

# Faith Acceptable to God

RADIO MESSAGE BY DWIGHT PORTER, D.D.

**A**BRAM believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). If the Apostle Paul used Abraham as an example of saving faith, we should pause to consider his exercise that was satisfactory to God. Since faith is demanded and provided by God in order for us to be pleasing unto Him, our lack of understanding will never be without personal responsibility. "But without faith IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

The greatest demonstration of faith is given to us through the life of Abraham. Want to understand faith as to what it actually is? Study carefully the life of Abraham and what the Apostle Paul declared concerning his faith. (Secure my printed radio message, WHAT IS FAITH?) Exactly how did Abraham believe God? What was his exercise that God classified him as satisfactory to His righteous and holy demands? How much did he know in order to exercise this satisfactory faith?

First of all, let us go back to the original promises made to Abraham? "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew you. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Further declaration of promise made to Abraham by God is found in Genesis 15:1-5. Read it carefully! "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, this shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he 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."

Abraham's lapse of faith, evident in his illicit relationship with Hagar, brought untold grief to his people down to this day. This was the beginning of the great race of Arabs. Abraham for an instant requested that Ishmael might stand before God. Abraham was then informed what kind of people the Arabs would be (Genesis 16:12, 17:20).

## He Believed the Promise

The lack of a single offspring mentioned in verse 3 is prior to the birth of Ishmael. The subject matter of Abraham's faith was the PROMISES OF GOD. He simply believed that which God has promised would actually become a reality. Despite all natural impossibilities, he rested upon the absolute assurance that God would bring to pass all He stated. The Holy Spirit recorded Abraham's attitude and response to a promise that was an impossibility as far as man's ability. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Romans 4:18-24).

Now let us go back to his original exercise of faith. After being pointed to the innumerable stars, God stated, "So shall thy seed be." Here is the declaration he believed. What else could he expect to come to pass? A vital part of faith is knowledge. How can we expect to believe God's promises being ignorant of them? His promises for you and me are clearly presented in His Word. We give assent to knowledge. God will do exactly as He has promised. The only remaining part of faith is appropriation. That which He has promised, He will perform for ME! The scriptural basis for these three parts of faith is Hebrews 11:6.

Here is the first exercise of faith on the part of Abraham. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

Near the age of 100, he was informed that Sarah would present him with a child. He believed God, when all reason was against it. The son of promise arrived and later this father was commanded by God to slay that very son. Up the mountain they go in obedience to God. As a father, what would your answer have been to the question by the son, who was soon to come under the knife? "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, 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" (Genesis 22:7)? Abraham believed God and obeyed Him.

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son" (Genesis 22:10). After the knife was poised to come down into the heart of his son of promise, the angel of the Lord stopped him with further instructions. "And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12).

Abraham being convinced that God could make no mistakes, obeyed fully, expecting to take the life of his son. He would believe for his resurrection, if need be. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Faith demands obedience, with God being responsible for all consequences. Some want to place the strength in our faith, rather than the PERSON in Whom our faith is placed. Faith is not a laborious work: but trust and reliance and dependence upon the God Who has promised.

There is no indication in the Scriptures that Abraham knew and believed the gospel of the grace of God. The gospel, or "good news," Abraham believed as God's Word, that in him, the nations of the earth were to be blessed. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). In death would Abraham rejoice to see the day of Christ and would be glad (John 8:56). The Bible is silent as to how much Abraham knew. We dare not conclude upon facts that the Bible does not state. Remember, Abraham believed God's promises that were plainly declared to him. There is no other kind of faith that is satisfactory to God. You had better get your Bible open and clearly read the promises, for hell is promised to the sinners and unbelievers just as surely as heaven is promised to the believers.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him (Jesus Christ) SHOULD NOT PERISH, but have everlasting life" ("John 3:16).

## **Do You Believe God?**

Are you the sinner He declares you to be? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Will you acknowledge your personal sin to God? Will you name them in His holy presence and ask for forgiveness? "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall he saved" (Romans 10:13). Like Abraham of old, you must believe God's promises as declared in His Word.

Here are some promises we rest upon in order for a holy God to accept us into His family of saints: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). - He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that

believeth not the son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved: And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:29-31). "But as many as received Him (Jesus Christ), to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

As God classified Abraham righteous in His sight, so he will declare you the same, if your faith is exercised in the faithfulness of Christ. Your complete dependence must be upon Him, for He is the Savior. Your faith is placed in HIS WORK, not yours. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Romans 3:22).

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