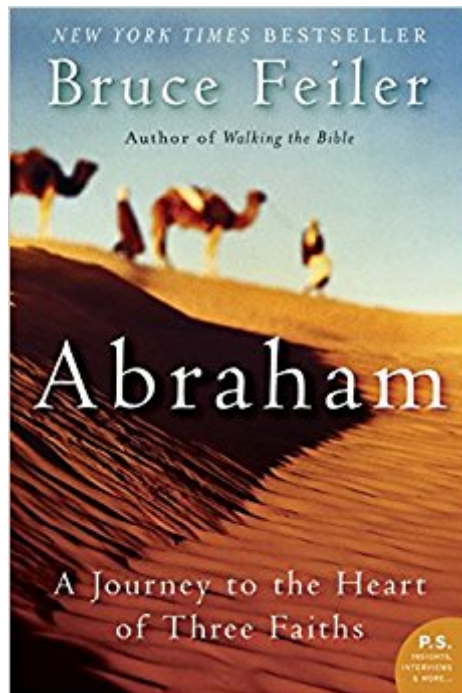




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Abraham: A Journey To The Heart Of Three Faiths



Synopsis

Both immediate and timeless, Abraham tells the powerful story of one man's search for the shared ancestor of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Traveling through war zones, braving violence at religious sites, and seeking out faith leaders, Bruce Feiler uncovers the defining yet divisive role that Abraham plays for half the world's believers. Provocative and uplifting, Abraham offers a thoughtful and inspiring vision of unity that redefines what we think about our neighbors, our future, and ourselves. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After having enjoyed Bruce Feiler's previous book, "Walking the Bible," I was a bit skeptical when I heard about this one. He had already covered the journey of Abraham in the first book, so what more could he add with a sequel? It wasn't until I heard him talk about Abraham on National Public Radio that I realized this book is not another travelogue. It's a chronicle of Feiler's own inner journey to understand the connections among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam through their common father, Abraham. As Feiler tells us in this book, the sedrah portion he studied for his own Bar Mitzvah was "Lech lecha," the section of the Torah which deals with God's call to Abraham to leave his home and go to a place that God would show him. It is said that one's Bar Mitzvah portion is forever connected with one's personal destiny. This is certainly true in Feiler's case. His lifelong fascination with Abraham has led him to write a very interesting and thought-provoking book. Don't expect this

to be a scholarly study. It's not. In fact, there are some glaring historical inaccuracies. For example, Feiler credits the "Essene" Qumran community with "starting" the tradition of midrash (Jewish hermeneutics). Apparently he's not up on recent Dead Sea Scroll scholarship, because it is now seriously questioned whether (A) the Qumran community was Essene and (B) whether the scrolls in question came from Qumran or a Jerusalem library that was hidden at the time of the Roman siege. At any rate, midrash did not begin at Qumran. (He also confuses midrash with the Mishnah at one point...) I'm sure that Muslim and Christian readers will find similar errors -- but that's not the point of the book.

How do you write a 226-page book covering someone whom we have very little historical knowledge about? Put a lot of space between the lines, and fill in the gaps with long, superfluous descriptions of what the weather was like the day you were doing your research, and you can stretch it out to 226 pages. Yes, the content of this book is quite thin, stretched out to needless length. But fortunately, it's an easy read, so it goes fast even though you do have to wade through some of those verbose setting-the-mood descriptions. I ended up reading this book through a book group discussion. I work at a Fortune 500 company that has a diversity committee, like most big corporations, but usually such groups tend to focus only on race, gender, and sexual orientation issues. At my company, they also include other types of diversity, such as generational differences and religion. This book was a perfect choice for such an environment because Abraham is an important figure in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, so people of all three of these major world religions could find something in the book for them. I found it quite interesting how the three religions have developed views of Abraham that are quite divergent, even though they all have the same historical writing about just a few incidents in his life. The most surprising view to me was the Jewish interpretation of Abraham in the Middle Ages, which according to this author, had become similar to Christ: "Abraham had become a savior, a celestial figure who embodies divinity on earth, represents humans in the afterlife, and contains, in the deeds of his life, the scripture of God's intention."

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