

# “THE FAITH JOURNEY”



**THIRTEEN LESSONS ON FAITH  
AND  
THE JOURNEY IT SUMMONS US TO  
TAKE!**

<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Abraham</b>	<b>The Faith of a Father</b>
<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>Caleb</b>	<b>A Bold Faith</b>
<b>Lesson 3</b>	<b>Jonathan</b>	<b>A Faith that Leads</b>
<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>Noah</b>	<b>A Faith that Preserves</b>
<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>Enoch</b>	<b>A Perfect Faith</b>
<b>Lesson 6</b>	<b>Joseph</b>	<b>A Faith that Protects</b>
<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Moses</b>	<b>A Faith that Obeys</b>
<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Gideon</b>	<b>A Faith that Conquers</b>
<b>Lesson 9</b>	<b>Jehoshaphat</b>	<b>A Faith that Trusts</b>
<b>Lesson 10</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>A Faith that Redeems</b>
<b>Lesson 11</b>	<b>David</b>	<b>A Faith that Breeds Confidence</b>
<b>Lesson 12</b>	<b>The Hebrew Boys</b>	<b>A Faith that Defies Logic</b>
<b>Lesson 13</b>	<b>The Centurion</b>	<b>A Faith that Humbles</b>

## LESSON 1

## ABRAHAM – THE FAITH OF A FATHER

**BIBLICAL TEXT: GENESIS 22:8**

*“AND ABRAHAM SAID, MY SON, GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING: SO THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER.”*

### INTRODUCTION

How would you define the word **FAITH**?

A missionary named John G. Paton faced that dilemma during his missionary journey in Africa.

Though he had mastered the language of the people to whom he had been sent, the natives had no word for **“BELIEVE”**, the simplest definition of the word **FAITH**.

One day, while working on his translating abilities, a native entered his room, flung himself down on a chair, and resting his feet on another chair, remarked how good it was to “lean his whole weight” on the chairs.

Dr. Paton had found his missing word...the word that the native used for **“LEAN YOUR WHOLE WEIGHT”!**

Many patriarchs of the Scriptures lived lives that demonstrated this complete faith in God.

They learned *to lean their whole weight* upon the Lord and trust that He would fulfill all of His promises.

One such man was Abraham, whom we examine in light of his great faith as the father of many nations.

## ABRAHAM'S FAITH JOURNEY

ABRAHAM, the son of Terah, was named before his older brothers Nahor and Haran (Genesis 11:27), because he was the heir of the promises.

He lived with his family in Ur of Chaldea until the age of seventy, when the Lord commanded Abram (as he was first named) to journey to a land of promise (Acts 7:2-4).

From this time forward, Abram would demonstrate his unfaltering great faith in the Lord.

His obedience to God's command was only the first of many demonstrations of his willingness to be remolded and reshaped by God.

Faith is a journey, and Abram's faith journey began here in Ur, when God removed him from his comfort zone.

Abram left the security of his family's position of wealth and domination in Ur, and sojourned 300 miles north to Haran, where he abode fifteen years, awaiting further instruction from God.

While they tarried at Haran, Abram's father, Terah, died at the age of 205 years.

It was then that Abram received a second and more definite call, and a promise from God who said, *"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"* (Genesis 12:1-2).

Abram left Haran with his nephew Lot, *"not knowing whither he went"* (Hebrews 11:8).

He trusted implicitly to the guidance of Him who had called him.

God's promise to Abram contained not only temporal but also spiritual blessings.

It implied that he was the chosen ancestor of the great Deliverer whose coming had been long ago predicted (Genesis 3:15).

Abram built an altar to "Jehovah" (in the mountainous district of Bethel, between the towns of Luz and Ai) as confirmation of his faith in the Lord.

Then, forced by famine to relocate his family, he traveled to Egypt, where he used his wife Sarai in a deception scheme that exposed him to the rebuke of Pharaoh (Genesis 12:18).

Sarai was restored to Abram, but Pharaoh loaded him with presents and recommended that he withdraw from the country.

Abram returned to Canaan richer than when he left it, *"in cattle, in silver, and in gold"* (Genesis 13:1-2).

He returned to Bethel, to the place where he had built his altar unto the Lord, and it was here that a dispute arose between Lot's shepherds and those of Abram about water and pasturing the flock.

