

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 32

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Noah's Ark Artist Unknown

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Thirty-Two

FAITH CHAMPIONS I

August 19, 2018

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THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM & SARAH

Hebrews 11:8–19

⁸ *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. ⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰ for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ¹¹ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. ¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (KJV).*

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

Hebrews 11:8

⁸ *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 (KJV).*

Abram's whole name was changed later by God. He was called out of the country of his birth. In Genesis chapter twelve verse one, the Hebrew phrase for "Get thee out..." is *Lech-Lecha*, or "get you!" It literally means, "go for your benefit." The *inheritance* promised would only come after Abram came into the land of Canaan. Now Abraham, being called *to go out into a place*; from *Ur* of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan; *which he should afterwards receive for*

an inheritance; not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity. Certainly, he will have it as a possession when he returns in the Messianic Kingdom in his resurrected body, As God directs him out with a finality and completeness, God commands three situations Abram must separate himself from:

- “*out of thy country*”
- “*from thy kindred*”
- “*from thy father’s house*”

It is extremely difficult to leave one’s country and friends. It is even more difficult to break off from our family, unless it is God guiding the situation. God clearly states He has a specific place He will lead Abram to, but does not specify it at the first calling.

Abram and his father as well as his brother worshipped other gods. They were idol worshipping Gentiles in Mesopotamia. God told Abraham to leave his country, his kindred, and his father’s house (Genesis 12:1). Everything Abram knew was to be left behind, and that included his religion. As a worshiper of other gods, Abram received a direct revelation from the true living God. The moon god and other pagan deities were distant objects of worship, and they could not personally interact with men because they were false and at best demonically driven. This call of God is representative of God’s people being called in every dispensation out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and, as Abraham was called from *Ur* of the Chaldees. Abram was called from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; so that, he would not be influenced and perish with the idolaters. He was a chosen vessel for whom God had peculiar blessings to bestow upon. And so, the grace of God is seen in the calling of Abram through his faith. The care and goodness of God is seen, in choosing up faithful people to propagate his cause and interest. The same happens today in the Church age. Abram obeyed God and left *Ur* of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia.

Hebrews 11:9–10

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: ¹⁰ for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (KJV).

Abraham placed his faith in God and immediately left *Ur* of the Chaldees for Haran and then for Canaan. It is important to observe that Abram’s act of faith was immediate. Grammatically the Greek text has a present participle, which means the action occurred at the same time as he was being called, Abraham obeyed immediately. While God was still speaking, Abraham was getting up to obey immediately thus demonstrating his faith. When he first left *Ur* of the Chaldees and later Haran, he didn’t know the destination. He only knew that God was telling him to go.

The Abrahamic Covenant which was given to him was unconditional, and it was not based upon Abram being faithful. God knew this when He chose him as an obedient servant.

Abraham had faith, and exercised it at God's calling. He left with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and the slaves, servants, the proselytes that he had acquired in Haran and his senior and trusted servant Eliezer of Damascus. This large family headed for Canaan when Abram was seventy-five years old. Because Abram's age is given in the Genesis text multiple times, God seems to be doing this to indicate a major turning point in his life. Typically, when something is emphasized by repetition in the Bible it is an indication that God is giving us an important concept to learn.

Abraham lived his life exhibiting his faith in God. He lived in the land of Canaan like a foreigner in tents. The interesting aspect of this is that he didn't build cities and take over the land in some fashion as a secular conqueror would. This is in spite of the fact that the God of the universe was providing for him. Isaac and Jacob did not take over it either. Their descendents hundreds of years later under general Joshua would acquire the land for Abraham's heirs as their sovereign territory. That being said Abraham, Isaac and Jacob understood that this was not their final destination. Their genuine home was in Heaven with God. Because Isaac and Jacob were given the same promise as Abraham they also lived their lives by faith in God and His promises.

SARAH

Hebrews 11:11-12

¹¹ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.¹² Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable (KJV).

