

The Faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob¹
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
September 18, 2022

Text: Hebrews 11:17-22

Purpose: Abraham demonstrated his faith by obedience – even to the point of sacrificing his only son, Isaac. God is calling us to be obedient to His word. We need to develop a heart of worship and trust in order to be obedient.

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources rep asked a young accountant who was fresh out of school, "What starting salary were you thinking about?" The accountant said, "In the neighborhood of \$100,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

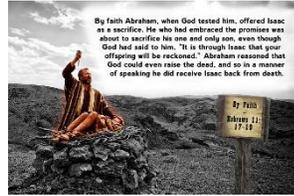


The interviewer said, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks' vacation, full medical and dental, Company Retirement Fund to 50% of salary, Executive Share Option Scheme, Profit-Related Pay and a company car leased every two years - say, a 5-series BMW?"

The accountant sat up straight and said, "Wow! Are you kidding?"

The interviewer replied, "Yes, but you started it." ²

Our text today involves the man called Abraham. God came to Abraham and asked him to take his one and only son up to a place where he would show him, and while there, offer Isaac up as a sacrifice to God. When God said this, He was not kidding with Abraham. God asked Abraham to trust Him and to be obedient.



Abraham's story goes back to the book of Genesis. We examined Abraham's story last week how God would bring a child into the life of Abram and Sarai. This promise was first given to them when Abram was 75 years old and Sarai was 65. They traveled to the place where God led them and they saw the land in which they were promised, but during their lifetime, they never possessed it.

At first Abram thought the child of promise would come through his servant Eliezer, but God said it would be a child of his. Then Sarai and Abram thought the promise would be fulfilled through the handmaid Hagar, but the child that was born, Ishmael, was not the child of promise. At the age of 99, God told Abraham that his wife Sarah (which means princess) would herself bear a child. To that news from God, Abraham laughed. Not only did Abraham laugh, his wife Sarah laughed also. How ridiculous to think a child would be born to a woman 90 years old.



So, then Abraham and Sarah gave birth to the child of promise Isaac. I am sure they along with others, laughed with delight. By the way the name Isaac means laughter! There in their arms laid the promise of God, the fulfillment

of prophecy, the hope of a great nation. I am sure they doted over the boy and made sure he had the best, and was carefully cared for.

GOD'S TEST

Then one day a word from God came with clarity and instruction. Genesis 22:1 says it like this:

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."



I can see Abraham immediately responding when God called out to him, "Here I am." But I can also see the countenance of Abraham begin to fade away. God is asking me to take this child, this precious child, our one and only child, and present him back to God as an offering. If it were me, I would want to make sure and question God intensely about the instructions. But you do not find that with Abraham. He immediately obeyed.

The next morning, without even telling Sarah, Abraham loaded up his donkey, quietly summoned two servants, split wood for the offering pyre, woke up Isaac and headed out for a three-day journey to Moriah.

As they stood at the base of the mountain, Abraham took the wood and placed it on Isaac's back, and the two of them headed up to the place that God would lead them.

We do not know how old Isaac was at this time. Some speculate he was a young boy; others say he could have been as old as 30. Either way, he willingly obeyed his father as they went up the mountain. As they proceeded up the hill, Isaac turned to his father and said, *“Father, we have the fire and the wood for the offering, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”* Abraham replied, *“My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering.”* So they completed the journey.



When they came to the place of sacrifice, the wood was placed on the altar. And then Abraham told Isaac of God’s instruction. What is amazing in the passage of scripture in Genesis is that Isaac did not flee or attempt to run away. He was bound and then Abraham lifted the knife in the air to sacrifice Isaac.

If we froze this moment in time, we would probably see a terrified Isaac bound on the altar and a heartbroken Abraham holding the knife. In the heart of Abraham, he had already completed the offering of Isaac. If God could give an old man like Abraham a son like Isaac and keep his promises, then God could surely raise Isaac back up from the dead. **It was not Abraham’s responsibility to keep the promises of God – it was God’s promise and only He could keep it.** If God required a sacrifice of this magnitude, then God surely had a purpose and plan for requiring this level of obedience.

