

Romans, Part 8

In the previous verses, we are told that the promise of God is not fulfilled through the law, but through by righteousness that comes by faith in God. Inheriting the promise and being justified or righteous before God depends entirely on faith, in order that it might be given as an act of God's grace or unmerited favor. If Abraham became an heir by the law, faith is empty and the promise is cancelled. Abraham is a prime example or pattern of strong faith and how God responds to that faith.

Romans 4:16-25 gives a picture of Abraham's faith.

The source of Abraham's faith was God and God alone.

Romans 4:16-17 NLT So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, he believed what God said that, "I have made you the father of many nations," (Romans 4:17, Genesis 17:1-5).

Listen to the conversation that Abraham had with God.

Genesis 17:1-2 NLT When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "*I am El-Shaddai— 'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.*"

Abram fell on his face before God, and God talked with him. Think about that for a moment.

This is the fourth time the Lord appeared to Abram.

- The first was in Genesis 12:7 when the Lord promised to give him the land and Abraham built an altar there.
- The second was in Genesis 13:14-17, after Lot departed for Sodom, God told Abraham that he would make his descendants as the dust of the earth. God told him to "walk through the length and width of the land, for I give it to you."
- The third time the Lord appeared to Abraham (Genesis 15), God promised to be his shield and exceedingly great reward and once again confirmed His promise.
- This text is the fourth time (Genesis 17) Abram was standing in the presence of God and the Lord tells him, I am Almighty God, — EL— Shaddai — God Almighty. The Almighty God was talking directly to Abram and said, "*Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.*" God Almighty

wanted Abram to walk before him in the same manner that Enoch walked with God.

- The fifth time the Lord appeared to him was by the terebinth trees of Mamre, (*Genesis 18*).

God is giving a guarantee to Abraham that the promise of the covenant He had made still stands.

Genesis 17:4-5 NLT “This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations.”

What God said did not align with the facts of Abram’s life.

He was ninety-nine and Sarah was close to the same age. It appeared humanly impossible for them to become the father and mother of many nations. They could have easily believed in their human limitations. They could have told God and everyone else, “*This can never happen.*” Do you see how profoundly impossible it would be for what God was saying to happen? The only way Abraham could have a son would be a miracle from God.

Abraham believed God.

According to God’s promise, Abraham and Sarah would be exceedingly fruitful and nations and kings would come out of them. God was the source of the promise, and nothing is impossible for El-Shaddai, God Almighty. Despite the impossibility, Abraham believed God.

When we consider the infallibility and certainty of God’s Word, we have every reason to believe and trust what God says.

Mark 11:22 NKJV So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God.”

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Jeremiah 1:12 NASB95 Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.”

Isaiah 55:11 NKJV So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Do you believe that God will do what He said He will do?

Romans 4:17 NLT This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

Abraham believed in the God who quickens the dead.

The source of Abraham's faith was the living and true God. He is God omnipotent, possessing all power. He has the power to breathe life into dead matter. Abraham believed God has the power to quicken, make alive, revive, rejuvenate and animate what is dead. Abraham considered his and Sarah's bodies to be dead. They did not possess the physical ability to have a child. Even though there was not physical possibility for it to happen, Abraham believed God's promise. No matter how impossible the promise seemed, God was able to do it. The All Mighty God possesses all of the power (omnipotent power) to do whatever He promises. God is able to quicken and resurrect the dead. He is able to call things into existence which do not exist.

How does that apply to Abraham and Sarah's situation?

They were so old and barren that it was humanly impossible for them to have children. They believed that God had the power to fulfill His promise.

Abraham believed that God "calls those things which do not exist as though they did." (vs. 17)

Romans 4:17 AMP Who ...speaks of the nonexistent things that [He has foretold and promised] as if they [already] existed.

What does that mean?

God is able to create anything from nothing. Abraham's faith was in the God Who creates. He really believed God omnipotent was able to create. El Shaddai needs nothing to make anything. When God speaks, anything is possible. In Genesis 1, God spoke and the world was created by the power of His word. Abraham believed God was able to do what He said. He believed God could create life in his and Sarah's bodies. He had confident unwavering trust and faith in God's promise.

When God makes a promise, He is all that is needed to fulfill that promise.

God's promises do not require man's creativity, wisdom or power. God is able to do what He says He will do. We should take this into account of all of the promises of God.

2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV84 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Romans 11:36 NIV84 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.

Matthew 19:26 NKJV But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*"

Luke 1:37 NKJV For with God nothing will be impossible.

Look at the strength of Abraham's faith.

We have seen that Abraham believed in what God said. He had nothing else to depend on but God's Word. Nothing else made sense.

Romans 4:18 NIV84 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Physically, Abraham and Sarah had no reason to hope for a child. Their faith in God gave them hope that was beyond human reason or help. Their situation was beyond hope, yet Abraham believed God. He placed his hope in God and in what God had said. We should consider this in relation to all of the promises of God. Even if there is no hope in your situation, faith in God brings hope for answers.

Romans 4:19-21 AMP He did not weaken in faith when he considered the [utter] impotence of his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or [when he considered] the barrenness of Sarah's [deadened] womb. No unbelief or distrust made him waver (doubtingly question) concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God, Fully satisfied and assured that God was able and mighty to keep His word and to do what He had promised.

Consider how strong his faith was in God.

Abraham recognized his own physical inability, his body was "now dead." He and Sarah were about one hundred years old. The word "dead" means they were past the possibility of having a son. When he considered this, he believed God was still able to do it. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief. He was not weak in faith. He had unwavering faith in God, even when everything said it was impossible.

"He grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."

Abraham believed the promise without staggering in faith. Instead of wavering and staggering at the promise of God, he walked about glorifying and praising God for His glorious promise. He was fully convinced of God's ability and God's power. Fully convinced is not the same thing as trying to talk yourself into believing. He knew God could overcome every difficulty and deficit of his body being "dead." He believed God could give life to his dead body. He did not know how God would do it, but he believed God would do what He promised. He was fully persuaded that the promise would be fulfilled. You need to remember and know that God cannot lie. What He has said, will He not do? (Numbers 23:19).

If you consider your situation, standing, and condition it may be impossible, put your faith in God.

God will do what He said He would do.

Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments

Psalms 37:5 NKJV Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

Proverbs 3:5 NKJV Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Why do we have the record of Abraham's faith?

Romans 4:22-25 NIV84 This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

The record of Abraham’s faith is given so that we have an account of what it is like to live by faith. The record was not just to honor Abraham. It was recorded so that we could know that we can become acceptable to God by faith. We have this record so that we will know that righteousness (*standing acceptable to God*) will be granted and credited to us who believe in God. The deficit that was accounted against us has been removed and we are absolved of all guilt before God because we have faith in Christ.

God is looking for unwavering faith in everyone who trusts in Him.

Righteousness will be imputed to everyone who believes in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. His resurrection has brought us justification before God. His resurrection proves that His sacrifice and death was accepted for us.