

A Promise to Abraham

Key Verse: “*He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*”
—*Genesis 15:6*

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 15:1-21

“He believed,” signifies more than just belief; it seems to convey the thought of a rest of faith. This is supported by the fact that Abraham is mentioned as a hero of faith in Hebrews. “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. 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.”—Heb. 11: 8,9

He responded to the leadings of God, and traveled to Canaan. The first test that came to Abraham after he was called was that he left his native country to wander up and down through Palestine as a shepherd. So much of an example of faith he has been to us, that God started a faith family through him to whom would be given many and great promises. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.”—II Pet. 1:4

OUR PREVIOUS LESSON

included an account of the events that led up to Abraham’s calling and subsequent journey to the land of promise under the guidance of the Heavenly Father. A very important aspect of God’s dealings with Abraham involved faith. The phrase,

Abraham's call was the result of his having faith in God, and so should ours. He trusted God's love and believed that the Father's wisdom was superior to his own. He therefore accepted God's authority above all others. He also lived at the appropriate time for the divine purposes to begin to be carried out. Abraham did not have this high degree of faith when he first entered the land of Canaan. He would come to learn to trust God in all things and, as a result, his faith would grow strong through the leadings of the Heavenly Father. We should remember that faith can firmly trust him come what may. In these aspects, his experiences typify the true church in coming out of the world. At the same time, we have the assurance that "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way." (Ps. 37:23) We see in these words how much care God has for his children, for those who desire to be faithful in service to him, and walk in his paths guided by his loving hand.

The record confirms that Abraham believed on the Lord, and his faith in God triumphed securely over every obstacle. The faith of Abraham is the type of faith and point of a character that is set in the Scriptures for our encouragement. Abraham was not perfect, just as we are not perfect, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) However, we are told in our theme verse that God so highly esteemed Abraham's faith that he counted it as making up for his natural imperfections. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted [reckoned] unto him for righteousness." (chap. 4:3) He had faith in what God had told him and, as James points out, he showed his faith by his conduct. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22) We have further assurance of this in Psalm 1:6, which reads, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous," for truly, "The Lord knoweth them that are his."—II Tim. 2:19 ■