

A Promise and a Command

Hebrews 11:8-19

Faith is properly responding to the Word of God. When the man of faith is given a command, he responds by obeying: “by faith... Abraham obeyed” (Heb. 11:8). When the man of faith is given a promise, he responds by embracing what God said and being fully persuaded that God will perform exactly what He said He would do (Heb. 11:13; Rom. 4:21). God tested Abraham’s faith and gave him both a promise and a command.



The command seemed to contradict the promise, unless both were seen through the eyes of faith. The promise God gave him was that Isaac would have children, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen. 21:12). That is, through Isaac, Abraham’s descendants would be named. Even today, we name the Israelites through Isaac, referring to them as the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God also promised that Isaac would have children in Genesis 17:19—“I will establish my covenant with him [Isaac] for an everlasting covenant, and *with his seed* after him.”

Then in Genesis 22, God tested Abraham’s faith by giving him the command to sacrifice his beloved son as a burnt offering (v. 2). Here was Abraham’s dilemma: *How can a dead son have children?*

Abraham’s faith solved the problem. Abraham knew that if a dead Isaac were to have children, then God must raise him from the dead, and this is exactly what Abraham believed: “Accounting that God was able to raise him [Isaac] up, even from the dead” (Heb. 11:19). Abraham’s belief that God would raise his son is even found in the text of Genesis 22:5 as Abraham told the two young men that he would go yonder (to sacrifice his son) and “[we] will worship and **[we] will come again to you**” (and he would not be carrying Isaac’s ashes).

What a tremendous exhibition of faith!

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org

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