

Abraham: The Story of a Life

By Joseph Blenkinsopp




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In this discursive commentary Joseph Blenkinsopp explores the story of Abraham -- iconic ancestor of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam -- as told in Genesis 11-25. Presented in continuous discussion rather than in verse-by-verse form, Blenkinsopp's commentary focuses on the literary and theological artistry of the narrative as a whole.

Blenkinsopp discusses a range of issues raised in the Abraham saga, including confirmation of God's promises, Isaac's sacrifice and the death of Jesus, and Abraham's other beloved son, Ishmael. Each chapter has a section called "Filling in the Gaps," which probes some of the vast amount of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic commentary that the basic Genesis text has generated through the ages.

In an epilogue Blenkinsopp looks at Abraham in early Christianity and expresses his own views, as a Christian, on Abraham. Readers of Blenkinsopp's *Abraham: The Story of a Life* will surely come away with a deeper, richer understanding of this seminal ancient figure.

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"Learned historian that he is, Joseph Blenkinsopp here brings his best critical eye to the Abraham narratives, paying primary attention to the ongoing role and function of the Abraham tradition. . . . Blenkinsopp's brief, disciplined commentary provides us with a sound critical summary of the text, its claims, and its rich resources for faith. Much of the force of the book comes from observing how this master interpreter goes about his work."

Jon D. Levenson

— Harvard University

"In clear and engaging language, one of the most accomplished biblical scholars of our time sheds much light on the figure of Abraham in Genesis, challenging scholarly conventions along the way and placing the narratives about him in a new framework. All readers can learn and benefit from Blenkinsopp's interpretations."

Lester L. Grabbe

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"A 'discursive commentary' on the intriguing story of Abraham, a seminal figure for three religions. . . . This book will enable many ordinary readers to come to grips with the Abraham story anew, in a way they never have before from just reading the text on their own or relying on sermons and Sunday school."

Baruch Halpern

— University of Georgia

"A profound study of the biographies of Abraham from the ninth century B.C.E. to the early Christian era. There is something to be learned on nearly every page."

Gary N. Knoppers

— University of Notre Dame

"Blenkinsopp has furnished us with a creative re-imagining of Abraham and his emergence in biblical tradition. A fascinating and provocative study."

Spirit & Life

"In this relatively slim volume, Blenkinsopp carefully examines the Abraham narratives in the Bible and beyond. . . . For any who wish to understand the implications of Abraham's life and journey, this book is well worth reading."

About the Author

Joseph Blenkinsopp is John A. O'Brien Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

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