Abram generously gave Lot his choice of the pasture-ground.

Lot chose the well-watered plain of Sodom, and the uncle and nephew were separated, and Abram, who was encouraged by a repetition of the promises already made to him, moved to the plain or "oak-grove" of Mamre, which is in Hebron.

This was Abram's third resting place in the land of promise.

Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, ravaged the whole country where Lot and his family had chosen to settle, plundering the towns, and carrying the inhabitants away as slaves.

Hearing of the disaster that had befallen his nephew, Abram immediately gathered a band of 318 armed men, and together with the armies of the Amoritish chiefs Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol, he attacked Chedorlaomer and brought back all the spoils of the fallen king, presenting a tenth of the wealth to Melchizedek, in recognition of his character as a priest of the most high God (Genesis 14:18-20), who came forth to meet them with refreshments on his returning journey. (Archaeologists recently discovered a tablet, dated in the reign of the grandfather of Amraphel [Genesis 14:1], in which one of the witnesses is called "the Amorite, the son of Abiramu," or Abram).

When Abram returned to his home at Mamre, the promises already made to him by God were repeated and enlarged (Genesis 13:14); "*The word of the Lord*" (the first time this expression occurs in scripture) "*came to him*" (Genesis 15:1), and Abram now had a better understanding of the nation that would spring from his loins.

But Sarai (now seventy-five years old) grew impatient with God and persuaded Abram to take Hagar, her Egyptian maid, as a concubine, intending to give Abram an heir by way of proxy.

Ishmael, son of Hagar, became Abram's first-born, and heir to the promise (Genesis 16).

When Ishmael was thirteen years old, God again revealed yet more explicitly and fully his gracious purpose.

In token of the sure fulfillment of that purpose, God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Genesis 17:4-5), and the rite of circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham.

God announced that the heir to these covenant promises would be the son of Sarai, though she was now ninety years old, and that his name should be Isaac.

It was at this same time, in commemoration of the promise, that Sarai's name was changed to Sarah.

On that memorable day, as a seal of God's great design, Abraham and his son Ishmael and all the males of his house were circumcised (Genesis 17).

Three months later, three men visited Abraham.

One of the three visitants was none other than the Lord, and the other two were angels in the guise of men.

The Lord renewed His promise of a son by Sarah, who was rebuked for her unbelief.

Then the Lord talked with Abraham, and revealed the destruction that was about to fall on the city of Sodom; and because Abraham was not able to find even ten righteous people with the city for whose sake the city would have been spared,

destruction fell upon it; and early next morning Abraham saw the smoke of the fire that consumed it as the "smoke of a furnace" (Genesis 19:1-28).

Sarah gives birth to Isaac one year after the visitation, and jealousy arises between her and Hagar.

But that is the least of Abraham's challenges, for in the plains around Moriah, God puts Abraham's faith to the severest of tests, saying "*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*" (Genesis 22:2).

When God wants to take us to a higher level of faith, He challenges us with the impossible.

How could Abraham sacrifice this beloved son for whom he had waited so long?

Was the God he served so selfish as to require that Abraham return his most precious gift?

Had God's promise that Abraham would be "the father of many nations" been scrapped in favor of some other heir?

These are the human questions one might expect to come from Abraham, but instead, he proceeded in a spirit of unhesitating obedience to carry out the command; and when he was about to slay his son, whom he had laid on the altar, his uplifted hand was arrested by the angel of Jehovah, and a ram, which was entangled in a thicket nearby, was seized and offered in his stead.

It is here that Abraham calls the Lord, "**JEHOVAH-JIREH**", i.e., "**THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.**"

Abraham buried his wife Sarah at the age of 127 years old, and lived to see the marriage of his son Isaac to Rebekah.

Then, at the age of 175, Abraham died and was buried in Canaan at Machpelah.

All of his wanderings came to an end, but his faith journey left a deep impression on both the ancient world and on us today.

His religious tradition of monotheism, faith in One God, is celebrated by almost all Eastern nations.

Abraham thus fulfilled his call by God to be "**THE FRIEND OF GOD**" (James 2:23), "**FAITHFUL ABRAHAM**" (Galatians 3:9), "**THE FATHER OF US ALL**" (Romans 4:16).

## **CONCLUSION**

Faith is the persuasion of your mind that a certain belief is true.