The faith the apostle speaks of here is actually Abrahams. Sarah laughed out of unbelief when she heard that she would bear a child at the age of ninety (Genesis 18:12). The Greek text for "to conceive seed" helps to affirm this and it is more graphic. The Greek translated literally means "the depositing of sperm." This is obviously the male action. This shows that the faith to which the author is referring is not immediately Sarah's faith. At first, she distrusted, yet she subsequently feared, and believed. She received strength to receive Abraham's seed; which the female does from the male. "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old (Genesis 18:13)?" God let Abraham know that He knew her unbelief. Here, unbelief will not cancel the unilateral unconditional provision of the Abrahamic Covenant. God then revealed an important fact about Himself, His all-powerful ability to do anything "hard" He promises. God confronted Sarah when He said again that He will return in one year, and Sarah will indeed have a son.

This particular promise refers to one of those acts that are outside of the normal natural order of things on earth. The Hebrew word for "hard" is *pelé*. It always refers to a characteristic of God in Scripture to do *hidden* things. That is, those supernatural actions that only God can achieve. It is never used to refer to man, only God (Judges 13: 18; Psalm 139: 6; Isaiah 9: 6, 28: 29). It sometimes gets translated as "wonderful", "extraordinary", "surpassing" or as in

this case, “hard”. We see Jesus bringing this characteristic of His divinity out in His discussion regarding a rich man’s difficulty in entering heaven:

Matthew 19:26

“²⁶But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” (KJV)

Christ here is affirming what He said to Abraham, and that is you must trust God to do what He said He would do. We are to listen and apply this to our lives when our anxiety is increasing over worldly cares that God said He would solve.

The promised son was born when Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety. Her womb and ovaries had been restored to give birth as well as her breasts to nurse. Sarah’s name means “a princess”, which signifies that many nobles would come from her as *many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable*. Orthodox Jews see the use of the word “*children*” as opposed to a single child as significant (Genesis 21: 7). They reasoned that she because she could nurse many children with the generous amount of breast milk she produced, this would prove to the other princesses who came to see the boy that she actually gave birth herself rather than bringing home an abandoned child from the marketplace to claim as her child. The *Beresheith Rabbah* honoring Sarah expands on this concept:

Our mother Sarah was extremely modest. Said Abraham to her: “This is not a time for modesty, but uncover your breasts so that all may know that the Holy One, blessed be He, has begun to perform miracles.” She uncovered her breasts and the milk gushed forth as from two fountains, and noble ladies came and had their children suckled by her, saying, “We do not merit that our children should be suckled with the milk of that righteous woman.” The Rabbis said: Whoever came for the sake of heaven became God-fearing. (*Beresheit Rabbah*, 50: 9).

ALL DIED IN FAITH

Hebrews 11:13–16

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (KJV).

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob all died in their natural bodies without seeing the promises of God realized on the earth during their lives. But by faith they believed God and held His

promises close and told others about them. They all knew that their time here on the earth was temporary and after which they would realize the promises of God which they held by faith. They knew that Heaven was real and was a far better destiny than any place on this earth. They had an active faith confessing it and not a passive faith simply accepting it. As we are implored in the book of Romans to express our faith not just accept it. Expressing your faith verbally drives it deeper into our minds and serves to affirm it in a stronger manner.

Romans 10:9

⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (KJV).

They desired a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. As they served God and walked with Him in trust and obedience in this world they knew that there was a better place which God had promised. Should they become tired of waiting for God to give them His promised land, they could have returned to where they came from at any time. The life of faith is a willingness to give up the past and live out the rest of life in whatever circumstances we are in for the sake of a better promise. God never promises to enhance our lives here. While they did not receive much of the promise during their earthly lives, they kept their faith focused on the destiny He promised them. It seems many modern churches promote getting satisfaction and blessings now instead of waiting on God's eternal promises.

All these knew they would receive a better country ... a heavenly [one]. They knew that one day they would be in the Heavenly Jerusalem. It will be extraordinarily superior to anything found on earth. Therefore, they were willing to wait, and not return to where they came from. Because of that, God was *not ashamed to be called their God*. God has already prepared for them the heavenly city that will be described later in chapter 12:22–24. They have a superior home, the New Jerusalem. They trusted God by faith and He was not ashamed to be their God knowing their trust in Him.

1. The Patriarchs lived according to faith;
2. They did not receive the totality of the promise in their lifetime;
3. They saw the future fulfillment by faith;
4. They believed that God would bring the promises to pass;
5. They embraced the promises;
6. They confessed that they were earthly strangers and pilgrims;
7. They were seeking a heavenly country;
8. They had no desire to return to Ur or Haran.

