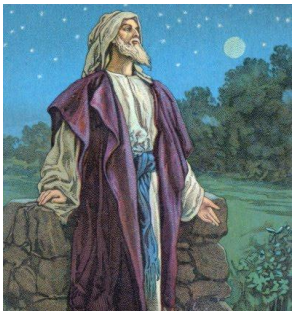
Reading Comprehension - Who was Abraham?



Abraham is known as the founding father of the Jewish people. His descendants became known as the Israelites, and the Jewish people trace their history and faith back to him. In the Bible, Abraham was originally known as Abram before God changed his name to Abraham. Abraham is traditionally believed to have lived around 1850 BC. He was a travelling merchant who moved with his tribe from one place to another across the Fertile Crescent. The Fertile Crescent was an area of fertile land in the Middle East, stretching from Mesopotamia towards Egypt. It was an important region for early settlements, farming and trade.

At this time in history, most people believed in many different gods. This belief is called polytheism. People worshipped different gods whom they believed controlled aspects of nature and everyday life, such as the sun, rain and harvest.

However, Abraham came to believe in just one God. This belief is called monotheism. Abraham believed that there was only one true God who created the world and cared for humanity. His belief in one God was very different from the beliefs of many people around him.

God's Call to Abraham

According to the Bible, God called Abraham to leave his homeland and travel to a new land. God promised to guide him and make his descendants into a great nation.

God asked Abraham to leave behind what was familiar to him and trust in the promise that God had made. Abraham responded with faith and obedience. He gathered his family and belongings and began the journey towards the land that God had promised him.

This land became known as the Promised Land. It was the land of Canaan, an area which included parts of what are now Israel and Palestine.

Abraham's journey was not always easy. He had to leave the security of his home and travel into unfamiliar places. His willingness to trust God became an important example of faith for the Jewish people and, later, for Christians and Muslims.

The Covenant with God

One of the most important parts of Abraham's story is the Covenant he made with God.

A covenant is a special agreement or promise between two parties. God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him three important things:

1. **Land:** God promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, which became known as the Promised Land.
2. **Descendants:** God promised that Abraham would become the father of a great nation and that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

3. **Blessing:** God promised to bless Abraham and, through him, bring blessings to all the nations of the world.

In return, Abraham was asked to remain faithful to God and trust in God's promises.
The covenant established a special relationship between God and Abraham and his descendants. They became known as God's Chosen People.

What Did It Mean to Be God's Chosen People?

Being God's Chosen People did not simply mean that Abraham's descendants were special or privileged. It also meant that they had a responsibility. They were called to believe in and worship the one true God. They were to live good and faithful lives, following God's guidance and setting an example for others. Through their words and actions, they were to help spread the message that there was only one God and encourage others to live according to God's ways.
Abraham's story became the foundation of the Jewish faith. His belief in one God, his trust in God's promises and his willingness to follow God's call made him an important figure in religious history.
Abraham is also an important figure in Christianity and Islam. All three religions recognise him as a significant person of faith. This is why Judaism, Christianity and Islam are often called the Abrahamic religions.

Answer the following questions into your copy.

1. Around what year is Abraham traditionally believed to have lived?
2. What was Abraham's occupation and where did he travel?
3. Explain the difference between polytheism and monotheism.
4. What did Abraham come to believe about God?
5. What did God ask Abraham to do?
6. What was the name of the land God promised to Abraham?
7. What is meant by the word *Covenant*?
8. Identify the three important promises God made to Abraham.
9. What did it mean for Abraham's descendants to be called God's Chosen People?
10. Name the three major world religions that recognise Abraham as an important figure.