

COVENANT FOUNDERS

ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Introduction

- Abraham and Sarah stand at the heart of the Hebrew Bible's narrative, representing the beginning of God's covenantal relationship with the Jewish people. Their journey—both physical and spiritual—marks the birth of Israel's identity. As the first patriarch and matriarch, their lives model themes of faith, obedience, struggle, and divine promise.

- The Covenant and Divine Promise
The story begins with God's call to Abram in Genesis 12:1–3, commanding him to leave his land for an unknown future. In return, God promises land, countless descendants, and a legacy of blessing:
"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you." – Genesis 12:2
This promise is reaffirmed in Genesis 15 and 17, where God changes their names and introduces circumcision as Sarah's story is not passive. She influences family decisions, confronts her infertility, and engages directly with God in Genesis 18. Her status is emphasized in Genesis 23, where she is honoured with a family tomb. Rabbinic sources call her a prophetess.
Feminist scholars like Phyllis Klistner explore Sarah's voice, her conflict with Hagar, and her dignity, showing her as a complex, influential woman in patriarchal texts.

In Genesis 22, Abraham is asked to sacrifice Isaac. This test, called the Akedah, highlights Abraham's deep trust in God. Jewish tradition sees this event as foundational. Abraham's faith, even in the face of great fear, becomes a model of covenant loyalty. This story is read during Rosh Hashanah and interpreted as an act of submission and divine mercy.

Abraham and Sarah are significant figures in biblical history, revered as the **founders of a covenant** between God and humanity. Their journey of faith, trials, and ultimate trust in God's promises laid the groundwork for many religious traditions, making them pivotal in the narrative of monotheism and the understanding of divine covenant.

Their legacy continues to inspire today.

Legacy and Influence
Abraham and Sarah are remembered daily in Jewish prayers, like the Amidah: "God of Abraham... God of Sarah..." They are the origin of Israel's spiritual and physical lineage. Their values of faith, justice (Genesis 18), hospitality, and obedience live on in Jewish ethics.
Their influence extends to Christianity and Islam, but in Judaism, they remain intimate ancestors, not distant myths.

References

Primary Sources (Biblical)

- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (1989). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (Genesis 12–25).
- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (1989). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (Genesis 18).
- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (1989). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (Genesis 21).
- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (1989). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (Genesis 22).
- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. (1989). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. (Exodus 19:5–6).

