



Margaret J. Wheatley

Abraham

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As he had done before,
Abram walked into the night with God.
Many times God had talked with him
and many times Abram had built Him an altar.
He knew this God, God
who led him
from his father's house to lands
of promise, God
who vowed to be his shield
and exceeding great reward, God
who so wanted Abram to
love him that
he would save Sodom
if he could.

As he had done before,
Abram walked into the night with God.
Many times God had talked with him
and many times Abram
had built Him an altar.
The sky was clear and the stars shone.
“Can you count the stars, Abram?” God asked.

“No, Lord, for they are
everywhere and without number.”

And then God
who loved Abram
promised him again
promised him the fathering
of a nation, a nation
without number.
Abram knew this God.

In his 99th year Abram became Abraham.
“Exalted father” became “father of many nations.”
God asked him to be perfect
(meaning that we are already the image of God)
and covenanted with him again.
Sarah, who was old, was to bear a son,
Sarah, who was listening behind the curtain,
laughed.

Her laughter insulted God.
“Do you think,” God asked Abraham,
“that anything is too hard for me?”
Sarah denied she
had laughed but

when the babe was born
Sarah laughed and laughed.

“All that hear me will laugh with me” she said.
They named the child Isaac, which means
to laugh and to rejoice.
He, first of a new nation
child of joy and mirth.

As he had done before,
Abraham walked into the night with God. And with Isaac.
Many times God had talked with them
and many times they had built Him an altar.
They knew this God.

Innocent Isaac, carrying wood
for his own pyre, asked about
the lamb. “God provides”
said Abraham and Isaac,
who loved his father,
who loved God,
knew this was true.

We do not know how Abraham bound
his child to the pyre,
we do not know
who raised the knife.
We know one thing.

Three times that day,
Abraham was called and
three times that day he answered
“Here I am.”

This is not Peter, denying God
three times, Peter collapsing
before the crowing cock.

This is Abraham
knowing God
walking into the night.

Then Abraham raises his knife
to slay Isaac.

And an angel calls to him.

“Abraham. Abraham.”

And he answers,

“Here I am.”

And the angel finds him.

And we shall all be saved.

Many years later, Paul writes to the Hebrews
about Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.” The faithful, says Paul,
embrace as real
what has only been promised.
They live in a future not of their time,
but true.

But Abraham’s faith was not that reasonable.

Abraham’s faith was that
he could bless the
senselessness
of God
to hold him
to no promise
to love him
past his madness.

Because Abraham knew.
Knew beyond
all reason,

God.



ABOUT MARGARET (MEG) WHEATLEY, Ed.D.

Margaret Wheatley writes, speaks, and teaches how we can accomplish our work, sustain our relationships, and willingly step forward to serve in this troubled time. She is co-founder and President emerita of The Berkana Institute, an organizational consultant since 1973, a global citizen since her youth, and a prolific writer. She has authored eight books. Her numerous articles may be downloaded free at her web site: margaretwheatley.com. For more biographical information, see margaretwheatley.com/bio