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# **FAITH AS EXEMPLIFIED IN ABRAHAM**

**Genesis 12:1-4, 7-9; 13:14-18**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**1. Does God still speak to men as He spoke to Abraham?** Our Scripture opens with the statement, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram ...." If the Lord said something to Abraham, may He not also say something to us? Does the Lord still guide men into His perfect will?

The Lord said unto Abraham, "Get thee ... unto a land that I will shew thee." The Lord, therefore, undertook to guide Abraham along the way; does He guide us? What we want to know is whether it is possible for a man in the 21st century A. D. to have a contact, personal and direct, with God, such as Abraham had centuries before Christ? Has God changed in His methods?

There is one thing we know; God's direct method of dealing with men is seen from the first verse of the Bible to the last verse of the Bible. We believe that He is now doing the same thing.

Are the ones reading these words guided of God?

**2. Does God still make promises to men?** God said unto Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

Are the days past and gone when we can count on God's direct promises to us? We know that the Lord told the disciples, "I am with you"; and we know that He said that He would be with us to the end of the world. Is He, therefore, with us personally and individually?

If you feel that you are left out, is it because God left you out, or is it because you yourself have never yielded to Him?—because you have never shown any willingness to follow when He spoke?

**3. Did the promise God made to Abraham fail?** God said:

(1) That He would show Abraham a land; and He did. He showed him the land of Canaan, and told him that He would give that land unto him, and unto his seed.

(2) He told Abraham that He would make of him a great nation. He has done this. What people is there like unto the people of Israel? This is a nation from the loins of Abraham.

(3) He told Abraham that He would make his name great. Is Abraham's name great? Even the rebellious rulers of Israel said, "We have Abraham to our father."

(4) God said, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." We believe that this is true to this day. God pity the individuals, or the nations, which set themselves against the Children of Israel, Abraham's seed; God's curse will rest upon them; the years have proved this. On the other hand, those who bless Abraham's seed are blessed.

**4. Did Abraham prove himself a man of faith?** Verse 4 begins, "So Abram departed, as the Lord had

spoken unto him." In the Book of Hebrews it says that he went out not knowing where he went. How many saints are there, today, who would pack up their goods, take their families, and start anywhere without knowing where they were going? Abraham did this. Verse 4 tells us, "Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him." Verse 5 says, "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan." Verse 6 says "Abram passed through the land." Verse 8, "He removed from thence unto a mountain on the east." Verse 9, "And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south." Verse 10 says, "Abram went down into Egypt."

## I. FAITH WAVERING (Gen. 12:9-12)

As Abraham moved along his way, he found difficulties. Tests always follow the walk of faith.

**1. The promise restated.** The 7th verse of Genesis 12 says, "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land." He delights in holding before us what He has in view. It is this that we need to keep before our eyes.

David said, "I have set the Lord always before me." Of Moses it is written that he saw the invisible. True men of God look far beyond the present, into the future.

**2. The famine.** Verse 10 tells us that there was a famine in the land. It did not seem at all as Abraham, perhaps, had imagined. When the famine came Abraham went down into Egypt to sojourn there. Abraham seemed to forget that wherever God sends us, He can keep us. God proved, in later years, that He could feed obedient servants with manna for bread; and with quails for meat. He proved that He could take water out of a flinty rock, where there was no water. Abraham, however, had not known this, and he went down to Egypt.

**3. Sarah was taken.** When they arrived in Egypt Abraham said unto his wife, "I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive." Whenever we get down into Egypt, our faith wavers. God had said, "Unto thee, and to thy seed," and Sarah was a party to the promise; yet, Abraham was afraid for Sarah's safety.

Did he not know that God could take care of Sarah? We know it, for God took care of two million people as they journeyed through a wilderness infested with all kinds of pests and diseases.

## II. FAITH TRUSTING (Gen. 13:8-10)

**1. The conflict.** In verse 7 of chapter 13, we learn that there was a strife which came up between the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abraham. Even among saints, such conflicts are liable to arise.

**2. A magnanimous spirit.** When Abraham saw that it would be necessary to sever himself and his cattle from Lot and his cattle, Abraham said, "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

When we are walking with God, we do not need to worry about even the things which are our own.

**3. Lot's choice.** When Lot was given the opportunity of his choice, we read that he "Beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere." So Lot chose the way that led down to Sodom and Gomorrah.

**4. God's word to Abraham.** After Lot was gone, the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said unto him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and

eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

God will always care for the one who is open-hearted and open-handed toward his fellow man. God will always provide the needs of the man who will trust Him, in faith. So it was that Abraham removed his tent, and dwelt in the plain of Mamre. The very word "Mamre" means "fatness." Is that where we are dwelling? Let us be very careful to get into the place where God can bless us.

### III. FAITH INQUIRING (Gen. 15:1, 2)

**1. God's words of comfort.** Verse 1 of chapter 15 opens with the statement, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram." Does the word of the Lord come to you? The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision. Does God come to you in visions upon your bed, in your dreams, in His Word, in His providences, in the hour when you seek His face in prayer? To Abraham God said, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." We have come into a blessed place, in faith, when we learn that it is God, and not us, that gives the victory.

**2. Abraham's inquiry.** "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" Abraham was reminding God that His promise depended absolutely and entirely upon his having a seed; yet, he was childless. The months were fast slipping by; the years were multiplying; and Abraham said, "Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed," How often does God seem to hold back the fulfillment of His promise for the while? We must remember, however, that a promise deferred, is not a promise broken.

**3. Where faith caught a vision.** During the time of Abraham's inquiry the Lord brought him forth abroad, and said, "Look now toward Heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." This time we read in verse 6, "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

Then the Lord said unto Abraham, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." Thank God for the Abraham; thank God that he had a faith which could accept the promise!

