

The Faith of Abraham

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"The faith of Abraham, when he was called, obeyed." Hebrews 11:8

Abraham is considered by Paul "*father of the faith*"; therefore, in Galatians believers are called "*children of Abraham*". The real meaning of these expressions is to be found in the characteristics of Abraham's faith. It is not that faith originates in him, but that the qualities of his faith define true faith, that which is considered the righteousness of God that saves.

Abraham was called by God. Faith starts in this quiet way, not shouted. The divine call, His Word directed to us, begins the process that leads to faith. It always involves an effectual call that works what God desires. The call was to leave his city and to become a pilgrim in search of a future city. This call contained a vocation and indicated a path to follow, a life to live, the life of the pilgrim who anticipates the future.

Abraham obeyed this call; he listened to that imprecise, dangerous, and hazardous Word. His response was simple: without asking questions, without regretting what he was leaving behind, without knowing where he was going.

These three characteristics of Abraham indicate the journey of the believer. Faith calls us to break with the past to live in the present with our gaze fixed on the divine promise, on the future that we wait for. The pilgrim is the one who sets up his tent in God's future, who lives by the power that frees the divine word into history. Abraham in return received a promise that concerned an

inheritance, a future land ~ the Promised Land that was the land of freedom for him. He never had a piece of land; his only possession was a cave where he buried his wife Sara! It was a land for others, for those who would be born from him.

The promise concerned an offspring that had to come from him and Sara. Faith is never sterile and fruitless; faith is a source of life and a future. The offspring is a result of faith and concerned a special relationship with God, a covenant. God promised Abraham that in reality the promise he was receiving was God Himself. We wait for nothing less from the future:

"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" (Revelation 22:20). This expression summarizes faith and hope. When we begin to walk by faith we are walking the path that leads to God. God always walks before us, he comes to meet us, and because of this our life consists in encountering the Lord in the present, he who constantly comes to us from the future which is he himself.

Abraham lived in tents all his life. His faith was not an inheritance for himself, but for his offspring. Faith gives the strength to wait against every hope. God doesn't promise things, but promises Himself, and that we will be his sons and daughters. The promised inheritance consists of the future toward which the Lord is moving history and all of us.

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