

# *The Trial of Faith*

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Hebrews 11:17-19 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.

- I. Abraham believed God – this is the summation of his life and his mind and heart, and who he was.

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (2 more times in the NT say the same thing: Galatians 3:6; James 2:23)

- A. God was not on trial in Abraham's life.
  - 1. He did not require God to prove anything, or give him anything, or do anything for him, in order for him to continue to believe God.
- B. Abraham believed God always, not just when it all made sense, or when all was going well, or going as he expected it to.
- C. Abraham believed God at all costs, regardless of the circumstances, in spite of what seemed to be complete contradictions from God.
- D. Somewhere back there in his past Abraham had dropped his anchor and began living a life of faith in God.
- E. Along the journey he had seen enough proof from God that He keeps his word.
- F. He had invested all in God and what God had promised.
- G. Abraham was not a part-time believer, he was a full-time servant of God.
- H. Thus, Abraham became the FRIEND of God.

Isaiah 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

- II. This trial of Abraham's faith is the greatest trial and greatest act of faith on record.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried..."

- A. Most people only see this scene as some kind of a drama acted out, and the focus is on the emotion Abraham and Isaac both must have felt.
  - 1. Most only perceive it as Abraham's strong determination to obey God at all costs.
  - 2. But while it is a trial of his faith it is the greatest ACT of faith he has ever experienced yet.
- B. All he had gained through a long life of trusting and sacrificing and believing God he is laying on this altar to be die and be consumed by the fire.
- C. All he had given up in his life because he chose to have God's favor rather than the company, affection, and blessing of all those he had known his life.
  - 1. His homeland, his countrymen, his citizenship
  - 2. His father's house and all his kin

- D. All that he had at this time, all that he had received from God that meant everything to him.
  - 1. All that his life amounted to was tied up in this boy.
- E. All that he hoped for.
  - 1. All his hope for the future was tied up in this boy, also.
- F. This is everything that a man's life consists of.
- G. Abraham is not at this altar to lay his sin on there.
- H. Abraham is not here to ask something of God.
- I. It would be far easier to die on this altar himself than to sacrifice all his hopes, and all he has trusted in for so long.
- J. He trusted God, even if God took back all He had promised him.

### III. Abraham believed God in this trial of his faith.

Hebrews 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

- A. God had promised and God does not break his promises.
  - 1. Abraham remembered what God had plainly told him:

Genesis 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

- B. So in Abraham's view at this point he was not giving up anything that God had already promised, but was simply obeying what God had told him to do.
- C. He fully expected to go through with this and see Isaac die and burnt up on the altar and then to see God restore him to life again.
- D. Not only this but he "received him in a figure..."

Galatians 3:8 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.

- 1. Abraham understood what God was going to do through his family by one day sending his only begotten Son to die for the sins of mankind.

### IV. What we must learn from the trial of Abraham's faith.

- A. That those who fall by the wayside and forsake God and his people because they think God let them down failed the test and do not have true faith.
  - 1. They never really believed God.
  - 2. They only jumped on the bus for a while to see if it would make their life better and give them access to power to get more of what they wanted in life.
- B. That God's promises are true no matter what the circumstances look like here at the present time.
  - 1. Therefore, we can trust God if the mountains be removed and cast into the midst of the sea.
  - 2. We can trust God even if death interrupts our life and our dreams.
  - 3. We can trust God even if it looks like all we have lived for all of our life has been in vain.
- C. That while it may appear that God is contradicting himself, He never really does.
  - 1. That the appearance of God contradicting himself is the very essence of the trial of our faith.
  - 2. It may appear that God has lied to us, but He never has, and never will.

- D. That the walk of faith is full of surprises and unexpected turns and that our faith must be in God alone and what He has told us in his Word.
1. Circumstances, people in our lives, gain or loss of earthly treasures or affections, or even things we have learned about God cannot move us from our trust in Him.

Galatians 3:6-9 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 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. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: