

## Trials of Abraham's Faith

Abraham is one of the greatest men who ever lived on earth. His life is discussed more completely and more fully than any other character in the Bible except the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He was born in the Ur of the Chaldees near the north end of the Persian Gulf. It seems he was born when his father was 130 years old (Gen. 11:26, 32; 12:4; Acts 7:2-4). At the age of 75, he was called to leave his home and to go out to a new land. He was about 80 when he rescued Lot and met Melchizedek. He was 86 when Ishmael was born, 99 when Sodom was destroyed, and 100 when Isaac was born. When Abraham was 137 years old Sarah died. He was 160 when Jacob was born and he died at the age of 175—115 years before Jacob's migration into Egypt.

When God called Abraham, He did not give him a reason for leaving his home—He did make certain promises to Abraham. He promised him that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan, that they should become a great nation and that through them all nations of the world would be blessed. This promise (Gen. 12:2-3; 22:18) is the foundation of the Scheme of Redemption. God first called Abraham in Ur (Acts 7:2-4; Gen. 11:31). He called him again when Abraham was in Haran (12:1-4). He called him again in Shechem (12:7) and in Bethel (13:14-17), twice in Hebron (15:5, 18; 17:1-8). This promise was repeated to Isaac (26:3-4) and also to Jacob (28:13-14; 35:11-12; 46:3-4).

Abraham was a believer in one God. He lived in a world of idolatry. His countrymen were idolaters. His father was an idolater (Jos. 24:2). From a youth, he believed in one God. God trusted in Abraham. He selected Abraham to be the founder of a new nation of people who would worship the true God and from whom the Christ would come. Haran was about 600 miles northwest of Ur and nearly 400 miles northeast of Canaan. This was Abraham's first stopping place. He set out from Ur in search of a land where he could build a free nation. He did not know where he was going; God was leading him (Gen. 12:4-9; Heb. 11:8). Haran was already a well-settled region with roads to Babylon, Syria, Egypt, etc., along which caravans and armies constantly marched. After the death of Terah, his father, Abraham, under the call of God, moved on. Shechem was his first stopping place in Canaan. This is the center of the land in a lovely vale between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Soon he located at Bethel, 20 miles south of Shechem and 10 miles north of Jerusalem. This is one of the highest points in Canaan and gives a magnificent view in every direction. Abraham spent some time in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20). After returning to the land, he magnanimously gave Lot his choice of all the Land. Lot foolishly chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom. Abraham chose Hebron in the hill country of Palestine (Gen. 13).

Abraham, with 318 men of his own and some help by neighbors, made a midnight surprise attack on four famous Babylonian kings. He defeated their small armies (Gen. 14). One of these kings "Amraphael" is commonly identified as Hammurabi, the most famous of early Babylonian kings.

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### “Edification in Christ”

The Greek noun *oikodorne* denotes the act of building. This word comes from the word *oiko*, a home, and *demo*, to build. The verb *oikodomeo* literally means “to build a house.” In Matthew 21:42 *oikodomeo* is used as a noun, and translated builders. This same word is translated “edified” in Acts 9:31 and other places. Edification is the act of building.

Any time a wise person sets out to erect a structure, he will sit down and count the cost. In Luke 14:28, we read the words of that wise master builder, Jesus the Christ. “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?” The cost involved in being built up in the Lord's house is considerable. Very few are willing to pay that price. In Matthew 13:44 Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” The price tag placed upon one being built up in the Lord's house is one's total worth. If we refuse to begin here, we labor in vain. Paul revealed to the Corinthians that the churches of Macedonia had much power in weakness, because they “first gave their own selves to the Lord” (2 Cor. 8:5).

The most important element in any structure is its foundation. In 1 Corinthians 3:11 we read, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The Jew's rejected the Christ, therefore He said to them: “Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Mat. 21:42).

So it is that all edification is centered around the Lord and His good doctrine. Jesus said, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24). True edification can only result when all of Jesus' doctrine is accepted. The hard sayings of the Lord are just as important as the love and grace passages found in His Word. Jesus' doctrine is the fiber holding His house together. Any time a person skimps, and leaves out some of the fiber, you can be assured that his building will not withstand the coming storm.

Inspired men in the first century were given various parts of the Lord's doctrine

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ (Eph. 4:12-15).

We have the New Testament for that same reason today; that is, to be built up in Christ!

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## “JESUS IS LORD”

I saw this phrase recently on the bulletin board outside a church building recently.

There is nothing wrong with the statement, in and of itself for indeed, “Jesus is Lord.” Peter called Jesus Lord: *“Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias”* (Matthew 17:4). John also called Jesus Lord: *“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea”* (John 21:7). The apostle Paul also called Him Lord: *“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35).

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia: *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (Galatians 6:14). Indeed, all Christians should glory only *“in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

We are also told that there will come a day when every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord: *“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:11). However, for those who will wait until the Judgment to confess “Jesus is Lord,” it will be too late as regards to their eternal salvation.

However, all need to remember the pointed words of Jesus Christ: *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46). Sadly, too many want to use expression “Jesus is Lord” but who *“do not the things which I say.”* Jesus makes it clear that it is useless to call Him “Lord” while being unwilling to keep His commandments. If one truly recognizes Jesus as Lord, he will show his submission to the Lordship of Christ by their obedience to His will. Note what Paul writes to Timothy: *“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness”* (I Timothy 6:3). How can one *“consent not”* to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and His doctrine and still, legitimately, say “Jesus is Lord?” Remember also what our Lord, Himself, stated: *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John. 14:15). Do we love the Lord? Is He truly our Lord, if we do not keep His commandments?

We rightly point this out with respect to those involved in denominationalism who *“teach for doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:9), particularly as it relates to their teachings regarding how one becomes a Christian. However, there are those in the Lord’s church who are also teaching doctrines that are no more than the commandments of men. The words of Jesus: *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46), are equally pertinent to those who teach such doctrines. Each one of us needs to examine ourselves and the doctrine that we teach to ensure that we are teaching the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ that we might legitimately say “Jesus is Lord.”

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver is still waiting to here about possible back surgery but won’t know until next month.

Myrtle Grimsley was sick and unable to be out Sunday.

DeJon Mitchell is recuperating at home following her back surgery.

Rachel Fitzpatrick is in Texas visiting family this week.

We will have a cookout on June 27 – Hamburgers, hot dogs and trimmings. Also on July 11 we will have a low country boil. Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to participate.

### **Trials of Abraham’s Faith continued from page 4**

Abraham met Melchizedek (14:18-20) who was the king and priest of Salem (Jerusalem). Melchizedek, so far as his priesthood was concerned, was without father or mother, beginning of days or end of time. He was a type of Christ (Psa. 110; Heb. 5-7).

God renewed His promises to Abraham in Genesis chapters 15, 16, and 17.

Abraham is called the “friend of God” and “the father of the faithful.” All Christians are of the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29).

Abraham’s faith was tested by:

(1) Separation. God called him to go to a new home (Gen. 12:1-9; Acts 7:1-4).

(2) Famine (Gen. 12:1-20).

(3) Riches (Gen. 13).

(4) Power (Gen. 14).

(5) Delay. Waited many years for the birth of Isaac and the fulfillment of the promise which God had made to him.

Through all of these tests, Abraham was faithful to God. God blessed him. He reached the end of the journey looking forward to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The trials of Abraham’s faith are the very same trials which most Christians have today.

*George W. DeHoff  
Deceased*