

HEROES OF FAITH - ABRAHAM
Genesis 12:1-4 ... 15:6
"Abraham - He Believed God's Promises"

INTRODUCTION ... Have you noticed? - we've been talking a lot about FAITH recently ... not surprising with a theme - HEROES OF FAITH ... that's what led Abel, Enoch, and Noah in a life that pleased God ... that's what made them righteous [holy] people: they believed God's promises - and God called them righteous. Perhaps that is clearest in today's hero - ABRAHAM - HE BELIEVED GOD'S PROMISES.

I. I introduce you to Abraham - man of God.

"Hello! Many of you know about me. I am glad to let my faith and my life be an example for you. True! - I did trust the Lord's promises, regardless it wasn't always very easy to do that... sometimes God promised things that seemed too good to be possible, and yet God led me to believe/trust those promises.

"Example: when I was younger, I lived in UR (somewhere in today's IRAQ) ... most people there worshiped idols ... my father, TERAH, moved 600 miles away to HARAN to escape the idol-worship ... but it was there, too, and my father worshipped them too. When I was 75, the Lord told me to leave my family and my home-land to go to a new land that He would show me - later He promised to give me that land ... you know how hard it is to move to an all new & strange place and start new at 75! He showed me the land of CANAAN - today you call it ISRAEL - a beautiful, rich land ... He promised that it would belong to me and my descendants - but during all the 100 more years that I lived, I never owned any land except a small grave-land for my wife! But still I trusted the Lord's promise!

"Example: God promised that the land will belong to my descendants, but I still had no children! He promised that I would have descendants - many as the stars in the sky! ... but 5, 10, 20 years passed - no child! ... I and my wife were becoming old - will God keep His promise? Finally, when I was 99, He said, 'Next year!' ... and, yes, when I was 100, my son Isaac was born. God kept His promise, but see how hard it was to wait and believe? And then a few years later the Lord told me to kill Isaac as an offering! - how can the promise of many descendants come true if I do that? ... but I continued to believe, and you know how the Lord stopped me at the last minute from killing Isaac!

"Example: God promised a special blessing for all the families of earth through me and one of my descendants ... that must mean a special blessing also for people who worship idols, people who forget God, people who wander from His right way. That promise pointed to the future Savior that will be born from one of my descendants. I needed that Savior, too ... I was not a perfect man, but a sinner ... sometimes my faith was very weak - instead of trusting God to care for me, I depended on my smarts and my lies to escape from danger - a big mistake! But I knew that God was merciful - that's why I called him LORD, emphasizing His mercy, love, and forgiveness ... I trusted that mercy - I trusted the Lord to forgive - and He did forgive - and He called me righteous."

II. "We, also, are righteous by faith in Christ."

Yes, Abraham is an important example of faith. Abraham shows what is center of all Bible teaching: God promises to call us righteous that Savior Jesus Christ (cf. Epistle - Gal 2.11-21) ... we believe that promise, and God does call us righteous! That doesn't happen because we obey God's Law (10 Commandments) ... or because we are good people ... or because we go to church every week or pray every day. Everything good we do is not good enough! ... we cannot pay what we owe to God for our sins - whether small or large! (cf Gospel - Lk 7.36-50) But God's mercy and His promises led Jesus to the cross for us all; therefore, He forgives and gives new life ... now Christ lives in us who believe in His promises ... now we live and walk with the Lord.