

Trust.

Week 3 of 8 : StartingPointGroup.org

INTRODUCTION

Three major world faith traditions - *Judaism, Islam, and Christianity* - claim the same starting point: a man named **Abraham**. All three agree that sin made a mess of the world and God started his clean up operation with Abraham. God made a series of promises and Abraham's response to those promises didn't just have implications for his personal starting point or the starting points of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. It had implications for your starting point as well.

LISTENING GUIDE

Faith Has a Starting Point.

- The story of faith has a Starting Point.
- The three largest faith traditions - *Judaism, Islam, and Christianity* - all claim the same Starting Point.

*"The world was created by a singular **God**."*

*"The first man on earth was named **Adam**."*

*"Humanity messed up a **Perfect World**."*

*"God began to correct the world through **Abraham**."*

- Abraham is the founding father of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity . . . but they all take different directions after Abraham.
- **1876 BC** : God decided to wade into the mess of humanity by choosing a single man - **ABRAHAM** - and he started there.

Genesis 12:1

The Lord had said to Abram, "*Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.*"

God made Abraham 3 Promises.

Promise # 1

"I will make you into a great nation." - Genesis 12:2

Promise # 2

"And I will bless you; I will make your name great." - Genesis 12:2

Promise # 3

"All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:3

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Genesis 15:4-6

Then the word of the Lord came to him: *"This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your flesh and blood will be your heir."*

Then God took Abram outside and said, *"Look up at the sky and count the stars - if indeed you can count them."*

Then he said to him, *"So shall your offspring be."*

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

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"Trusting God resulted in a right standing with God."

Jews: *"The way to have a right standing with God is by being Jewish."*

Muslims: *"The way to have a right standing with God is to believe in the one true God of Allah, believe in his prophet Mohammed, and do acts of righteousness that will be used in the end to determine if your good works outweigh your bad works. You won't know till the end."*

Christians: Argued and disagreed - *"You've got to become Jewish. NO - you've got to keep the Law of Moses. NO - you've got to believe."*

Q: How can you know if you have a right standing with God?

- Birth?
- Behavior?
- Belief?

Q: What if the Starting Point for a relationship with God is TRUST?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following reflects your view? Why?
 - God accepts me based upon my ***birth***.
 - God accepts me based upon my ***behavior***.
 - God accepts me based upon my ***belief***.
 - God accepts me based upon some *combination* of the above.
2. Do you think it was hard for Abraham to believe God's promises? Why or why not?
3. What is the significance of Abraham being declared righteous by God?
4. What experiences have you had that have made it difficult to trust God?
5. In what area of your life is God currently calling you to trust him? What is one thing you can do this week to trust him? What can this group do to support you?

MOVING FORWARD

When sin stranded mankind in a sea of broken glass, God had a choice: hang an “*Out of Order*” sign on our mess and move on or get involved. Because he cared, he chose to get involved. That meant he had to start somewhere. He reached out to one man - Abraham - and asked for his trust. In return for Abraham’s faith, God credited him with righteousness and cleared a path for personal relationship. He makes the same offer to each of us.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Psalm 32:1-2 - “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.”

HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 3 | Answer Reflection Questions

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