

## Creation and the Abrahamic Traditions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam

The following story text is from *The Hebrew Bible* in English, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917 Edition. Biblical scholars regard the written Jewish *Torah* (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) to have originated with the Aaronid priesthood (from the tribe of Levi) during the Jewish expulsion from their homeland and the Babylonian Exile, ca. 550-400 BCE. It was an attempt to codify and secure their laws and genealogies, during their captivity. Note: the written word had only been invented around 2,800 BCE, with it being fully developed with consonants and vowels by 500 BCE. The *Torah* was thus one of the first written creation stories. The story of Genesis and the Abraham give birth to the monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

### **(And God said . . . )**

**1:1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **2** Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. **3** And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light. **4** And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. **5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

**1:11** And God said: 'Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth.' And it was so. **12** And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

### **(Be fruitful and multiply, and subdue and have dominion over . . . )**

**1:24** And God said: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind.' And it was so. **25** And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. **26** And God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.' **27** And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. **28** And God blessed them; and God said unto them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth.' **29** And God said: 'Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed--to you it shall be for food; **30** and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every

thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is a living soul, [I have given] every green herb for food.' And it was so. **31** And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**(Man give names to his dominion; helpmate for man)**

**2:18** And the LORD God said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.' **19** And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man would call every living creature, that was to be the name thereof. **20** And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help mate for him. **21** And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof. **22** And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. **23** And the man said: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'

**(Tree of Life and Knowledge; serpent tempts woman who eats of Tree, and so too man)**

**3:1** Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman: 'Yea, hath God said: Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?' **2** And the woman said unto the serpent: 'Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; **3** but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said: Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' **4** And the serpent said unto the woman: 'Ye shall not surely die; **5** for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.' **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. **7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves girdles.

**(Man shall toil in fields of the herb; man rules over woman)**

**3:14** And the LORD God said unto the serpent: 'Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. **15** And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel.' **16** Unto the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' **17** And unto Adam He said: 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and

hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. **18** Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. **19** In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' **20** And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. **21** And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.

**(Expulsion from Eden; knowledge of good and evil; the earth is populated by man)**

**3:22** And the LORD God said: 'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.' **23** Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. **24** So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way to the tree of life.

**(Stories of the Flood and Noah; Tower of Babel)**

**(First child)**

**4:1** And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bore Cain, and said: 'I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.' **2** And again she bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

**(And among the descendants of Adam and Eve was Abram/Abraham/Ibrahim. The Covenant with Abram: the promise of a great nation and a land; the First Calling; archaeologically part of a great migration from Mesopotamia to Canaan around 1,800 BCE)**

**12:1** Now the LORD said unto Abram: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee. **2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing. **3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

**(Hagar and Ishmael)**

**16:1** Now Sarai Abram's wife bore him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. **2** And Sarai said unto Abram: 'Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall be builded up through her.' And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. **3** And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar

the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife. **4** And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

**(Covenant and Circumcision; Abram given name, “Abraham”; circumcision originally a rite of initiation into marriage and the clan responsibilities, becomes “sign” of obligations as a “chosen people”; Sarah give birth to Isaac, the descendants would be Moses, and Judaism and Christianity)**

**17:1** And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him: 'I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou wholehearted. **2** And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.' **3** And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying: **4** 'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations. **5** Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. **6** And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. **7** And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. **8** And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.' **9** And God said unto Abraham: 'And as for thee, thou shalt keep My covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. **10** This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. **11** And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt Me and you. **12** And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner, that is not of thy seed. **13** He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. **14** And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.' **15** And God said unto Abraham: 'As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. **16** And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her.' **17** Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart: 'Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?' **18** And Abraham said unto God: 'Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!' **19** And God said: 'Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.'

**(Hagar and Ishmael vanquished, the descendants would be Muhammad and Islam)**

**21:9** And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne unto Abraham, making sport. **10** Wherefore she said unto Abraham: 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.' **11** And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son. **12** And God said unto Abraham: 'Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall seed be called to thee. **13** And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.' **14** And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and strayed in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. **15** And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. **16** And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said: 'Let me not look upon the death of the child.' And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. **17** And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her: 'What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18** Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him fast by thy hand; for I will make him a great nation.' **19** And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. **20** And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. **21** And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

**(God tests Abraham's faith with burnt offering of own son; the Second Calling)**

**22:1** And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.' **2** And He said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' **3** And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. **5** And Abraham said unto his young men: 'Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come back to you.' **6** And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. **7** And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said: 'My father.' And he said: 'Here am I, my son.' And he said: 'Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' **8** And Abraham said: 'God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So they went both of them together. **9** And they came to the place which God

had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10** And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. **11** And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said: 'Abraham, Abraham.' And he said: 'Here am I.' **12** And he said: 'Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou art a God-fearing man, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.' **13** And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-jireh; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the LORD is seen.' **15** And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, **16** and said: 'By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, **17** that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; **18** and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast hearkened to My voice.' **19** So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-heba.



**Abraham by Rembrandt 1635-80**