

The Faith of Abraham !

Lessons on Faith

A.T. Jones, January 24, 1899

“At nine o'clock I attended a meeting of the students in the school chapel. About eighty were present, and the room was full. An hour was occupied in reading, and in talking to them about the necessity of their understanding how to exercise faith. **This is the science of the gospel**. The Scripture declares, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired. We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and our ignorance of how to exercise faith. We must break through the clouds of unbelief. We can not have a healthy Christian experience, we can not obey **the Glad Tidings** (gospel) unto Salvation, until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised (put to the test). There can be no perfection of Christian character without that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul . . . !”

- Ellen White, week of prayer in Australia, October 18, 1898

“I have spoken once each Sabbath and Sunday, and have attended some of the morning meetings. **At these I have dwelt especially upon faith**, the necessity of our taking God at His Word, and the duty of cultivating cheerfulness and gratitude. Our voices should be oftener heard in praise and thanksgiving to God. His praise should continually be in our hearts and upon our lips !”

- Ellen White, RH, May 22, 1900

Faith is the expecting the Word of God to do the thing which that Word speaks and the depending upon the Word only to accomplish the thing which that Word speaks. Abraham is the father of all them which be of faith. The record of Abraham, then, gives instruction in faith--what it is and what it does for him who has it.

“For by the Word of the LORD (Jehovah, Yehuwah) were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Breath (Spirit) of His mouth . . . For He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stands fast . . . !”

Psalm 33:6-9

What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the faith, has found? What saith the Scripture?

When Abram was more than eighty years old and Sarai his wife was old and he had no child, God “brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell (count) the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, **So shall thy seed be . . . !”**

And Abram “believed in the LORD; and He counted (reckoned) it to him for righteousness!” Genesis 15:5-6. Abram accepted the Word of God and expected by the Word what the Word said. And in that he was right !

*“And for this cause also thank we God without ceasing . . . Because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men (yea or maybe), **but as It is in Truth** (Verity), the **Word of God** (Deity), which effectually worketh also in you that believe . . . !”*

I Thessalonians 2:13

Sarai, however, did not put her expectation upon the Word of God only. She resorted to a device of her own to bring forth seed. She said to him, “The LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her.” Genesis 16:2.

Abram, for the moment, swerved from the perfect integrity of faith. Instead of holding fast his expectation

and dependence upon the Word of God only, he “harkened to the voice of Sarai.” Accordingly, a child was born, but the whole matter proved to be so unsatisfactory to Sarai that she repudiated her own arrangement. And God showed His repudiation of it by totally ignoring the fact that any child had been born.

He changed Abram's name to Abraham (*mighty father to father of a great multitude innumerable*) and continued to talk about making him the father of nations through **the Seed promised** and of making His Covenant with Abraham and the Seed that was Promised (ref: Galatians 3:16). He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, because she should “be a mother of nations” through the Promised Seed !

Abraham noticed this total ignoring of the child that had been born and called the LORD's attention to it, saying, “O, that Ishmael might live before thee (in Thy Presence)!”

But “God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac (laughter), and I will establish My Covenant (Oath, Promise) with him for an everlasting Covenant and with his Seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. **But My Covenant** will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” Genesis 17:15-21.

By all this both Abram and Sarai were taught that, in carrying out the Promise, the fulfilling of the Word of God, nothing would answer but dependence upon that Word only. Sarai learned that her device brought only trouble and perplexity and delayed the fulfillment of the Promise. Abram learned that in harkening to the voice of Sarai, he had missed the Word of God, and that now he must abandon that whole scheme and turn again to the Word of God only.

But now Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sarah was eighty- nine. And, if anything, this seemed to put farther off than ever the fulfillment of the Word and called for a deeper dependence upon the Word of God-- a greater faith than before !

It was perfectly plain that now there was no possibility of dependence upon anything whatever, but the naked **Word only**; they were shut up absolutely to this for the accomplishment of what the Word said. All works, devices, plans, and efforts of their own were excluded, and they were shut up to faith alone--shut up to the Word alone and to absolute dependence upon that Word only for the accomplishment of what that Word said.

And now that the way was clear for “the Word only” to work, that Word did work, effectually, and the Promised “Seed” was born. And so “through faith,” through helpless, total dependence upon the Word only-- “Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age, **because she judged Him faithful Who had Promised !**”

And “therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.” Hebrews 11:12. And thus was fulfilled the Word spoken to Abram, when God “brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. . . . So shall thy Seed be !”

This is a Divine lesson in faith. And this is what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith. For this was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith. Yet “it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, **if we believe** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord (Sovereign King) from the dead, Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification !” Romans 4:23-25.

And all “they which be of faith are Blessed with faithful Abraham.” All they who, excluding--yea,

repudiating--all works, plans, devices, and efforts, of their own, depend in utter helplessness **upon the Word of God only** to accomplish what that Word says--these are they which be of faith and are Blessed with faithful Abraham with the righteousness of God.

*“That **the Blessing** of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive **the Promise of the Spirit** through faith . . . And faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God !”*

Galatians 3:14 & Romans 10:17

O, “understanding how to exercise faith: this is the science of the gospel !” And the science of the gospel is the science of sciences. Who would not strain every nerve to understand it?

A.T. Jones - Review & Herald, Jan. 24, 1899

From the book, “Lessons on Faith !”