We wonder how many of us have such a faith?

### IV. FAITH WORSHIPING (Gen. 17:1-3)

**1. The glorious fellowship.** Abraham had now become 90 years of age. His wife was about 80. The years were fast flying, and the seed had not yet been born. It was at this time that the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

Can a man be perfect before God—perfect in his faith, and in his life? Certainly, he can; for God would not ask of us that which we, empowered by the Holy Spirit, cannot do.

**2. An overwhelming promise.** "I will make My Covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." How wonderful for God to make a tryst, a Covenant between Himself and men. This is just like our Lord. We sing, "Blest be the tie that binds"; and we think of saints bound together; but here is a tie more precious, a life bound to God. I "will multiply thee exceedingly." Has not God also said to us that He will bless us with all spiritual blessings? Has He not even said that He will do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us?

**3. The worshipping servant.** Verse 3 says, "And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him." The accomplishments of faith never make one proud or self-centered. The closer God draws to us; the larger His promise of blessing, the more do we feel like falling down upon our faces in hallowed adoration

and worship.

## **V. FAITH SEEING THINGS DESTINED TO COME TO PASS (Gen. 18:17, 18)**

**1. The visit of three men from Heaven.** The Lord and two angels came to Abraham, as he stood in his tent door in the heat of the day. The man of faith, who walked with God, arose immediately, and ran to meet them from the tent door, bowing himself toward the ground. He welcomed his Heavenly Visitors, hastened to wash their feet, and bade them sit under a tree while he brought them a morsel of bread.

It was a wonderful visitation. We read that Abraham said to Sarah, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." Meanwhile, Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good. He gave it unto a young man, who hastened to dress it. Then Abraham took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed and set it before them.

Would you not love to do as much for your Lord? If He came to your house, would you not give Him the very best? Certainly you would. Then why not do it now?

**2. A revelation.** As they sat together, the Lord said unto Abraham, "Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Sarah heard it in the tent door, and she laughed. She laughed because she was old, and Abraham was older. The angel quickly reproved Sarah by saying, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" However, Sarah believed God, In the Book of Hebrews we read, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed." Her faith gave her the strength.

**3. The second revelation.** As they were together that day, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."

Here is something very remarkable. God is going to tell Abraham what He is about to do to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the reason for the Divine confidence is because He knew of Abraham's future, and because He knew also of his family fidelity. If we expect God to show us things, we must live worthy of His Name.

**4. Faith praying.** Verse 23 tells us that Abraham drew near to pray concerning the destruction of Sodom, for he knew that his nephew, Lot, and Lot's family were in Sodom.

Abraham's faith was not wavering so far as God was concerned, but his faith in his nephew's faithfulness wavered. "God remembered Abraham" and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow. The man of faith proved to be a man of prayer.

## **VI. FAITH'S GREATEST TEST AND TRIUMPH (Gen. 22:2, 5, 12)**

**1. God's call to Abraham to sacrifice his son.** In answer to faith Isaac had now been born; he was the well-beloved of his father. God, however, said unto Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest ... and offer him there for a burnt offering."

Here is perhaps the greatest mark of Abraham's faith. He had waited long for Isaac to be born, and when he came, Abraham knew that God's promise was in course of fulfillment; for the promise had been, "Unto thee, and to thy seed." In Isaac, Abraham saw centered, everything God had ever promised him. Everything therefore was in the balance. Even the birth of Christ, according to the flesh, was in

the balance.

**2. A faithful obedience.** We read in the Book of Acts of the obedience of faith. Here is an example of it that is unparalleled. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son."

**3. Where faith triumphed even over death.** As the two of them walked on together; Isaac, with the wood upon his shoulders; Abraham with the fire and the knife in his hand; Isaac said unto his father, "My father": and he said, "Here am I, my son." "And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb."

When they came to the place, Isaac was bound and laid upon the wood, and Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. Did Abraham expect to slay him?

Abraham meant simply this (it is expressed in the Book of Hebrews): "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

As Abraham heard the Voice commanding him to stay his hand, and he saw the ram caught in the thicket ready to be sacrificed instead of his son, Abraham saw the day of Christ and was glad.

## VII. FAITH'S FINAL PROVIDENCE (Gen. 24:3, 4)

**1. Abraham's command to his servant.** Abraham was old, well stricken in years, and he knew that he must soon be going the way of all men. His heart dwelt upon his son Isaac. If Christ was to be born of the seed of Abraham, Isaac must have a wife. Therefore, Abraham told his servant that ruled over all he had, "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven." What was the oath that Abraham demanded of his servant? Here it is, "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

**2. Abraham's faith in the successful issue of his command.** Immediately Abraham's servant said unto him, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land." Abraham replied with words which breathed the spirit of his faith: "The Lord God of Heaven, which took me from my father's, house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." Abraham knew that God would not fail him in this.

**3. What came to pass.** When the servant of Abraham arrived in the far country, he had not finished praying, when, lifting up his eyes, he saw Rebekah coming, and the damsel, having filled her water pitcher, gave him to drink, and then drew water and filled the troughs for the camels.

The next morning Abraham's servant said, "Send me away unto *my* master," and the mother of Rebekah said, "Wilt thou go with this man?" and she said, "I will go." As they left that day, Rebekah's brother and mother called out after her daughter, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." It was not long until the happy marriage was consummated in the tent of Sarah. God had vindicated the faith of the man who was His friend. As we close, we call upon every young man and young woman who reads these words to join Abraham in the life of faith. When you pray, "believe that ye receive them (the things that you ask for), and ye shall have them." Let faith do her perfect work.