

ROMANS 4:17b-25

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The
Foundation
of
Abraham's
FAITH

PROLOGUE

In the remainder of Romans 4, Paul will make numerous references to God's Word and His spoken Promise which convey the basis, grounding, FOUNDATION of Abraham's faith!

These include:

- + "just as it stands written" (17);
- + "according to that which was spoken and now stands in effect" (18);
- + "the promise of God" (20);
- + "what was promised [by God] and still in effect, He [God] is powerful to do" (21); and,
- + "written on his account (23).

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We will also see in this section that God is referred to as "The One" in two successive phrases. In the Greek, Paul uses a distributive article (tou:) (The) to connect them.

Then in verses 24 and 25, Paul will assert that God's life-giving characteristic is exemplified by the resurrection of Jesus, our Lord.

Additionally, The One also extends His power over death to give life to all believers (we'll see this again in Chap 8).



¹⁷Before whom he believed God, The One, who makes the dead alive and calls things not [into] being even being.

This verse can be understood in various ways. It can be the creation that was (*ex nihilo*); spoken into being. Yet, we should stay in context!

Paul is using this verse to show that Abraham believed in God "[who] calls things not [into] being even being." Thus, God knew the being of all nations, these nations of all believers in Christ Jesus. We now know What and in Whom Abraham believed!



18Who contrary to expectations on the basis of hope believed, with the result that he became father of many nations, according to that which was spoken and now stands in effect: "thus will be your seed."

This verse begins and retrieves the verbs form of LXX Gen 15:6, which Paul has cited in 4:3: Abraham believed!

The important word is HOPE. In the OT, hope is much different from fear; hope was expectation of good! Thus, it is closely allied with Trust... hopeful (confident) trust in God.



18Who contrary to expectations on the basis of hope believed, with the result that he became father of many nations, according to that which was spoken and now stands in effect: "thus will be your seed."

The result of Abraham's confident hope and trust is that "he became father of many nations," **Abraham believed God's promise** upon the confident expectation of hope and, therefore, also received what God promised: Abraham became the father of many nations (cf. Gen 17:5).



¹⁹And after not weakening in the faith, he considered his own body already dead and lifeless, since he was about one hundred years [old], and [he considered] the deadness of the womb of Sarah.

The important aspect of this verse is that Abraham did not weaken in faith! Since he was nearly 100 years old (99) and Sarah, now past child-bearing years, has "the deadness of the womb."

Paul writes for effect here. It is compatible with Abraham's "dead and lifeless" body. So, in Faith, Abraham believed what was now dead, God would make alive!

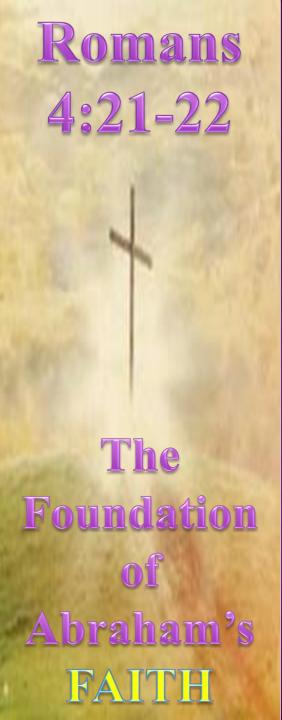


²⁰But he did not waver into unfaith in the promise of God, but he was empowered in the faith, after giving glory to God.

We have already discussed the fact that Abraham (and Sarah) were sinners and, at times, his faith did waver. Even so, as Paul writes, "...he did not waver into unfaith..."

Abraham never rejected or refused to believe in God and His Promise.

Actually, in regard to God's Promise, Abraham "... was empowered in the faith, after giving glory to God."



²¹And after being fully convinced that what was promised [by God] and still in effect, he [God] is powerful to do. ²²Therefore also "it was credited to him for righteousness."

The sense in which Abraham was empowered in the faith (v.20) rest in his conviction that God is powerful (v.21). Paul is stating that Abraham believed in God's power, without wavering or falling into unfaith! So the power of God is God's work; not mans. God did what He promised!

This is the *What* Abraham believed, and, more importantly, this characterizes the God in *Whom* Abraham believed.

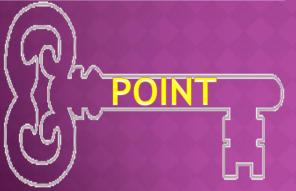


Abraham's

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²¹And after being fully convinced that what was promised [by God] and still in effect, he [God] is powerful to do. ²²Therefore also "it was credited to him for righteousness."

St. Paul now closes the discussion on Abraham and he expresses a very profound truth about God [as he did in 1:32; 2:11, 16, 29: 3:1-8, 19-20, 26, 29-31] that what God has promised to Abraham and to us, He is able to and will do!



In Faith, Abraham
BELIEVED GOD and
"it was credited to him
for righteousness."



²³But "it was credited to him" was not written on his account only, ²⁴but also on our account, to whom it is about to be credited, to those who believe upon the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over on account of our trespasses and was raised on account of our becoming righteous.

St. Paul now applies the Promise to an entire group of people: the greater family of Abraham. Paul is making an overarching perspective and it's quite clear:

The Faith of Abraham is the Christian Faith!



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²³But "it was credited to him" was not written on his account only, ²⁴but also on our account, to whom it is about to be credited, to those who believe upon The One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over on account of our trespasses and was raised on account of our becoming righteous.

What is that Faith?



Peace, Hope, Reconciliation and Salvation through Our Lord Jesus Part 1: Effects of **Justification**

ROMANS 5:1-5

Next Week