

Not By Faith Only

“Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes” (Genesis 16:1-4): “And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six years old (86), when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.”

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly” (Genesis 17:1-2).

For thirteen years, Ishmael had been the only son of Abram. However, though Sarai had thought “it may be that I shall obtain children by” Hagar, such never was Jehovah’s intention. Therefore, “And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him” (Genesis 19:15-19).

Thus, “Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken. And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him” (Genesis 21:1-5).

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son

(Josephus indicates that Isaac was, at this time twenty-five years of age: Book 1, Chapter 13), thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, 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. And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me” (Genesis 22:1-12).

It was to this event, that James said, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith” (James 2:21-24).

Remember the words of the Hebrew writer, saying, “By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back” (Hebrews 11:17-19).