

Lent 2 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026

## Welcome – Introduction

Today 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent and also 1<sup>st</sup> of March – St David’s day. David fits well into the theme of Lent of simple living and denying ourselves some of the luxuries of life, his rule for his monks was that they should eat only bread and herbs and drink only water also to focus his thoughts on God he would immerse himself in cold water. There are some thoughts to be going on with.

## Sermon

Abram or Abraham was the first of what we now call the Patriarch, the founding fathers of the Hebrew nation. Looked on by Christian’s Jews and Moslem’s as a great leader and favourite of God.

Now if you are going to instigate a new nation you might look for someone with great insight, wisdom and understanding of politics. Someone with an unblemished character and history.

That was not Abram.

He was a successful herder but seemed to have no political aspirations. At the point we dipped into his story today he was getting on a bit, even older than me, and had no offspring, no children. Abram was just a couple or so generations on from Noah, and apart from genealogy today’s reading is the first we now of him, in his old age already.

So why was he chosen by God to be the founder or father of nations?

St Paul gives us the reasoning in the Roman’s reading, picking up on the absurdity of the situation, Abram or Abraham as God renamed him, was not a perfect saintly man, this was a flawed human who made mistakes and wasn’t particularly good with people.

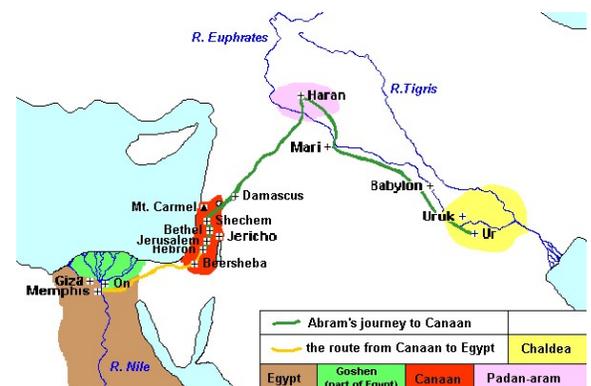
But as St Paul put it: **“Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and *that* was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own.”**

Abraham must have recognised that he could trust God to do what was good and, in effect handed his life to God. Giving up his comfortable existence he set off for a strange land becoming a refugee, a foreigner in an unfamiliar country. God had made what seemed like a ridiculous promise that he would even be the father of a child in his and Sarai’s old age.

Off they went though, travelling for around for 25 or 30 years, going as far as Egypt where he gave his wife to the Pharaoh to save his own skin, having a child with his wife’s slave girl, laughing at God when he was told, at the age of 99 that he and Sarai were about to become parents. Casting out the slave girl and his son into the desert to die. Through all of this though, he maintained his relationship with God and trusted in the promise made to him.

As St Paul points out : *That famous promise God gave Abraham—that he and his children would possess the earth—was not given because of something Abraham did or would do. It was based on God’s decision to put everything together for him, which Abraham then entered when he believed.*

*If those who get what God gives them only get it by doing everything they are told to do, by obeying the rules then most of us are lost or at least limited in what our futures have in store for us.*



We are very limited if we have to earn what we are to be given our futures are closely connected to our trust in God's promise.

All of this was happening a few hundred years before Moses was given the Law as a guide to how we should live our lives. Trust in God pre-dates the Law.

As often happens the relationship between the Spiritual connection between God and Humans is overshadowed by rules and regulations that are open to interpretation and manipulation. In our arrogance we start to think that we can be in charge of our destiny by our own works.



By the time of Jesus and the Pharisee Nicodemus the interpretation of the Law had become a tool to control by the ruling classes, often for their own benefit.

However this particular Pharisee recognised the signs of the Messiah in Jesus, recognised that there was something very special about this itinerant Rabbi. He recognised the marks of something Godly, something Holy. Jesus did things that were not possible by traditional prayer and sacrifice.

That Jesus had something of the holy spirit about him.

Nicodemus is a bit of a shadowy character, recognising the Messiah but not quite trusting enough to give up his position. We can see in the 2 or 3 passages where he is mentioned that there is tension and turmoil in this man, between his heritage and the work of the Holy Spirit.

He struggled with being spiritual rebirth or awakening. But it seems that there was a spark that lit a fire in him that perhaps smouldered for a while before eventually bursting into flames.

This I think is how it is for many of us, we may not be able to pinpoint exactly when we found a realisation and trust in God through Jesus.

The final mention in the Gospel of Nicodemus was when he publicly made his feelings know as he helped to bury Jesus' body.

The Jews considered themselves as ethnic descendents of Abraham, blood line was all important to their understanding of who they were. It was and is part of their national identity. However God's promise was for much more than a Jewish nation

It said in the Genesis reading of Abram that "All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you."

St Paul is arguing for a spiritual understanding, after all he was writing for those who had no claim to a family genetic connection to Abraham but would still look to him for a spiritual root, as we do in looking for an example of trusting in and following God's plan for us. **Amen**