Abraham was persuaded to look for "*a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" (Hebrews 11:10).

The primary idea of faith is **TRUST**.

When we believe in something, we have deemed it to be worthy of our trust.

Abraham's faith journey, like our own, was accomplished in degrees, through his experiences on his journey from Ur to Canaan.

With each new experience, Abraham built his storehouse of evidence on which his faith would rest.

How full is your storehouse of evidence?

## LESSON 2

## CALEB - A BOLD FAITH

**BIBLICAL TEXT: JOSHUA 14:12-14**

*“Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.*

*And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.*

*Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.”*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As we studied in the life of Abraham, the purpose of our faith journey is to strengthen us for God’s ultimate purpose.

All of life’s challenges serve to mold us as God’s faith vessels, and prepare us to accomplish His will in spite of our human frailty.

Though we see ourselves as finite human beings, God is still able to use us to accomplish His infinite plans, if we will only believe!

Bold faith is not inherited...it is nurtured by means of life’s experience.

We learn to trust God in the bleakest of circumstances because our experience tells us that **He WILL** deliver us out of it all!

Our faith experience teaches us to ignore the obstacles and see only the bright path that God has cut through our darkest hours.

This bold faith rests in the assurance that the Lord is who He claims to be, and that no situation is too difficult for His Omniscient power.

This next biblical character study reveals how God uses a man’s bold expression of faith to move a frightened nation forward in His plan for their redemption.

## **CALEB, THE DOG**

Caleb, (meaning ‘dog’) was the son of Jephunneh (Numbers 13:6; Numbers 32:12; Joshua 14:6, 14) of the house of Judah.

As one of the family chiefs of the fearless tribe of Judah, Caleb was well known for his strength.

When Moses put together a reconnaissance mission to scout out the Promised Land in the second year after the Exodus from Egypt, Caleb was one of the twelve men selected for the task.

When the group returned from their mission, they brought mixed messages.

The spy mission had been a success, for not a single soldier had been lost while making a complete surveillance of the Promised Land.

After 40 exhausting days in enemy territory, they were now ready to give their report, but they could not agree on its content.

A contingent of ten men were determined to bring a negative report, a *defeatist* attitude, to the people who were anxiously awaiting entrance into the Land of Promise.

There was one strong, positive factor on which they all agreed: ***the land flowed with milk and honey.***

The proof was seen in the fruit they brought back (Numbers 13:27).

The land was fertile and would abundantly feed the people and their livestock, giving them all they could ever need or desire.

But ten spies were gripped with fear as they described the inhabitants of the land as GIANTS, and themselves as mere grasshoppers in their presence.

Their report was so distrusting of God that it was labeled a *bad, evil report* (Numbers 13:32).

But one of the spies was a man of courage and strong faith.

Caleb silenced the leaders standing around Moses who were beginning to murmur and discuss the issues among themselves, and then he boldly and forcefully declared that they should go up and take possession of the Promised Land, and defeat the enemy.

At first, Caleb was overruled by the report of the ten spies who prevailed as they continued to spread lies and exaggerations.

The lies spread like wildfire through the camp, and their own fear and cowardice became stumbling blocks to the tribe of Israel.

The words of Caleb and Joshua were not heard.

Everywhere people heard of walled cities, strong men, giants, and the fabled Nephilim.

**No one talked about God's grace.**

**None recited His miracles.**

They had all but forgotten that God had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh with His mighty rushing waters.

The thunder of Sinai, the fire of God that He had spoken and delivered and graced His people beyond imagination—all these things were forgotten in their fear.

Fear unchecked becomes its own fuel, a self-propelling force that expands as it expands.

The more the people wailed, the more excessive their words.

The more the people cried, the more they protested in rage.

Then they began to aim their anger more directly at God Himself.

Moses and Aaron were the fall guys, but the people were really blaming the Lord for their situation.

God had delivered them from Egypt. He had brought Pharaoh to his knees, had cast horse and rider into the sea, had led them through a barren land, and had provided bread from heaven and water from a gushing rock.

He had spoken, revealing grace and wonder, power and gentleness, direction and the Torah [law].

Yet God was the one at fault!

And they began to curse Him, to condemn His goodness and reject His grace.

### **WHEN FEAR LEADS TO FAILURE**

Forgetful of God's power against Egypt, the people worked themselves into such a frenzy of fear that they wished that God had not brought them here at all.