GOD’S INTERVENTION

Just as the knife began to come down, God intervened.



But the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ) called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” (the same response he first gave) And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place The-Lord-Will-Provide, (YHWH Yireh) as it is said to this day, “in the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”



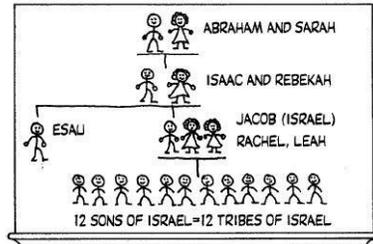
This location of sacrifice was the place where Jerusalem would be built and where Solomon’s temple would be built. It is also the area where Christ, some 2000 years later would be sacrificed. God’s Only son would be sacrificed on a cruel wooden cross which He carried up the hill, and would willingly lay down His life for the sins of all humanity. The parallels between



Abraham and Isaac and God and his son Jesus Christ are remarkable. Today, the Dome of the Rock stands in the place where Solomon's Temple once stood. Both Solomon's temple as well as the Dome of the Rock covered the rock where Abraham brought Isaac.

THE LOGIC OF ABRAHAM

The story of Abraham's faith stands tall among the heroes of faith found in the book of Hebrews. The scripture says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

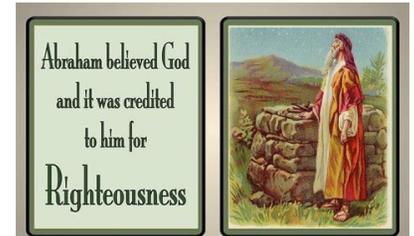


Abraham knew that Isaac was the one in which the promises of God would flow. It would be his offspring that would provide a great nation. He knew that God was a promise keeping God. At every turn in life, God had fulfilled his promises toward him and his family. Abraham trusted God. They were in covenant agreement together. They had split the covenant and God was the responsible party in fulfilling the promises. Abraham immediately and instantly believed God.

Hebrews 11:19 says, Abraham "concluded that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." In many ways, Abraham had received Isaac from two people that were as good as dead. And if God can do that, surely God can raise one from the dead. That word "concluded" or "reasoned" comes from the word *logisamenos*. It is the word in which

we get logarithm. It means to calculate or compute. Abraham logically calculated if God could give them Isaac through a promise, then the only way Abraham could be willing to follow through with God's command was to conclude that he would be raised from the dead.

Abraham rested on the greatness of God. "God exists and the He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." (11:6)



Abraham was grounded on the creative power of God. Abraham understood "that the universe was formed at His command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." (11:3) He knew God could bring life out of nothing. (*ex nilio*)

Abraham believed God even if it required sacrificing the son he loved so dearly. What an amazing faith!

You may be sitting here thinking, I can never exercise that kind of faith in God. We need to realize that there were times in Abraham's life that he did not trust God. He partially lied about his wife – he said she was his sister. He did not trust God to give them a son so Abraham and Sarah took matters in their own hand and thus the child Ishmael was born. All of us at times doubt. But in those doubting times, God calls us back to trust Him more. When all seems lost, we are called to walk by faith and not by sight. We are called to simply trust and obey.

ABRAHAM'S LEGACY

When Abraham died, he was succeeded by Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. These are often referred to as the patriarchs. They were imperfect men with imperfect lives. There were a few times that they made decisions that denied their faith in God. Sometimes they acted selfishly and with evil intentions at times. But it was their acts of faith that made them justified with God.



ISAAC'S FAITH

Verse 20 says, *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”* The promise he had received from Abraham was passed on to Isaac. Now that Isaac's days were coming to an end, he passed on the blessing to his sons, Jacob and Esau. The primary blessing was supposed to go to the oldest son, but in the case of Jacob and Esau, Isaac was tricked by Rebecca and Jacob received the blessing. Later Isaac blessed Jacob fully aware that he was giving the blessing to Jacob. But what Isaac knew was that God was the one that would fulfill His promises – not Abraham, not Isaac, not Jacob – only God.

