

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Genesis 26:1-5**.
- B. From Roy H. Enoch (9-13-93).
- C. Today, we are studying Abraham, "the father of all those who believe" (Rom. 4:11):
 - 1. The name "Abram" means "exalted father."
 - 2. It was changed to "Abraham" when he was 99 years old (17:1) which name means "father of many nations" (17:5).
 - 3. It took great faith for Abraham to believe that at the age of 99 with a barren wife that he would be the father of great multitudes.
- D. Abraham is also known as "the friend of God" (Jas. 2:23):
 - 1. This is one of the highest forms of praise given to a man by inspiration.
 - 2. He is "Thy friend forever" (2Chr. 20:7).
 - 3. Isa. 41:8 reminds us that Israel is the chosen nation from Abraham, God's friend.
- E. Reasons that Abraham's faith is given as an example for us to follow:
 - 1. He had the same temptations and difficulties others do.
 - 2. He was told to do very difficult things.
 - 3. He could not understand how many of those things could be done.

I. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS GREAT IN SPITE OF DIFFICULTIES.

- A. Abraham had great wealth (13:1-2), which Jesus said made faith difficult (Mt. 19:23, 24): He did not seek wealth.
 - 1. When the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot contended for pasture and water, Abraham told Lot to choose what he wanted; he would take what was left (13:9).
 - 2. When Abraham rescued Lot from Chedorlaomer and the other three kings, the King of Sodom told Abraham to keep the spoil (14:22-23).
- B. Abraham had weakness at times:
 - 1. In chapters 12 and 20, Abraham was fearful that he would be killed and that his beautiful wife could be taken. He asked her to say that she was his sister.
 - 2. God still protected them both from harm, and both Pharaoh and Abimelech rebuked Abraham for his deception.
- C. Abraham and Sarah had difficulty believing God's promises:
 - 1. We can certainly identify with that.
 - a. God offers such great blessings, that it seems difficult to realize that they are possible, much less probable.
 - b. Jack Wilhelm wrote in his newsletter, "We will never know what God can do through us if we only attempt what we think we can do on our own."
 - 2. Some think Abraham showed a lack of faith in (17:15-21).
 - a. But Abraham did what God said and circumcised all.
 - b. God did not rebuke Abraham for unbelief as Sarah.
 - 3. Sarah laughed when the Lord appeared as three men (18:12-15).
 - 4. What ever doubt they may have had, it was not enough to keep them from doing what God said (Rom. 4:20-22).
- D. Abraham lived among people who worshipped idols (31:19; Josh. 24:2).

II. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS GREAT IN WHAT GOD TOLD HIM TO DO.

- A. He was told to leave his family and homeland (12:1):
 - 1. Stephen said that in Ur of the Chaldeans he was called (Ac. 7:2-3).

2. After the death of his father in Haran at the age of 75 God called him again (12:1-3).
3. Not knowing where or why he was to go was a great test of his faith.
4. But he served God faithfully for another 100 years.
- B. God told him that he would be the father of many nations (12:2-3):
 1. The scriptures often mention the difficulty of believing this promise.
 2. They describe the struggle Abraham and Sarah had with it.
 3. But they never turned from doing what God said.
- C. The greatest test of Abraham's faith was telling him to offer his son Isaac, whom he loved, as a burnt sacrifice to God (22:1-2):
 1. Abraham did not waver or hesitate at the command.
 2. He made preparations and arose early the next morning and went the 3 day journey.
 3. Isaac is described as "the lad" or "the boy" (22:5).
 - a. The next event mentioned in Isaac's life was the death of his mother, when he was 37. He married Rebekah when he was 40.
 - b. Josephus supposed that he was 25, and some Rabbis that he was 35. Adam Clark prefers 33 (the age of God's Son when He was sacrificed).
 - c. Isaac seemed to show as much faith and submission as his father.
 4. God describes Abraham's obedience as proof of faith (22:11-12).

III. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS GREAT BECAUSE HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE WHY OR HOW OF WHAT GOD TOLD HIM TO DO.

- A. God did not tell him why he was to leave his family.
- B. He did not tell him where he was going, or why he was to go.
- C. He could not know why he was to offer his son:
 1. Isaac was the heir of promise, that through his seed all nations would be blessed.
 2. Through Isaac would come many nations.
 3. God reveals through inspiration to the Hebrew writer that Abraham believed that God would raise him from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19).
- D. Neither Abraham nor his descendants could know that "thy seed" referred to the Messiah rather than his descendants:
 1. The Jews thought they were "the seed of Abraham" and God's blessing to the world.
 2. Only by inspiration could Paul affirm X as the seed, to the Galatians (Gal. 3:16).
- E. Sometimes we also wonder about God's revelation and wish for a greater understanding.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Studying the faith of Abraham, we are amazed at such trust in view of the circumstances.
- B. He had the same temptations we have, with less revelation of God's will.
- C. He was told to do many great and difficult things.
- D. He did not understand why or how he was to do them.
- E. Saving faith does not have to know why God tells us to do the things commanded, nor how we will be able to accomplish them. It is a trust that will try w/complete confidence and our greatest effort of faith.
- F. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.