Why had He not just left them alone?

When fear takes over, all rationale is cast to the wind.

Slavery and the hovels of Egypt began to look good again.

The memory of a variety of food made the memory of oppressive taskmasters less fearsome.

So it was that the frightening words of the faithless spies led to the mourning of the entire community and to their great rebellion against the Lord.

In their ingratitude they preferred death (Numbers 14:2).

Unfortunately, it was death they deserved and death they were to get.

Only their children would survive.

All the rest would die in this desert that they had chosen over the Land of Promise.

Moses and Aaron had done all they could.

They fell face down before the people, helpless and submissive before God (Numbers 14:5).

But the response of Joshua and Caleb was different (Numbers 14:6-9).

These two young men tore their clothes in a symbol of ritual mourning and declared once again the truthful facts about the land they had spied out: *the land was exceedingly good and it would not consume the people as the other spies had claimed* (Numbers 14:7).

Caleb boldly proclaimed that the LORD would lead His people into the Promised Land if they would only obey and please Him.

God would give the land—a land that flowed with milk and honey (Numbers 14:8).

Still, the people plotted to assassinate and to stone the four godly leaders... Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:10).

Unbelief and rebellion are very serious offenses against God.

He will not tolerate those who work to tear apart His plans.

When a plague broke out in the assembly of the Israelites, the spies perished along with all those in the assembly over nineteen 19 years of age...except Joshua, Caleb, Moses and Aaron.

They were spared because they trusted God.

Caleb's bold proclamation of his trust in God was the last sermon the Israelites heard before being snuffed out for their unfaithfulness.

## **FAITH'S REWARD**

The last record we have of Caleb is when, at eighty-five years of age, he came to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, after the people had gained possession of the land, and reminded him of the promise Moses had made to him, to give him a certain portion of land as his inheritance, the land of Kirjath-arba.

His reward of a parcel of land was the fulfillment of God's promise to those who held fast to His Word and trusted His amazing power to deliver them to a land of Promise.

## **FAITH OVERCOMES FEAR**

Fear is a catalyst for failure.

It stifles our ability to move forward in spite of circumstance.

We may claim that we believe God is able to overcome any obstacle placed in our path, but we will never see the demonstration of His power if we refuse to exercise that belief and trust Him.

Bold faith moves a man beyond self-doubt to the place where God will intervene.

The children of Israel saw only the obstacles before them.

Their faith was not strong enough to overcome their limited understanding of their position as God's chosen people.

But Caleb's strength and courage, and his fearless determination to trust God at His Word, allowed him to see the completion of God's promise.

## **CONCLUSION**

There will be times in our life's journey when the way seems difficult and victory seems virtually impossible.

But when God wants to demonstrate His omniscient power, He first takes us to the precipice of impossibility.

That is where He performs His greatest miracles.

Man sees only that which his finite understanding can comprehend.

But faith sees far beyond man's limited horizons.

“Let go, and let God!”

Doubt sees the obstacles.

Faith sees the way!

Doubt sees the darkest night,

Faith sees the day!

Doubt dreads to take a step.

Faith soars on high!

Doubt questions, “Who believes?”

Faith answers, “I!”

—*Gospel Banner*

## LESSON 3

## JONATHAN – A FAITH THAT LEADS

**BIBLICAL TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 14:6**

*“And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.”*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Leaders are both born and made.

God predestines a man (or woman) to greatness and then trains him to fulfill his calling, equipping him with talents and abilities suitable to the tasks he will later be called to complete.

The most essential characteristic of sound leadership is the leader’s confidence in his cause.

No man will risk life and limb for a cause in which he does not believe.

In our lesson today, we will become better acquainted with a young man who was willing to put all on the line for the sake of God’s plan for Israel.

### **TROUBLE BREWS IN ISRAEL**

“JONATHAN” (meaning ‘God is gracious’; or ‘whom Jehovah gave’), is the name of fifteen or more persons that are mentioned in scripture, but none is more beloved than Jonathan, the son of king Saul, who befriended David and ultimately saved the life of Israel’s young king.

Here in 1st Samuel, the Bible records the establishment of Israel’s monarchy, about 1050 B.C., and the heart-rending account of the relationship between David and Jonathan.

