

The Story of Abraham (part 4 of 7): His Migration to Canaan

Description: Abraham's dispute with a king, and the command of God to migrate to Canaan.

By Imam Kamil Mufti

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Modern archeological discoveries suggest the high priestess was the emperor's daughter. Naturally, she would have made a point to make an example of the man who defiled her temple. Soon Abraham, still a young man^[1], found himself on trial, standing all alone in front of a king, most probably King Nimrod. Even his father was not on his side. But God was, as He always had been.

Dispute with a King

While Judeo-Christian traditionists clearly assert that Abraham was sentenced to the fire by the king, Nimrod, the Quran does not elucidate this matter. It does however mention the dispute which a king had with Abraham, and some Muslim scholars suggest that it was this same Nimrod, but only after an attempt was made by the masses to kill Abraham^[2]. After God had saved Abraham from the fire, his case was presented to the king, who out of his pompousness, vied with God himself due to his kingdom. He debated with the young man, as God tells us:

"Have you not considered him who had an argument with Abraham about his Lord, because God had given him the kingdom?" (Quran 2:258)

Abraham's logic was undeniable,

"My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death.' He answered: 'I give life and cause death.'" (Quran 2:258)

The king brought forth two men sentenced to death. He freed one and condemned the other. This reply of the king was out of the context and utterly stupid, so Abraham put forth another, one which would surely silence him.

"Abraham said: 'Lo! God causes the sun to rise in the east, so you cause it to come up from the west.' Thus was the disbeliever absolutely defeated. And God guides not wrongdoing folk." (Quran 2:258)

Abraham in Migration

After years of ceaseless calling, faced with the rejection of his people, God commanded Abraham to disassociate from his family and people.

Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and

those with him, when they said to their people: "Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides God, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred forever, until you believe in God Alone." (Quran 60:4)

At least two persons in his family did, however, accept his exhortation - Lot, his nephew, and Sarah, his wife. Thus, Abraham migrated along with the other believers.

"So Lot believed in him (Abraham). He (Abraham) said: 'I will emigrate for the sake of my Lord. Verily, He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.'" (Quran 29:26)

They migrated together to a blessed land, the land of Canaan, or Greater Syria where, according to Judeo-Christian traditions, Abraham and Lot divided their people west and east of the land they had migrated to[3].

"And We rescued him and Lot to the land which We have blessed for the worlds." (Quran 21:71)

It was here, in this blessed land, that God chose to bless Abraham with progeny.

"...We (God) bestowed upon him Isaac, and (a grandson) Jacob. Each one We made righteous." (Quran 21:72)

"And that was Our Proof which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will in degrees. Certainly your Lord is All Wise, All Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob, each of them We guided, and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. Thus do We reward the good doers. And Zachariah, and John and Jesus and Elias, each one of them was of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha, and Jonah and Lot, and each one of them We preferred above the worlds (of men and jinn). And also some of their fathers and their progeny and their brethren, We chose them, and We guided them to a Straight Path. This is the Guidance of God with which He guides whomsoever He will of His slaves. But if they had joined in worship others with God, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them. They are those whom We gave the Book, the Understanding, and Prophethood..." (Quran 6:83-87)

Prophets, chosen for the guidance of his nation:

"And We made them leaders, guiding (humankind) by Our Command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds, performing prayers, and the giving of Zakat and of Us (Alone) they were worshippers." (Quran 21:73)

Endnotes:

[1] Judeo-Christian traditions tell him to be of fifty years of age. *The Talmud: Selections*, H. Polano. (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/pol/index.htm>)

[2] *Stories of the Prophets*. Ibn Katheer. Darussalam Publications.

[3] Jewish Encyclopedia: Abraham

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