

## **The Faith of Abraham**

In our last issue, we began talking about the faith of Abraham. Abraham was the first of the patriarchs. We pointed out that Abraham began the Dispensation of Promise; this is the Abrahamic Covenant. Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 8 says, "*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.*" We pointed out that Abraham did leave, but this was partial obedience. We found out that God said, "Leave your family." Abraham took his family with him. His father slowed him down. They went to Heron and were there nine years before his father died. Abraham also took Lot with him, which delayed him even longer from reaching the promised land. There was a drought going on; God had told him that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. When Abraham did finally arrive in the promised land, he was moved by what he saw.

Verse 8 says, again, "*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.*" Verse 9 continues, "*By faith he sojourned...*" The word "sojourn" means he acted as a temporary resident. It says here that Abraham went into the land, but his outward manner of life was as a sojourner. This was actually a form of witness to the world. Our very life style should show people that we are not going to be here long; that we do not have a tight hold on our possessions. We have the possessions, but the possessions do not have us. My friend, when you get to Heaven, you are going to be rewarded for how much you gave; God wants you to learn to sow into His kingdom. When we give into God's kingdom, it comes back; the real reason that God gave us these things was for us to give and bless other people. God told Abraham, "I am going to bless you so you can be a blessing."

Verse 9 says again, "*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*" Abraham was rich in gold, silver, cattle and possessions. He could have bought himself the finest home; instead, he lived in a tent. Isaac and Jacob also lived in

tents. Even though they were in the land that God promised would be theirs eternally, they still lived in this earth as sojourners; they showed the world that they were not going to live here forever. The next verse continues, *“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder [architect] and make is God.”* The “looked” here is looking through the eye of faith. Second Corinthians, chapter 4 and verse 18 says, *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* In other words, Abraham developed the eye of faith. He lived in a tent on this earth; yet, he looked for a city which had foundations. You can have a home in this earth with foundations under it, but those foundations will one day be destroyed. I am looking for a city that is in the heavenlies. It has a foundation which will never be destroyed; it is eternal. My friend, things that are in the spirit realm are more eternal than things that are in the natural realm because the spirit world was here before the natural world; and the spirit world will be here after this natural world is gone.

Revelation, chapter 21 tells us about the city that Abraham was going to, and the city that we are going to as well. Abraham is already there; he has left this earth. He had his opportunity while he was here, and he made a mark on this earth. We are here today for the same reason. Why do we come to hear the Word of God? Why do so many people come out on a Sunday evening when there are other things in the world to do? We come because we are looking for a city; we are preparing ourselves by listening to the voice of God, and understanding things in the spirit realm. We are preparing ourselves for eternity right now. Eternity does not begin when we get to heaven; it began the moment we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior!

Chapter 21 and verse 10 of Revelations says, *“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”* Verse 11, *“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”* Did you know that there is no sun in heaven? Heaven is actually lit up by God’s glory. There is going to come a day when we will have no need of night; it will continually be daytime. We will never sleep because we will be just like God and we will be able to go anywhere on this earth. Verses 12-16 say, *“And had a wall great and*

*high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”* Twelve thousand furlongs is equivalent to about 1500 miles. Heaven is 1500 miles long, 500 miles wide and 1500 miles high. That is the city we are going to! Verses 17 and 18 continue, “*And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*” Can you imagine? Everything in the entire city is made out of transparent gold! Your mansion is built with transparent gold; you can see right through it like glass. Glory!

Verses 19-27, “*And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony [agate]; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx [onyx]; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite [diamond]; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus [carbuncle]; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was one of pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine it: for the glory God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall be in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”* What a tremendous city to live in! I do not care how nice your house is; it cannot compare. I do not care how nice the city is that you live in; there is no comparison to this city. I do

not care how much money you put into a city; there is no city like the one that God lives in! You can begin to see why Abraham traveled as a sojourner. He decided that he was going to live in a tent as an outward witness to the world that he was only here for a while; and even though God had given him possessions on this earth in the land of Canaan, Abraham was showing them that he was looking for a city – a city whose designer and maker was God. God was the architect; God was the builder of the city.

Going back to Hebrews, chapter 11 and verse 14, we see, “*For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*” I want you to notice something: Abraham became an example for us. We also, by our lifestyle, can say the same thing: we look for a country. Verse 16, “*But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*” God is pleased when we have things in this earth, but He is also pleased when we do not have a tight hold on these things; when we openly declare to the world, by our lifestyle, that we are looking for something better. I do not care how prosperous you get in this life; it is nothing compared to the wealth that we have in Heaven. I do not care how nice things are in this earth and how much God prospers you; it is only a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. For we look (through the eye of faith) “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”

Before getting into the faith of Sarah, let's go for a moment to Romans, chapter 4, and discuss the faith of Abraham. Abraham is brought out in Romans, chapter 4, as an example to us. Each time a person steps out in faith, it affects others. God wants us to be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Don't you like to follow successes? Too many people follow failures. We can benefit from failures in that we can see what not to do, but we should follow after successes. Romans, chapter 4, verses 17 and 18 say, “*(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 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.*” Verse 19 continues, “*And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb.*”

Verse 19 is horribly mistranslated. When you stand in faith, you do not ignore circumstances, but you are not to be moved by them. Verse 19 properly translated says, "And being not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb: but he staggered not at the promise of God." You may say, "I do not believe that he considered his own body." Turn back to chapter 17 of Genesis and we will see that Abraham **did** consider his body and the deadness of Sarah's womb. Look at verse 15: "*And God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*" We find out from this chapter that he did consider his own body, laughed in his own heart, thought about his own condition, and thought about Sarah's condition. Romans tells us that he was not weak in faith. He considered his body, considered her body; yet, he was not moved. My friend, you can look at the circumstances and not be moved away from faith.

Romans chapter 4 says, again, in verse 19: "*And being [becoming] not weak in faith, he considered his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, and the deadness of Sara's womb: But he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was [became] strong in faith, giving glory to God.*" My friend, faith grows from day to day and becomes strong through God's Word. The stronger the faith, the more glory God receives. Verse 21 says, "*And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*" Listen to me carefully! Becoming fully persuaded is a process. Day by day Abraham grew in faith until he became fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform.

The definition of strong faith is, "being fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is able also to perform." There is only one way to find out if you are fully persuaded; that is when you are in a trial. To sit in church and say, "I am fully persuaded", is one thing; to walk out and meet the devil head on is another thing. That is when you find out if you are fully persuaded. Abraham faced one trial after

another. Sometimes he fell, sometimes he gave up, and sometimes he ran; but through it all he became stronger and stronger in faith because he kept returning to God's Word – he kept returning to the promise of God.

Bob Yandian

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