**The Faith of Abraham**

Genesis 22 tells us that God commanded Abraham to offer his beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. It is difficult to fathom the emotional turmoil Abraham had to have experienced. This command was disturbing on so many levels.

The very thought of putting one’s own child to death is horrific. Besides, every indication in Scripture is that Jehovah considered human sacrifice repulsive and had never commanded such a thing. What was He thinking now?

God’s command seemed counter to His prior plans and promises. When He revealed to Abraham that he and his aged wife would miraculously have a son, he said, “I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.” God kept that promise, but now He was telling Abraham to kill Isaac, still a boy with no descendants! Ironically, this apparent contradiction became the very basis for the faith behind Abraham’s obedience.

The Hebrew writer reveals the logic that Abraham followed as he contemplated God’s command to sacrifice his son (Hebrews 11:17-19). The premises of his thinking looked like this: 1) God promised that Isaac would have descendants. 2) God never lies and always keeps His promises. 3) Isaac has yet to have a family. 4) Therefore, when I obey God and put Isaac to death, God will simply raise him from the dead. The key to this conclusion was Abraham’s unwavering faith in God and His promises. Given His trustworthiness, Abraham’s conclusion was unavoidable.

As the events unfolded, it is still true that God has never required or desired human sacrifice. As Abraham took knife in hand, an angel of God called out and told him not to harm the boy. Abraham certainly demonstrated his total devotion to God. But more importantly, he demonstrated his total faith and trust in the promises of God.

Christians today should be following in the steps of the faith of Abraham (Romans 4:12). While none of us will ever be called upon to harm a loved one, we will endure many things in this life which may be baffling to us. We may not understand why things happen, but we should take comfort in the fact that God loves us, He wants what is best for us and causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Most importantly, Abraham’s obedience served as a foreshadowing of God’s willingness to sacrifice His own beloved Son as a propitiation for the sins we have committed. Jesus’ death on the cross was both heartbreaking and love-inspiring. Each and every one of us can access His atoning blood by repenting of our sins, confessing Jesus as Lord and being immersed into a relationship with Him. He gave His life so we may live.

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