THE AKEDAH OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Hebrews 11:17–19

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, That in Isaac

shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (KJV).

The name Akedah is a Hebrew word meaning “binding” which describes God's command to Abraham to offer Isaac, the son of his old age, as a sacrifice. Obedient to the command, Abraham takes Isaac to the place of sacrifice and binds him (Genesis 22:9). The angel of the Lord then bids Abraham to stay his hand and a ram is offered in Isaac's stead.

Genesis 22: 1

¹And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I.” (ASV, 1901)

“*After these things*” means there is a gap of about twenty to thirty years since Isaac’s birth. Josephus said Isaac was twenty–five years old, and he was a mature man, not a young boy. God was going to put Abraham to a severe test that defies our logic and reason. It is not a test He will bring upon a believer today since Christ paid the sacrifice for us, and no other sacrifice is needed. Our trust is in God, and we can see what He has done for us through the truth of scripture. This story is one of the situations that have been of benefit to those of us who believe.

The test about to be given by God to Abraham was a test of Abraham’s faith. God knew what the outcome would be. It is Abraham who had to realize the outworking of his own faith, and trust completely in God. God wanted Abraham to see this in himself. God called him and he responded.

Genesis 22:2

² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt–offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” (ASV, 1901)

God said to take his only son whom he loved and go “*into the land of Moriah*”. This location is in Jerusalem, and is the site now known as the Temple Mount. This is the first time the word “love” is used in the Bible. God tells him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on a yet to be revealed mountain. This would be Mount Moriah, or the location where Solomon built the Temple many years later in about 973 B.C. (II Chronicles 3:1). Mount Moriah later became Mount Zion.

Genesis 22:3–5

³And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he clave the wood for the burnt–offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. ⁵And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you.” (ASV, 1901)

Abraham had to trust God immensely due to the fact He told him earlier that the covenant would go down to his son and be fulfilled through him and his progeny. Abraham had to realize that if God wanted to sacrifice Isaac, He must intend to bring him back from the dead to continue the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham had witnessed so many wonders from God that by now he knew God's power and love for him. The text tells us explicitly each step of Abraham's preparation and execution of the command in order to emphasize the sequence of Abraham's obedience. He travelled three days with Isaac and two young men. He reached a spot at the end of three days where he could see the place "still far off" where he must go. He then told the young men to stay with the donkey while Isaac and he go worship. Notice that he said "we" would return, again illustrating that he has put his full trust in God to keep Isaac alive, or bring him back from the dead.

Genesis 22: 6–9

"⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And they went both of them together. ⁷And 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? ⁸And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together. ⁹And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood." (ASV, 1901)

Abraham then had Isaac carry the wood for the fire while he carried the fire ignition and the knife. Isaac asked his father where was the lamb for a burnt offering? The next statement is a strong prophetic verse indicating the sacrifice of Messiah who would also carry his own wood (cross) to His sacrifice many years later. Abraham says to Isaac "*God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering.*" Abraham and Isaac continue to the place where he bound Isaac, and laid him on the wood of the altar. The Hebrew word for binding is *Akeidah*, and this has become the name of this event. Isaac, being a full-grown man could have easily resisted if he wanted to do that, for by now his father was about 130 years old.

Genesis 22:10–14

"¹⁰And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. ¹²And he said, Lay not thy 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. ¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh. As it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided." (ASV, 1901)

Abraham stretched forth his hand with the knife to slay Isaac when “*the angel of Jehovah*” (the preincarnate Jesus) called out to him from heaven to stop. “*The angel of the Jehovah*” let Abraham know he passed the test. God provided a ram caught in a thicket for the necessary sacrifice. This is truly divine intervention and substitutionary atonement presented in a very realistic manner. Accordingly, God did not spare His own Son:

Romans 8: 32

“³²He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall I give us all things.” (KJV)

Finally, Abraham called the name of the place “*Jehovah–Jireh*”, which means “*God provides*” in that figuratively Abraham received his son Isaac back from the dead.

Next message: THE FAITH OF ISAAC, JACOB & JOSEPH

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