

How Abraham became "the father of the faithful"

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance.... By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age" (Hebrews 11:8, 11).

When Abraham and Sarah had cleared themselves of the scheme of unbelief which had produced Ishmael, and had stood upon faith alone--dependence on the word of God alone--Isaac, the true child of the promise, was born.

In hearkening to the voice of Sarah (Gen. 16:1, 2), Abraham had swerved from the true faith. And now that he had returned to the word only, to true faith, he must be tested before it could be said of him that "his faith is accounted for righteousness"

(Rom. 4:5).

He had trusted the naked word of God and had obtained Isaac, the true child of the promise. And now, having obtained Isaac, the question must be determined whether he would trust the naked word of God as against even Isaac himself.

Accordingly, God said to Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, ... and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Gen. 22:2).

Abraham had received Isaac by trusting the word of God only. After Isaac was born, God had confirmed the word by declaring, "In Isaac your seed shall be called" (Gen. 21:12). And now came the word of God, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, and offer him as a burnt offering."

But if Isaac is offered as a burnt offering, what will become of the promise, Your seed shall be as the stars of heaven? Yet there stood the word, offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham had trusted the

word of God only, as against Ishmael; but this is more than trusting the word as against Isaac--it is trusting the word of God as against the word of God'

And Abraham did it. He did not insist that God should "harmonize these passages." It was all-sufficient for him to know that the statements were all the word of God. Knowing this, he would trust that word, and would let the Lord "harmonize these passages," or "explain these texts," if any such were needed. [1]

Note:

1. Lessons on Faith, pp. 28. 29.