

ABRAHAM'S FAITH (PART I): AN OBEDIENT, HOPEFUL FAITH HEBREWS 11:08–10

Introduction

Abraham demonstrates one of the greatest examples of faith in the Bible. He believed against all odds and he endured in his faith. Abraham's faith was an obedient, believing faith — a faith that genuinely obeyed and believed God.

- I. His faith: a faith that obeyed God (vv. 8-9).
- II. His reward: the hope that looked for a heavenly city (v. 10).

I. *Hebrews 11:08–09 Abraham's Faith*

Abraham's faith was a faith that obeyed and hoped in God. (See *Israel, God's Special People*, Jn. 4:22; notes, Rom. 4:1-25; 9:7-13; Gal. 3:6-7; 3:8-9; *Abraham*, Gal. 3:8, 16.)

Gen 12:1-5 *The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.(cp. Gen. 11:26-32)*

Gen 13:14-17 *The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."*

Gen 15:1-7 *After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."*

Gen 17:1-7 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell face-down, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

Gen 17:15-19 *God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." Abraham fell face-down; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.*

Gen 22:15-18 *The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

Acts 7:2-3 *To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'*

Heb 11:8-10 *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Note two things about Abraham's faith.

1. God gave Abraham a great call. He called and challenged Abraham to be a witness to the other people of the world — a witness to the only living and true God. God challenged Abraham to separate himself from the world and to follow God — to leave his home, friends, employment and his country. If Abraham would heed and obey

God's call — if Abraham would obey God unquestionably — then God would do three wonderful things for Abraham.

- => God would cause a people to be born of his seed (Gen.12:1-5; Rom. 4:17-18).
- => God would bless all nations through his seed (Gen. 12:2; Rom. 4:17-18; Gal. 3:8, 16).
- => God would give him a promised land, the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1; Rom.4:13; Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16).

Rom 8:14-17 *Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear; but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

2 Cor 6:17-18 *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

1 Tim 2:4 *Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

2. Abraham obeyed God; he believed God. Note exactly the kind of faith he had.
 - a. He had a *decisive, obedient faith*. He obeyed, and he went out not knowing where he was going. When God called, he acted immediately. He did not hesitate, argue, question, equivocate or waver back and forth. He obeyed. As soon as he heard the call of God, he got up and followed God: he acted decisively.

Note a significant fact about following God. Abraham did not know where he was going. He did not know where following God would lead him. He just believed the promises of God; therefore, he acted upon his belief. He believed; therefore, he obeyed.

Thought 1. A person who truly believes God obeys God. There is no such thing as belief without obedience, not genuine belief.

Thought 2. No person knows where his faith will lead him, but he is not to fear following God. God is good and He has only good things in store for any true follower of His. If we shrink back and do not believe and follow God, then we shall miss out on the promises of God.

- b. He had a *hopeful, obedient faith*. Note that Abraham never received the inheritance of the promised land, and he never saw a nation of people born of his seed. In fact, Abraham never even owned a piece of land upon which he could settle and live. He was only a *stranger*, a wanderer from place to place in a strange country. He even lived to a ripe old age, seeing both his son and grandson born, and he witnessed them become the heirs of promise. But even they were heirs of the promise, not the inheritors of the land. He never even saw them receive one parcel of land. But despite

it all — despite what appeared to be all kinds of odds against the promises of God ever being fulfilled — Abraham still believed in God. He still believed in the hope God had given him. He believed it so strongly that he even taught *the same promises* to his son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob.

Mat 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Mat 7:24-25 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

Heb 5:9 And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Rev 22:14 “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”

HEBREWS 11:08–09 ABRAHAM’S FAITH

What did Abraham believe? (See *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom. 4:1-25; note, 9:7-13; *Abraham*, Gal. 3:8, 16.)

1. He believed that God would create a nation through his seed (Gen. 12:2-5; Rom. 4:17-18).
2. He believed that God would give a child against all odds (Gen. 15:1-6; Rom. 4:18-22; Heb. 11:11-12).
3. He believed in the eternal city (Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16).
4. He believed in God’s power to raise the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). □

II. *Hebrews 11:10 Reward for Faith*

Abraham’s reward was the great city which had foundations, whose architect and maker is God. The great heavenly city was his hope. This verse plainly says that Abraham’s faith was the faith that looked beyond this world to heaven. This is a phenomenal declaration: that Abraham believed in the heavenly city of God, in a future life — a life that would put him in the presence of God forever and ever. Yet, this is exactly what is declared in this Scripture by the Holy Spirit through the writer to the Hebrews. Paul even says that the promise made to Abraham was “that he would be heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13). This refers, of course, to the new heavens and earth (cp. 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1f).

The point to see is the great faith of Abraham. He believed that God was going to give him the land of Canaan which was a type or symbol of the great land of heaven, the great city whose architect is God.

Rom 4:13 *It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

Heb 11:10 *For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Heb 11:16 *Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.*

Heb 13:14 *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Rev 21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

Rev 21:10 *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*

Rev 22:14 *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.*

Rev 22:19 *And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. ■*