ISAAC, ESAU and JACOB



JACOB'S FAITH

Verse 21 says, *“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.”*



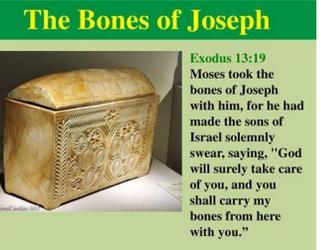
As Jacob was dying, the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim were included in the inheritance along with Jacob's other eleven sons. A special blessing was intended for these two sons of Jacob's favorite son, Joseph. Joseph lined Manasseh up on the right to receive the favored blessing while Ephraim was put on the left. Jacob, led by God, crossed his hands and blessed the younger instead. In the course of time, it was the tribe of Ephraim that became a leader in Israel.



JOSEPH'S FAITH

The last patriarch listed in Hebrews 11 is Joseph. *“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”* Joseph knew that one day his family of 70 individuals would seek to leave the land of Egypt. For now, they lived and grew in number in the land of Goshen. But Joseph remembered the promises of God about the number of descendants and the promise of a land. When they returned there, Joseph wanted his bones to go home.

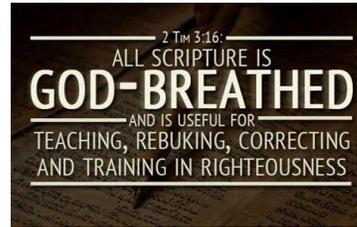
At the age of 110, Joseph died and he was embalmed. Almost 400 years after the family of Israel entered Egypt, Moses came to rescue the people of Israel. They remembered the promise they made to Joseph and they carried the bones of Joseph with them into the wilderness. Forty years later, once they crossed over into the Promised Land, Joshua took Joseph's bones to Shechem and buried them there.



Each of these patriarchs learned to take God at His word and lived their lives by faith. They trusted God's word completely. They understood God's word never, never fails. They also understood that it must be obeyed at all costs.

GOD'S WORD

What does God's Word say?



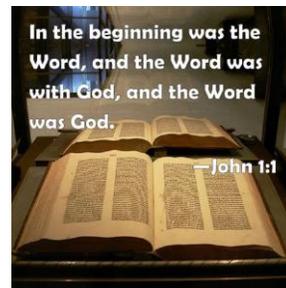
Baptist people have always been people of the book. We totally believe this to be God's complete revelation of Himself to mankind. This revelation of God to us is authoritative for living life, providing correction and reproof, comfort and conviction, guidance and wisdom.

Mark Twain once said, "it is not what we do not understand about God's word that troubles us, it is what we do understand!" Yes, there are portions of this bible that I do not understand, I have come to realize if I began to implement what I do know; the rest will fall in place.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

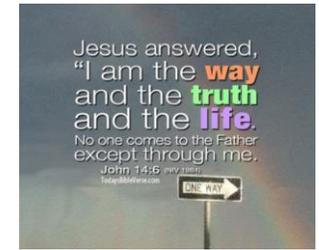
Do you believe what the Bible says about Jesus?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:1-3)



Do you believe what it says about salvation?

Jesus answered and said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)



Do you believe what it says about judgment?

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name is not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:11-15)



Do you believe what it says about riches?

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)



Do you believe what it says about purity?

“It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this manner no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.” (I Thessalonians 4:3-6)

For God Did Not Call
Us To Be Impure, But
To Live A Holy Life.

1 Thessalonians 4-7

BibleWordings.com

Are you willing to be obedient to God’s word?

God is not kidding – He wants our obedience.



LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Outline from R. Kent Hughes Commentary on Hebrews, vol. 2 p. 105-112

² Sermon Central, The Real Deal? by Victor Yap in “Hope for the Unemployed.” 8/31/08