

# THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

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Hebrews 6:12 teaches us to be “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” In the word of God, we have many great examples of people who trusted in the Lord and believed in his promises, demonstrating their faith by their steadfast obedience. Abraham stands out as perhaps the greatest example to follow. He is the one God calls “the father of all them that believe” (Rom 4:11).

## **The promise of a son to Abraham**

In Genesis 12:7, “the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.” This is the first recorded case in which God promised childless Abraham that he would one day have many descendants. This promise was repeated in Genesis 13:14-17. In Genesis 15:4-6, God told Abraham, “*He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.* And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. *And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*” How many 100 year-old men would believe such a promise? Romans 4:18-22 says of Abraham, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; *and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.” Since God promised it, Abraham believed that somehow He would fulfill it. God counted this faith as righteous, because it *was* righteous. “Now 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 from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom 4:23-25).

## **The command to offer the heir of the promises**

Abraham had a son Ishmael born to him by Hagar. But Ishmael was never going to be the heir of God’s promises to Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah, whom he would name Isaac, and Isaac would be the heir of the promises (Gen 17:15-21; Rom 9:7-9). Later, God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (Gen 22:1-2). Abraham went to the place God told him, then bound Isaac on an altar, and lifted up a knife to kill his son (Gen 22:3-10). God stopped him, and blessed him for his faith and obedience to the point of being willing to offer his son (Gen 22:11-19). How could Abraham believe God would fulfill all His promises through Isaac if he offered him on an altar? Hebrews 11:17-19 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of

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whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: *accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*; from whence also he received him in a figure.” There is no record of anyone ever having been raised from the dead when Abraham walked the earth. But Abraham did not doubt the Lord’s promises, even when given a command that many would consider to contradict and invalidate the prior promises. If Isaac were killed, then Abraham figured God would raise him back to life and then fulfill his promises through him. It is no wonder that God would use this situation as our example of having a *living faith*. James 2:20-24 says, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 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. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*”

## **The promises of God to us**

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise” (2 Pet 3:9). He *always* keeps His promises: “But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor 1:18-20). The promises God fulfilled to Abraham are given as proof that it is impossible for God to lie, so that “we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb 6:18-20). Hebrews 6:11-20 says, “And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Endurance is key. Hebrews 10:35-36 says, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*” James 1:12 says, “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*” The ultimate goal is given in 2 Peter 1:3-4: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: *whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*”