

Hebrews 11:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Analysis

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. Abraham resolved the impossible paradox through resurrection faith. He 'accounted' (logisamenos, λογισάμενος, 'reckoned' or 'calculated'—same root used for imputed righteousness) that if Isaac died, God could and would raise him from the dead to fulfill His promises. This is Scripture's first explicit reference to resurrection faith, showing Abraham believed in God's power over death itself.

The phrase 'from whence also he received him in a figure' (en parabolē, ἐν παραβολῇ, 'in a parable' or 'as a type') indicates Abraham did receive Isaac back as from death. When the knife was raised, Isaac was as good as dead; when God provided the ram substitute, Abraham received Isaac back as if from resurrection. This served as a 'figure' or 'type'—a prophetic picture of Christ's actual death and resurrection. Isaac's three-day journey to Moriah (Genesis 22:4) prefigures Christ's three days in the tomb.

Abraham's resurrection faith reveals the essence of saving faith: confidence in God's power to bring life from death. This is the gospel pattern—Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). We are saved by faith in resurrection power (Romans 10:9). Abraham looked forward to this through types and shadows; we look back at the accomplished reality. Both are saved by faith in the same God who 'gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Romans 4:17 ESV).

Historical Context

Abraham lived approximately 2000 BC, roughly 2000 years before Christ's actual death and resurrection. Yet by divine revelation and faith, Abraham grasped the principle that God can and will bring life from death to accomplish His purposes. No one had yet been resurrected, making Abraham's faith in this possibility even more remarkable. His willingness to proceed with sacrificing Isaac, believing God could restore him, demonstrated faith in God's power beyond all human experience or precedent. This prefigures our faith in Christ's resurrection—an event unique in history, requiring faith in God's testimony rather than empirical proof.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Abraham's resurrection faith strengthen your confidence that God can bring life from the 'dead' situations you face?
2. In what ways is Isaac a 'figure' or type of Christ, and how does understanding this deepen your appreciation of the gospel?
3. What areas of your life require faith that God can resurrect what seems dead —relationships, ministries, hopes?

Interlinear Text

λογισάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν δυνατὸς
Accounting that also from the dead to raise him up was able
G3049 G3754 G2532 G1537 G3498 G1453 G1415

ὁ θεός ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσατο
God from whence him also in a figure he received
G3588 G2316 G3606 G846 G2532 G1722 G3850 G2865

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 3:20 (Parallel theme): Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Romans 5:14 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Matthew 9:28 (Parallel theme): And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

Genesis 22:13 (Parallel theme): And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

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