

“Who In Hope ...”

“... believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoke, so shall thy seed be” (Rom. 4:18)

With good reason Abraham is called the *“father of the faithful”* and *“the friend of God.”* Seldom is such faith seen in man. There was no rational reason for Abraham to believe he would be the father of many nations for *“he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about one hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”* Being of such an age himself and his wife not only past child bearing, but barren as well, why should Abraham hope for offspring? There was no sensible reason for hope for hope is a combination of two factors; desire and expectation. Without doubt Abraham had the desire for sons, but expectation? Still, he did expect that his wife would have a son ... against all rational odds to the contrary.

His expectation was based upon his confidence in God’s word. True, both he and Sarah were “too old” but God had promised! That made the difference. The promise had been made many years before. He was seventy five when he left Haran but ere he dwelt there, he lived in Ur of the Chaldees and there God had promised him, *“Get thee out of thy father’s house and from thy kindred, unto a land that I will shew thee and I will make of thee a great nation ...”* (Gen. 12:1f; Acts 7:2f). Through twenty-five to thirty years Abraham had lived as a pilgrim in Canaan (Heb. 11:8-9, 13). Still God had not given him and Sarah a son. But, God had promised, *“and Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness”* (Gen. 15:6).

Furthermore, when finally after the long awaited Isaac was born of whom God had said, *“In Isaac shall thy seed be called,”* another occasion arose in which Abraham *“hoped against hope.”* While Isaac was yet young with no offspring of his own, God commanded his father, *“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”* (Gen. 22:2). Once more Abraham’s faith caused him to act contrary to all reason, to hope against hope. God had specifically said, *“In Isaac shall thy seed be called,”* and just as specifically required *“offer him as a burnt offering.”* If God was to make a great nation of Abraham through Isaac, and Isaac had no seed and was dead, how could God fulfill that promise? All common reason railed against such! But Abraham

"walked by faith and not by sight" and prepared to offer Isaac as God dictated (2 Cor. 5:7). Abraham was confident his son would live. He accounted that if he killed his son, God would raise him up again from the dead and had it not been for God's intervention, Abraham would have been slain Isaac (Heb. 11:19)!

A practical application is posed for us. How can we believe in a resurrection when all wisdom denies such a possibility? How can we pillow our head in death with calmness of soul, believing our spirit will be given a spiritual body at some future time of God own choosing? We can believe such "*in hope against hope*" and for the same reason that Abraham did! God had given his promise to Abraham and Abraham believed His word. He has also given his promise to us, "*The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth ...*" (Jon. 5:28). Will we take God's word to be truth and "*in hope believe against hope?*"

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