Samuel led Israel for many years in the combined roles of prophet, priest, and judge, but after the people demanded a king like those of the other nations (Chapter 8), God directed Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel’s first king.

When Saul turned from God, David was anointed by Samuel to succeed him.

After David killed the giant Goliath, he was brought to Saul's court, eventually becoming the leader of Saul's armies.

Saul and David enjoyed a congenial relationship as king and protégé, and David and Saul's son, Jonathan, became close friends.

History records the growing madness of the man who would call himself the king of Israel.

Saul's subsequent violent jealousy of David, Israel's next king, forced a wedge between the two, and David had to flee into the mountains to escape Saul's wrath.

Jonathan made the difficult decision to disavow his father and follow David.

Jonathan swore his allegiance to David, who would be the new king (1 Samuel 20:34).

This was the plight of a king's son, and the path that he was forced to follow if he would remain true to his calling as God's ambassador.

And it is here that we can begin to address the argument of whether a leader is born or made.

### **A YOUNG MAN OF STRENGTH**

Jonathan is first mentioned when he was about thirty years of age, sometime after his father's accession to the throne (1 Samuel 13:2).

Like his father, he was a man of great strength and activity (2 Samuel 1:23), and was well trained as a soldier.

It was not long before he excelled in archery and slinging (1 Chron. 12:2; 2 Samuel 1:22).

If Jonathan was chosen from birth to fulfill his role as Israel's protector and David's personal bodyguard, certainly his training in the art of archery and slinging was an essential part of his preparation.

But the inner qualities of strength, valor and fearlessness were born in him as a gift from God.

In chapter 14, we are given a glimpse into the character of this young leader.

### **THE MAKING OF A LEADER**

Jonathan was about to go on a secret reconnaissance mission into the Philistine camp.

The Israelites were in a military conflict where victory, from all outward appearance, was impossible.

They were vastly outnumbered, and were greatly surpassed in military technology.

The Philistines had oppressed the nation of Israel, causing the people to fear for their very lives.

At the beginning, there was nothing in this day that indicated it would be a remarkable day.

But it would!

On this day, God would win a great victory through the bold trust of Jonathan.

Jonathan gives the order for the mission to his armor bearer.

Every "**officer**" in the Israelite army had an "**assistant**" known as an *armor bearer*.

The armor bearer not only carried the leader's armor, but he would help the officer in fighting and administration of the army.

In our text, we listen in as Jonathan gives his armor bearer his instructions. *“Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.”*

Jonathan's bold faith was strong enough that he knew there was no way the LORD would forsake Israel.

Sure, the odds were great against them.  
But God was greater than the odds.

God had promised to do great things for Israel.

God gave this land to Israel, not to the Philistines.

Jonathan knew God could conquer any foe!

Why not now?  
Why not today?  
Why not through him?

### **A SECRET MISSION**

Jonathan didn't tell his father about his plans to infiltrate the Philistine camp.

Why not?

It may have been that Jonathan *deliberately* did not tell his father, because he believed his father would have simply said "no."

While the king was sitting under a tree as the picture of defeat, Jonathan's faith was propelling him forward in faith.

God chooses and uses leaders according to the measure of their faith, and some things we do for the Lord are best kept secret because those with less faith may discourage us.

Not even the people knew that Jonathan had gone into the Philistine camp, so we know that Jonathan did not go out of a desire for personal glory.  
If that had been his motivation, he would have told at least a few people that he had gone over.

Instead, Jonathan finds a strategic position between the passes, where *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side, where a few men could easily fight against a much larger number from this strategic vantage point.

Jonathan knew that God could overcome any enemy of Israel, whether with a large army or a few good men.

His belief in God's power opened the door for the Lord to guide Jonathan to this place, because Jonathan was boldly trusting God, and acting on that bold trust.

## **CONCLUSION**

Do you believe that “nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few”?

Like Jonathan, we must believe in the power of God to sustain and control our lives to accomplish His will.

Jonathan's wise courage in God was the catalyst that God used to deliver Israel.

Many Christians often feel that God is restrained in one way or another.

In reality, the only thing that restrains God is our *unbelief*.

In Matthew 13:58, it says of Jesus, “*He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief*”.

God's *power* is never restrained, but His *will* may be restrained by our unbelief.

He may choose not to act until we partner with Him in trust.

God had a trusting partner in Jonathan!

Does He have one in you?