

The Shield of Abraham's Faith

(Rom 4:18-21)

- Overview from Theme (Rom 1:16-18) to conclusion (Rom 4:16-17)
- I. Paul has used Abraham, as God intended, as an example of justification by grace through faith, and proven that far from being a difficulty in this doctrine, is a proof of it in every respect
 - A) He is called as a pagan out of that world and brought into the promise of God
 - B) He is justified as an uncircumcised gentile
 - C) He is saved prior to the Law of Moses
- II. Characteristics of faith- Paul now uses Abraham's faith as an example of what faith is and what it does
 - A) God uses Abraham as the pattern of faith in the scripture
 - 1. Examples need to be the clearest and strongest cases
 - i. I say this because satan will attack us and cause us to doubt our faith if it be not as strong as Abraham's
 - 2. We need examples and pictures, not only for our understanding, but for testing and comparison
 - i. 1 Tim 1:5- "Faith unfeigned"
 - ii. 2 Cor 13:5- "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"
 - 3. Faith is always the same, it is only the level or strength of it that varies
 - i. Matt 8:26- "Oh ye of little faith"
 - ii. Luke 8:25- "Where is your faith"
- III. Historical fact- Abraham became the father of many nations
 - A) To the Jews:
 - 1. Isa 51:1- "Look to the rock from whence you were hewn"
 - 2. "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"
 - 3. John 8:33- "We be Abraham's seed"
 - B) To the gentiles:
 - 1. The muslims lay claim to Abraham as their father through Ishmael, and the koran speaks of him
 - C) To the Christians:
 - 1. Gal 3:7- Children of Abraham by faith
 - i. This same faith is the instrument though which God enabled Abraham to become the father of many nations, but how?
- IV. What faith enabled Abraham to do
 - A) Enabled Abraham to believe the staggering promise of God- **"so shall thy seed be"** which means:

1. Abraham to have an enormous number of offspring (yet he is childless)
 2. The Redeemer is to come through Abraham's loins (Gal 3:16)
 - i. John 8:56- "Abraham rejoiced to see My day" (fully expecting it)
 - a) Gal 3:8- Abraham believed the gospel
 - b) Heb 1:19- Abraham given a figure of the gospel
 - ii. This is similar to the way in which David believed the Messiah was to come through his family
 3. Those of all nations would come into this promise through the Seed
 - i. Matt 8:11- "They shall come from east and west and sit down with Abraham in the KOG"
 - a) Church history proves this
- B) Enabled Abraham to believe solely based upon the word of God with no visible proof in support
- i. We see this same element in all saint, standing upon the scriptures as God's word and being fully persuaded by them alone in spite of the world
- C) Enabled Abraham to believe in spite of visible proof to the contrary
1. Abraham "against hope believed in hope"
 - i. He believed in expectation when there was no seeming possibility
 - ii. Where was there any reason to expect Abraham and Sarah to produce a child?
- D) Enabled Abraham to not only believe, but to be "fully persuaded"
1. Abraham didn't just live under some wild fantasy saying "I hope so" but was in full expectation
 2. True faith always has the same element of confidence
 - i. Root word of faith is *persuaded*
 - ii. Heb 11:1- Faith substantiates the thing hoped for and expected
 - a) Faith is evidence of the unseen promise
 - iii. Heb 11:13- Faith sees afar off and is fully assured
 - a) This is much different from the attempts of "believism" to persuade self, or the psychological method self-reinforcement
 - 1) Various forms of forced conversions
 - (a) Sandemanism (public profession)
 - (b) Roman Roadism (intellectual assent)
 - (c) Conformism (walk the aisle)
- E) Enabled Abraham to act upon his faith
1. Abram (high father) begins going by Abraham (father of many nations)
 - i. Heb 11:13- Embraced and confessed that he was a pilgrim on earth
 - a) Abraham's life after salvation was a proof of his faith
 - 1) This is true of all the examples in Heb ch 11
- V. How did faith do this?

A) Faith strengthens (v.20- “made strong by faith”)

1. Negative- Being not weak in faith (v.19)

- i. Faith delivers from being weak by nature when unbelief says “look at the facts”
 - a) “Considered not his own body now dead” doesn’t mean that he didn’t consider the facts at all, but that he did consider it and was not dissuaded by it
 - 1) Gen 17:17- Abraham did consider the facts, but was not weakened by them
- ii. True faith is not afraid to consider the facts
 - a) Faith is not an escape from reality as so many accuse Christians of having our head in the sand
 - b) True faith does consider all things, but then places them in perspective under the knowledge that “with God nothing is impossible”
- iii. Abraham didn’t stop at the facts, he went on to God
 - a) Example of Peter walking on the water on being weakened by the unbelief that comes from looking to self
 - 1) “Faith looks at the facts and then rises above them”- MLJ
- iv. Doubts do not negate faith, as satan so often accuses
 - a) Do not confuse temptation with sin
 - b) Zero doubts is more than likely a sign of believism and “psychological salvation” than it is of true faith
 - 1) Why did Paul write Eph 6:10-18
 - c) Faith enables us to overcome our doubts
 - 1) Faith is unbelief kept quiet like the snake beneath Michael’s foot”- Robert Browning

2. Negative- Staggered not at the promise of God (v.20)

- i. Faith delivers from staggering when unbelief says the promises of God are to surreal, too monumental
 - a) Stagger- “to discern, to discriminate, to estimate”
 - 1) In other words, to evaluate based on our own logic and to reach a conclusion by the natural mind, and thus to waver
 - 2) James 1:8- “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways”
- ii. The shield of faith repels the fiery darts of the devil
 - a) Doubts can and will come, and we must be equipped to repel them by faith
 - b) Abraham did consider the flesh of both he and Sarah, thus doubts did come, but faith prevailed when he “believed God” and its that true faith that is imputed for righteousness