

## The Faith of Abraham

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There are a lot of great things that could be said about Abraham. But, of all the things that could be said, none of them matches what God said about him. In Romans 4:16, God tells us that salvation is available today to those who have the “faith of Abraham.” This nomad, this guy who traveled around living in a tent, had a faith that God said is our model for our faith. Now it’s hard for me to adequately explain just how incredible that is.

When it comes to trusting people, we recognize the need for there to be a basis for that trust. I have often made the statement, and believe it to be true, that trust has to be earned. If someone we know has broken our trust in some way, it will take a while for that trust to be re-built.

And so, for us to trust God is a relatively easy thing to do. Because God has proven himself over and over throughout history. Every time he has made a promise, he kept that promise. Every time God said he would do something, he did it. God has definitely earned our trust.

But Abraham didn’t have that level of confidence. And Abraham had faith without the benefit of having a written Word of God. He didn’t know about God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. We understand God’s promise to bring about a blessing through Abraham, but Abraham didn’t.

We know that the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham was achieved in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We understand that God’s ultimate objective was the opportunity for all people on the face of this earth to find salvation in Christ. We have the benefit of being able to look back and see how God was working throughout history to keep that promise.

But Abraham didn’t have any of that. And yet, it is Abraham who is the ultimate example of the faith which God wants in his people — not Moses, the man who led the Israelites out of Egypt and gave them God’s law; not David, the man after God’s own heart; not Elijah, the great prophet who was received up into heaven without experiencing death; not any of the other great prophets like Isaiah or Jeremiah. Rather, it was Abraham who trusted God in such a way that he is held up as an example to us all.

The New Testament repeatedly refers to Abraham as the great man of faith. There are nearly 75 references to Abraham in the New Testament. Any time a New Testament writer wanted to teach a lesson on the importance of faith, Abraham was the model.

- When Paul taught in Romans 4 about the righteousness which exists through faith, he pointed to Abraham.
- When Paul taught in Galatians 3 that both Jews and Gentiles receive God’s promises through faith, he calls us sons of Abraham.
- In Hebrews’ roll call of the people of faith in chapter 11, one section pays tribute to Abraham’s travels and another to his offering of Isaac.
- When James taught in chapter 2 that obedient works are the natural expression of a living faith, it was Abraham’s faith that was held up as an example.

Now, if God spent that much time looking to Abraham as an example of the kind of faith we ought to have, then it seems to me that we need to learn as much as we can about his faith.