

The Faith of Abraham – Romans 4



MEMORY VERSE: For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”
Romans 4:3

DAY 1 ROMANS 4:1-3 — Abraham’s Belief

1. Who is Abraham? v. 1
2. Abraham was originally named Abram. What was God’s plan for Abram and how did he respond? Genesis 12:1-4
3. Abram obeyed God, but still had no heirs. What did God promise Abram during this time of waiting? Genesis 15:1-6
4. Abram changed his whole life in order to obey God. Could he boast about this? If not, why not? v. 2
5. If not because of his obedience, why then was Abraham counted as righteous? v. 3

LEARN THE TRUTH

Do you believe that God is good and will do all that He promises? His promises are based on His character, not on yours. Do you trust in your own good deeds, or is your faith in Jesus Christ? As you learn about Abraham, follow his example of believing God, and you too will be counted as righteous.

DAY 2 ROMANS 4:4-8 — The Blessing of Belief

6. What is the difference between a wage and a gift? vv. 4-5
7. According to King David, what blessings does God’s gift of righteousness provide? vv. 6-8

8. What do you learn about guilt and forgiveness from the Psalm of David? Psalm 32:1-5
9. Read Luke 18:9-14. How was the tax collector's attitude and fate different from that of the Pharisee? How did Jesus explain the difference?
10. Can you relate to the Pharisee or the tax collector, or both? If so, how?

DAY 3 ROMANS 4:9-12 — The Father of All Who Believe

11. Why is it important to understand that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness **before** he had been circumcised instead of **after**?
12. Why might this have made some people angry, but been extremely encouraging to others?
13. Circumcision was commanded by God in the Old Testament (Genesis 17:9-14), as is baptism in the New Testament (Mark 1:4-8; Matthew 28:18-20). What is the connection between rituals or rites ordained by God and actual righteousness? vv. 11-12
14. In what valid expressions of Christianity today might one wrongly value over belief? How do you think we can keep from doing this?

DAY 4 ROMANS 4:13-17 — The Law vs. Faith

15. Why did the promise that Abraham would be **heir of the world** have to come through faith rather than through the law? vv. 13-14
16. If righteousness cannot be gained by obeying the law, for what purpose did God give the law? Galatians 3:19-23

17. What does it mean to you that God's promise depends on faith but rests on grace?
(see Ephesians 2:8-9 from last week for help)

18. In what particular power of God did Abraham believe? v. 17

19. What does this aspect of God's character mean to you? Have you ever experienced it, or is there an area of your life where you would like to experience it?

DAY 5 ROMANS 4:18-25 — God is Able!

20. What obstacles stood in the way of God's promise for Abraham being fulfilled? vv. 18-19

21. Instead of turning away from God, what did he do? Why was he able to do this? vv. 20-22

22. How does Abraham's experience relate to ours? vv. 23-25

23. Are you fully convinced that God will count you righteous if you simply believe?

24. What promises has God given in the Bible that you have either seen fulfilled or are still believing will be fulfilled in "hope against hope?"

LOVE THE TRUTH

Abraham had great faith, yet he failed and sinned, as do all of us. We too are Abraham's children if we "believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 24). Read verses 20-22 aloud, replacing your name with Abraham's. Embrace this truth and apply it to your own life.

Romans 4

The Faith of Abraham

Long before the time of Christ, God called Abram to leave his people and homeland to follow God to a new place. His journey of faith is recorded in the book of Genesi. It includes lapses of integrity, but in his heart, He trusted God and believed His promises and so God counted him as righteous. When Abram was 99, God established His everlasting covenant of circumcision with Abram and his offspring and changed his name to Abraham, promising he would be the father of many nations. (Genesis 17) Abraham believed God before the covenant of circumcision was made, so it was impossible for his justification to have been earned by obedience to God's law. His justification came only by belief in God. He is a hero to the entire human race because the fact that he was justified because he believed, frees us from the lie that we must continually prove we are good enough to earn God's favor.

God promised Abraham that he would have more descendants than the stars in the sky. That is rather an impossible promise considering he was 75 years old when he received the promise, and his wife, Sarah was barren. It was 25 years before he had a flesh and blood heir with Sarah. In the mean time he and Sarah took shortcuts to *help* God fulfill His promise. Short cuts are easy and seem to make sense at the time, but are actually costly and destructive. Are we any different? It is all too easy to either cut corners to get where we think God wants us, or to claim by faith something we want that God never actually promised. We need to believe what He *has* promised! When we believe God, instead of holding our sins against us, He forgives us. As King David said, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Think about the words that describe Abraham's faith as he waited for God's promise to be fulfilled. "*In hope he believed against hope*, that he should become the

father of many nations...*He did not weaken in faith*" when he considered the circumstances. (4:18-19) "*No distrust made him waver* concerning the promises of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised." (4:20-21) Abraham held on to the truth and character of the One who created heaven and earth and who cared enough about him to call him to a new life. He did indeed end up having more descendants than there are stars in the sky. And those stars include not only Jews, but anyone who believes in Christ who died for our sins and rose from the dead. We too are the children of Abraham.

WALK IN TRUTH



Believing that God is who He says He is frees us from the trap of having to be perfect or make our own way. We can't be perfect nor can we *help* Him fulfill His promises. We also cannot do enough good deeds to *maintain* our salvation. When we believe in Him, we are not only deemed righteous, forgiven of our sins, but we can rest in knowing that His plan for this life and eternity will indeed come to pass. His love inspires and empowers us to live in obedience to Him. He changes our desires!

Sin is an expression of a wavering or lack of belief and yet Abraham is remembered, not for his sin, but for his belief. What do you want to be remembered for? Belief! Praise God that He does not hold our momentary wavering in trust against us! When we believe God, He calls into existence the things that do not exist in our lives. What does God want to exist in your life that is not there now? Ask Him what that is, and trust Him bring it to pass.