***Abraham was a Friend of God, because of his Faith in God!**

I. By Faith ABRAHAM . . .
STEPPED OUT TO WHERE HE HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE (v. 8)
(The Step of Faith)

II. By Faith ABRAHAM . . .
DID NOT PLANT HIS ROOTS TOO DEEP IN THIS WORLD (v. 9, 10)
(The Quest of Faith)

III. By Faith ABRAHAM . . .
KEPT HIS EYES ON THINGS ABOVE (v. 10; 13-16)
(The Focus of Faith)

IV. By Faith ABRAHAM . . . OVERCAME THE ULTIMATE TEST (v. 17-19)

(The Test of Faith)

"ABRAHAM - A FRIEND OF GOD"
(James 2:23; Heb. 11:8-19)

INTRODUCTION:

In 2,165 B.C. there was born one of the most famous men to ever live.

He was to grow up in a wealthy, populated, and sophisticated pagan city - called Ur of the Chaldees (220 miles south of Baghdad in southern Mesopotamia).

He was to become the father of the Jewish nation, an example to all people, and a friend of God.

His name was Abraham.

Abraham is one of the few people ever to be called a "friend of God" by God.

Is. 41:8 - "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."

II Chron. 20:7 - "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"

Ja. 2:23 - "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

NOTE: A friend is one whom you enjoy being with. Someone whom you can related to. Someone who brings pleasure to your life.

The key to pleasing God is believing God (Heb. 11:6).

"Faith honors God and God honors faith."

God was so close to Abraham because Abraham was so close to God. He trusted God; he depended on God; he believed God. Hence, he is called a friend of God.

The secret to friendship with God is faith in God.

The predominant characteristic of Abraham (as recorded in Scripture) is his faith in God.

(Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1-22; Gal. 3:6-9; Heb. 11:8-10, 17-19; Ja. 2:21-24)

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God's call of Abraham - SEE Gen. 12:1.

Abraham was to leave the "security" of country, family, and home, to follow the leading of God.

Note: The importance of separation.

1 - The original call came at Ur
(Acts 7:2)

2 - The family moved out of Ur to Haran
(Gen. 11:31)

3 - God then moved Abraham out of Haran into Canaan
(Gen. 12:4-5)

Jesus spoke of leaving country and family for the Gospel's sake and the rewards that would come with such sacrifice (Mk. 10:29-30; cp. Mt. 19:29-30).

To do that which you have never done before requires faith.

EX. - To come out on visitation, tract attack

EX. - To teach a S.S. class

EX. - To go off to Bible college

Ex. - To serve Christ full-time on the foreign field
What is the response of those without faith to a new work (ministry) for God?

7 Steps to Stagnation

1. "We're not ready"
2. "We never did it that way before"
3. "We don't know how"
4. "We've tried that once before"
5. "It costs too much"
6. "That's not our responsibility"
7. "It won't work"

II. By Faith ABRAHAM . . .
DID NOT PLANT HIS ROOTS TOO DEEP IN THIS WORLD (v. 9, 10)

(The Quest of Faith)

Abraham lived in tents because he was a stranger and pilgrim in the world and had to be ready to move whenever God spoke.

Christians today are also strangers and pilgrims -

> I Pet. 1:1 - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."
>
> I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Faith keeps this life in perspective.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

EX: Hymn - "Faith is the Victory"

SEE: Gen. 13:1ff

God wanted Abraham to be separated from all his relatives, including Lot.

Lot chooses the best for himself (v. 10) (such a love for the world would be the downfall for Lot).

III. By Faith ABRAHAM . . .
KEPT HIS EYES ON THINGS ABOVE (v. 10; 13-16)

(The Focus of Faith)

Heb. 11:11-12 -

God promised Abraham and Sarah a son when they were 75 and 65 years old. The promise was not fulfilled until 25 years later!

Though waiting on the Lord is very hard to do, true faith enables one to wait for the fulfillment of God's promises in God's time (Wiersbe, p. 318).

Though God with an oath promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (Gen. 15:7-18), Abraham, by faith, had his eyes on an eternal, heavenly city.

Dr. George Morrison, a great Scottish preacher, once said, "The important thing is not what we live in, but what we look for." (Wiersbe, p. 319).

"Set your affection on things above . . ." (SEE: Col. 3:1ff)

"Live in the future tense" (Phil. 3:20-21)

IV. By Faith ABRAHAM . . . OVERCAME THE ULTIMATE TEST (v. 17-19)

(The Test of Faith)

SEE: Gen. 22:1-18 - The offering of Isaac

James 2:20-24 - Abraham was proven to be righteous ("justified") by his obedient faith.

CONCLUSION:

Abraham was not perfect (EX: his lies about Sarah - Gen. 12:13, 20:2) but he believed God!

SEE: Rom. 4:16-25 Abraham's faith was the key to:

--Facing the impossible (v. 17-18)
--Gaining spiritual strength (v. 19-20)
--Glorifying God (v. 20b-21)

--Attaining salvation (v. 22-25; 4:1-3)

Hebrews 11

v. 8 - By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

v. 9 - "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

v. 10 - "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

v. 13 - "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen

then afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

v. 16 - "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

v. 17 - "By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."

v. 18 - "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

v. 19 - "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from

whence also he received him in a figure."

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