**"Abraham Believed God"**

*by James Cooper*

I find it highly significant that the Scripture says. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). These New Testament passages refer back to Gen. 15:6, which says, "And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." While there is but a slight variation in the wording of the New Testament quotations, there is a stronger emphasis than in the statement that he "believed IN Jehovah." Abraham not only believed IN Jehovah, in the sense of believing that Jehovah is the only true God, he BELIEVED GOD and was willing to submit his life to the will of God. He manifested his faith in his obedience and trusted God to fulfill his promises.

**An Attitude Needed Today**

This is the attitude that we should have toward God today. There is a far larger number of people who say they "believe IN God" than who actually BELIEVE GOD. Pleasing God requires more of us than believing that God is; we must also believe that he is rewarder of those who *diligently seek him*" (Heb. 11:6). The faith that avails is the faith that "works through love" (Gal. 5:6).

**When He Was Called**

There are three outstanding examples from Abraham's life that show that Abraham believed God. The first of those was when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees, promising to show him a land in which to dwell and to give him a numerous progeny and that all families of earth would be blessed through his seed (cf. Gen. 12:1-7). The writer of Hebrews says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). Abraham believed God — he believed that God would lead him to the land he had promised. All Abraham had to go on was the word of God, but he believed God and obeyed God's instructions. There is no suggestion of hesitation or doubting on his part. He believed God and obeyed.

**About the Birth of Isaac**

The second illustration of Abraham's faith is in connection with the birth of Isaac. The statement quoted above from Gen. 15:6 follows the record of his being assured that Eliezer of Damascus would not be his heir (Gen. 15:1-4). It appears that Abraham was wondering how God's promise about his descendants would be fulfilled, and was asking if it would be through an adopted son. We know from ancient records that childless couples sometimes adopted a servant who became their heir. However, God assures Abraham that he himself would father a son. Abraham was about 86 years old at this time.

Not long after this, his wife, Sarah, concocted a plan to aid God. Since she was barren, she suggested that Abraham father a child by her handmaid, Hagar; which he did (Gen. 16:1-4). Hagar became his wife and bare Ishmael when Abraham was 86 years of age. Thirteen years later, when Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him to renew his covenant and promise to him. At this time he declared that Ishmael was not the son of the promise, but that Sarah would conceive and bear a son, to be called Isaac (Gen. 17:15-19). Sarah was 90 years of age at this time, and past the age of childbearing. By faith Sarah received power to conceive (cf. Heb. 11:11-12). Paul, in writing to the Romans says of Abraham, "And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able to perform" (Rom. 4:19-21). Isaac was born according to God's promise and God assured Abraham that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12).

**When His Faith Was Tried**

When Isaac had grown up to be a young man, Abraham's faith in God was put to a most severe test. How he met this test is a third illustration of the fact that "Abraham believed God." God commanded Abraham to take Isaac — the son of promise fathered in his old age — into the land of Moriah and there offer him as a burnt offering unto God (Gen. 22:1-2). Abraham did not hesitate. He rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He cut the wood for the burnt offering and went to the place of which God had told him. When he arrived, he bound Isaac, placed him on the altar, upon the wood, and took the knife to slay his son. At this point the angel of God stopped him and said, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, shine only son, from me" (Gen. 22:12).

How could Abraham do such a thing, How could he be so "calloused" that he would be willing to slay his own son? The answer is that ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD! "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promise was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back" (Heb. 11:17-19). Abraham believed God — He was confident that God would fulfill his promise through Isaac, even if it required him to raise Isaac from the dead. Yes, Abraham believed God!!!

**Not By Faith Alone**

Abraham's faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness — but it was not faith alone, without works of obedience. James asks, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith7 And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God" (Jas. 2:21-24). This serves to show that we are not justified by faith only (Jas. 2:24).

**Conclusion**

From the foregoing, we can learn what it means to really believe God. The person who believes God is willing to submit his will completely to God's command. He may not "see any sense in it," but he is willing to obey God anyhow. His attitude is "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." He not only believes IN God, but he believes that God can and will fulfill his promises. But he knows that God is true to his word—and that he must meet the conditions upon which the promises are stipulated.

Do you believe God? If so, you will be willing unhesitatingly to obey God's commands as revealed in Christ. You can then, without doubt, expect God to keep his word.