laughed so hard he fell on his face! It was hard to believe that he and Sarah would have a child in their old age?

One day three visitors came to Abraham's house. He hurried to meet them. "May I get you something to eat and drink!" Abraham asked. "Please come in and join us and have a rest on the couch."

The visitors agreed, so Abraham brought them some fresh bread, milk, and hambugers.

While the visitors were eating, they asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" Abraham thought this was a little strange, but he replied, "She's in the other room".

Then one of the men spoke and said, "I will come back to see you at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening behind the living room door. She started to laugh but covered her mouth and laughed to herself because she didn't want to be heard. Then she said to herself, "How can I have a child, I'm almost one hundred years old."

Later when the visitors had left, Abraham and Sarah realized that the man who had told them this was indeed God.

A year later Sarah did have a sun. She and Abraham named him Isaac, which means "he laughs." They were very excited and remembered to thank God for isaac.

GIST STATEMENT:

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1. Adapted from the text about Abraham, Judaism, Christianity and Islam on the Three Faiths website:

<http://exhibitions.nypl.org/threefaiths> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)