

From the Book of Hebrews 11:17-19.
GENERALIZATION. PART 1: THE FORMULA.

#1. "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;..."He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type", v.17, 19.

#2. Generalization from scripture is the implementation of a formula. Abraham had received promises from God regarding a bright and extraordinary future time, Genesis 12. But then the Almighty commanded that Isaac be offered as a sacrifice, Genesis 22. A contradiction was forced into Abraham's reasoning. The promise of God demanded a live Isaac and yet the command of the Lord featured a dead one!

#3. How then would the patriarch deal with such an impossible contradiction? Despite the contradiction, Abraham applied the formula and followed it to its end.

#4. The formula: Abraham did not begin his contemplation of the situation with his personal experience of nature--which experience taught him that the dead do not rise. The accepted practice is to generalize from human experience to life's flow of events.

#5. Instead, the patriarch began his consideration of circumstances by turning to the revealed language of God's promises. He concluded that there had to be a resurrection of Isaac from the dead.

#6. If one generalizes from experience, that practice inherently limits the meaning of the revealed truth. And if one generalizes from Scripture to the material, it immediately affects how nature and the natural are understood. One can do one or the other, but not both.

#7. This means that generalization from the Bible to temporality is "anti-nature". Abraham generated an anti-natural resolution to the contradiction.

#8. Typical Bible interpretation is rooted in time and therefore not in the Word of God. But generalization has the power to disengage us from time and its hold on the mind.

From the Book of Hebrews 11:17-19. GENERALIZATION.
PART 2: RESOLUTION OF CONTRADICTION BY POWER.

#1. Upon consideration of the wording of the promises of God ("It was he to whom it was said, 'In Isaac your descendants shall be called", v.18) Abraham came to a remarkable idea that became an article of belief.

#2. His conclusion: With enough power there are no such things as contradictions to the Word of God ("He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead...", v.19)!

#3. The patriarch had followed the formula; his reasoning was rooted in revelation and from that he generalized to an anti-nature conclusion. Abraham's thinking was correct, but it takes more than that. To resolve any such contradiction requires power, more power than anyone has.

#4. Supernatural power was necessary for Abraham and Sarah to bring Isaac into the world; "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised", v.11.

#5. The text presents a power relation between anti-nature generalization and material circumstances. There is no question; generalization from Scripture to time and materiality defies human wisdom and experience. Biblical faith is anti-nature.

#6. A problem: Intellectual Entitlement. Historically in the Bible, human reason and experience were accorded more intellectual entitlement than the teaching of the Word of God. That translates into doubt about the efficacy of trust in the Bible over rationalism.

#7. Unless and until that is reversed so that revealed truth is accorded intellectual entitlement over rationalism, believers will not follow the prescribed formula of beginning with scripture.

#8. In all cases, in the Bible, contradictions were resolved by the power of God applied.

#9. How is it possible that one can think that one's own thought generation is on a higher plane than revelation?

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GENERALIZATION. PART 3: THE TWO PLANES OF THOUGHT, SPEECH and BEHAVIOR.

#1. Generalization from the Bible to material existence has an inevitable, if not an immediate, effect. Such a reading of Scripture takes us off "the plane of logical relations between particles of nature" and puts us on the "plane of the power of God".

#2. Abraham made the jump from one plane to the other because of his understanding of the revealed language of the promises of God. "He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead...", v.19.

#3. These are the two planes of dependence, demonstrated by our thought, speech and behavior. To consult the Bible is to take the measure of each of these two planes. The life of Abraham is more than instructive, it is precedent (Abrahamic Faith, Galatians).

#4. Standing on one or the other of these planes represents two different understandings of "resolving conditions". The patriarch could have depended upon the natural plane wherein the power to resolve conditions depends upon nature and human lived experience. In that case Abraham's faith in the Word of God would have dissolved away.

#5. However, he made the jump to the plane of supernatural power. On that plane the resolving power is that of God. Abraham's reasoning was the embodiment of biblical faith.

#6. The great personalities of faith named in Hebrews 11 had all made the jump from nature to the power of God; their thought, speech and behavior anchored in the report of revealed truth.

#7. To read the Bible from the natural plane of human logic diminishes the authority of the text. To observe the natural plane from the perspective of revelation relativizes its supposed monopoly on resolving conditions (control).

#8. The validity of generalization from Scripture to time is rooted in the resolving power of God, the Word of God and the power of God.