



The Birth Of Judaism



Abraham lived in the land of Ur in Sumer. His family was like most of the day; they were pagans and kept a room of idols in their home. One day, Abraham was in the idol room, when he accidentally knocked into one of the figures, causing it to crash to the ground and break into pieces. When his father came home and saw what had happened, he was very angry and demanded, "How could you do such a thing to a god?"

Abraham had been worried all day about how his father would react and had thought long and hard about the accident. He answered his father, "Father, I am truly sorry that I broke the idol. It was an accident. But, Father, I have been thinking all day about this, and I must ask a question. Why, if this idol is a god, was I, a small and weak boy, able to destroy him?" His father could not answer.

As Abraham grew, the answer became clear to him. The idols were not gods, since there was only one God. Abraham came to know and love God, and God showed his love for Abraham, as well. However, though God had blessed Abraham in many ways, He had never allowed Sarah, Abraham's wife, to bear children, and this was a source of sadness for the couple. But God spoke to Abraham and assured him that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. Abraham did not understand, but he trusted the Lord and believed Him.

When Abraham and Sarah were both quite old, three angels disguised as travelers came to their tent. The elderly couple welcomed these nomads and fed them well with the richest cream and the fattest calf. When the angels were leaving, they told Sarah that in nine months she would bear a son. Sarah laughed, since she did not believe that she could conceive at such an old age, but the angels assured her that, "All things are possible for the Lord."

And so, when Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety, they had a son, whom they named Isaac. God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you; Every male shall be presented to me in sacred ritual as a sign that you will worship only Me." As God commanded, Isaac was presented in the temple when he was eight days old.

His descendants, the Jewish people, maintain to this day the covenant that God made with Abraham.

(Adapted from the Old Testament Bible)