

The Faith of Abraham

Intro: Abraham, the man upon whom God chose to found the nation of His Son.

1. “Abraham Believed God ...” (Rom 4:3)

A. Abraham’s history:

1. Ac 7:2-4 - Left all familiar to go *where??*
2. Received, acted upon God’s promises - Gn 12:1-4.
3. Built altars to God - Gn 12:7-8.
4. Called upon name of the Lord - Gn 13:4. A comprehensive term which involves acknowledging, submitting to and obeying God.
5. When God repeats the promise, Abraham asks for confirmation as he yet has no children - Gn 15:1-5.

B. Gn 15:6 - “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him ...”

1. This was not a mental act apart from obedience. Abr’s faith was **active** faith.
2. This was not an initial, one-time act but continuing, life-long trust.
3. God considers such trust, respect, submission and obedience *righteousness*.

C. Rom 4:3 - Paul uses this characterization of faith to describe what God is looking for - what He expects - in man. While faithful men aspire to such lives, the merit of so living - “works” (of merit) - does not secure our salvation. Abraham, as faithful as he was, needed **forgiveness**.

2. “Abraham Believed God ...” (Jas 2:23)

A. Abraham’s story continues ...

1. Over the course of time the promised son was born - Gn 21:1-3.
2. Abraham sends Ishmael away at God’s command - Gn 21:12.
3. **THEN** God commands him to offer Isaac - Gn 22:2.

B. Another NT writer refers to this episode of Abraham’s life, *amplifying Gn 15:6*.

1. Can faith without works save? - Jas 2:14. Man says “yes!” It **must** be without works.
 2. Faith without works is **dead** - Jas 2:17, 20, 26.
 3. How does one *know* he has faith apart from works? - Jas 2:18.
 4. Abraham justified by works; works made faith perfect - Jas 2:21-22.
 5. **“And the Scripture was fulfilled ...”** - Jas 2:23.
 - a. Abraham *feared* God - Gn 22:12.
 - b. Abraham *acted*; in principle he slew his son - Gn 22:16.
 - c. Abraham *obeyed* God - Gn 22:18.
- C. By such a life Abraham became “*the friend of God*” (Jas 2:23) and the “*father of us all*” (Rom 4:16).

3. Applications

- A. Paul was writing to stress the need for forgiveness, affirming that salvation will not be based upon perfect lawkeeping - Rom 3:20. This is a comfort; it gives us hope in the midst of guilt, frustration and sorrow over our mistakes.
- B. James was writing to rebuke inactive, hypocritical Christians whose behavior fell far short of their professed convictions.
- C. Do we practice what we preach? Abraham had less going for him in terms of full knowledge of God’s scheme, an appreciation of God manifested in flesh, and studying God’s activities over several millennia. **Such faith is a high standard! It calls for our complete devotion, doubtless determination, and dogged pursuit.**