

In the Beginning...

An Exploration of Genesis

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 April 28, 2024

“The Father of Many Religions”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come before You, offering our thanks for bringing us together safely. As we prepare for this study, we ask that You would be with us. May our thoughts be led by You, and our conversations be inspired by You. Help us to put our own agendas to the side, and seek Your will and outcome for this meeting. Please grant us wisdom in times of uncertainty, and clarity in times of confusion. Lead us to solutions, and help strengthen us as a group. In Jesus’ name, amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis 12:1-5 (NIV)

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

*² “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.*

*³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”*

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Genesis 15:4-6 (NIV)

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him 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.”

⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 *April 28, 2024*
“The Father of Many Religions”

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 responses 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.

When sin stranded humankind in a sea of broken glass, God had a choice: to hang an "Out of Order" sign on our mess and move on or to 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 a personal relationship. He makes the same offer to each of us.

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. Have you ever taken a first step in restoring a relationship? If so, what was it like for you?
3. Do you believe adversity is part of God's plan? Why or why not?
4. When have you seen someone demonstrate great faith despite his or her circumstances?
5. What experiences have you had that have made it difficult to trust God?

FINAL APPLICATION

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?