

“And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for **now** I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.” Friends, the kind of faith that pleases God (1.) believes what God says, and when God gives a command; (2.) this kind of faith obeys God without questioning or doubt! Do you suppose Abraham loved God? Sure he did. Remember, Jesus tells us, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Jesus further says, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (v.23). Paul’s formula: “faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6), is in perfect harmony with what James wrote. People with “faith only” do not obey all the commands of Jesus, this is easily seen. For those who are taught that James is wrong I ask: Is Jesus wrong for saying, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will** of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21)? Jesus is telling us who will be saved.

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect”

Study the above paragraph carefully. Now, let us look back to Noah for an illustration. Noah’s salvation from the destruction was “in the ark” (Gen. 7:1; Heb. 11:7). Noah was saved by grace (Gen. 6:8) through faith. What kind of faith? An active (living), obedient faith as Paul speaks of in the book of Romans: “obedience to the faith” (1:5; 16:26). What kind of faith would Noah have had if he did not obey God? As James asks: “can faith save him” (James 2:16). What if the flood came and found Noah sitting on a log with “faith only” and no obedience to God – he did not build the ark? Would God have saved him? No, Noah would have been wicked like the rest (cp. 1 Peter 3:20). Remember, “the devils also believe [“faith only”], and tremble” (James 2:19).

“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.”

The Scriptures show that no command was given to Abraham at this time, but God knew Abraham believed Him. Abraham had the right kind of faith and God shows us in the Bible that it was an obedient faith (James 2:21-24 and other accounts of Abraham). That is what this article is about.

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”

The Bible shows this over and over again. See Noah above. We must have the kind of faith that Paul and James describes: an obedient faith (cp. Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6; James 2:14-26, etc.). ♥



“Hold fast the form of sound words”

SW

(II Tim. 1:13 cp. Tit. 1:9; Jude 3)



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Volume VI

March 2013

Number 7

The Kind Of Faith God Requires (part 2) (Abraham’s Faith)

by Perry Sexton

Concerning Abraham’s faith I wrote last month: “Let us start with a misunderstood and misused verse by many: ‘For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness’ (Rom. 4:3). Many sincere people misunderstand this because they are taught wrong and do not look at the context and whole of Abraham’s faith.” They are taught to believe in “faith only.”

Romans 4:3 is referring to the time when God promised Abraham that he would have a child (Isaac) saying, “he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Gen. 15:4). God further promised Abraham that his descendants would be very great in number (v.5). Abraham believed God (v.6). Let us consider:

1. Did God give Abraham any commandment to obey here? No.
2. Had God given Abraham a commandment here would Abraham have obeyed? It is most certain he would have; we can be assured of this by Abraham’s life which we will look at in just a moment.
3. Abraham did not have “faith only” as multitudes today are taught to have by the many false teachers (cp. 1 John 4:1). Abraham’s faith was not dead (cp. **James 2:21-26 speaking of Abraham’s faith**). Abraham believed God, he trusted in God. Paul shows this is the kind of faith all must have in order to please God: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6 cp. the book of Romans).
4. What if Abraham had not believed God?

5. Keep in mind God knows the hearts of all men (Acts 1:24; 1 Cor. 4:5). God knew of Abraham that “he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:19).

Let Us Consider Abraham’s Faithful Life

We first read of Abraham (Abram) in Genesis 11:26 where we learn he was the son of Terah. In Genesis 12:1 we find the first recorded commandment given to Abraham: “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee:” (12:1). This must have been a very hard commandment for Abraham for at least three reasons: (1.) Leave his country and all the things entailed in that. (2.) Leave his kindred and father’s house which obviously involved loving associations. (3.) Go into a strange land which he had not seen. Friends, think on these things and try to put yourself in the position of Abraham.

Remember, Abraham did not have modern transportation or communication. Most people would have balked at such commands. We can know this from the simple fact that most people do not keep even the simple commands of God today. **Abraham obeyed God because he believed and trusted God** (12:4). The Hebrew writer recorded by inspiration of God: “**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” (Heb. 11:8). As hard as this was, Abraham would be given an even harder commandment.

“**By faith Abraham, when he was tried [tested], offered up Isaac**: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*,” (Heb. 11:17). Remember, Abraham had true faith in God (Rom. 4:3; Gen. 15:4-6). He did not have “faith only,” i.e., a dead faith (Jam. 2:14-26), but he had an active, trusting, and obedient faith which Paul speaks of in his writings (cp. Gal. 5:6 and the book of Romans, etc.). Abraham did not balk; he did not complain, but “Abraham rose up early in the morning,...and went unto the place of which God had told him” (Gen. 22:3, read the context for the story).

The rest of the story: In part 1 we spoke of the “sum,” here is the verse again, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the **sum** of them” (Psa. 139:17). In order to have the truth

on anything we must have all the truth. Let us consider what else God wants us to know concerning Abraham’s faith:

“**Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**”²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?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.²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:21-24). **Consider each point**:

“**Was not Abraham our father justified by works?**”

As we saw in part 1, we all will be judged by our works (Rev. 20:12; 22:12). Will anyone deny this? **James**, by inspiration said Abraham was justified by works (James 2:21), while **Paul** said Abraham was not justified by works, i.e., the works of the Law of Moses (Rom. 4:2). Many are taught that James contradicts Paul, but that is a statement showing unbelief and is far from the truth. The all important **context** of both references is so vital here as it is to any study. **James** clearly is dealing with faith which is dead, i.e., “faith only,” faith without works (James 2:24 see 14-26). **Paul** is clearly dealing with those whose trust was in the Law of Moses, and not trusting in God as they should. Romans 2:17-23 says it well: “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, ...being instructed out of the law;¹⁹ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, ...²⁰ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, ...²³ Thou that makest thy **boast of the law**, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?”

The Jew’s problem is seen clearly in Romans 9:32 and 33: “Wherefore? Because *they* [Jews] *sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law [Law of Moses]. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; ³³As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” The gospel accounts show the Jew’s rejection of Christ. The accounts also show the boastfulness of the Jews (cp. Luke 18:11; John 5:45; 9:28,29, etc.). Furthermore: “For they [Jews] being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish **their own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3).

“**when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**”

Please read the account in Genesis 22 and note in particular: