

**The Book of Romans**  
**4:13-25**  
**11/28/2018 Wednesday PM**

**Romans 4:13-25**

<sup>13</sup>It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. <sup>14</sup>For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, <sup>15</sup>because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. <sup>17</sup>As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

<sup>18</sup>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." <sup>19</sup>Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. <sup>20</sup>Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

<sup>23</sup>The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, <sup>24</sup>but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup>He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

- In this section Paul makes three points about the “promise” to Abraham:
  1. The promise is based on faith, not the law. (vv.13-15)
  2. The promise, because it is based on faith, united Jews and Gentiles together into one people of God. (vv.16-17)
  3. The faith with which Abraham responded to God’s promise was firm and unwavering. (vv.18-22)
- **V. 13** – Jewish Rabbis taught in Paul’s day that Abraham’s stature and role had much to do with his obedience to the law of Moses.
- Paul is making it clear in this verse that this is not the case.
- We see in Galatians 3 that Paul deals with this issue to and he uses chronology to demonstrate his point.
- The promise to Abraham could have nothing to do with the law of Moses, because the law was given 430 years after Abraham. (**Galatians 3:17**)
- In Romans, Paul does not discuss timing, rather he speaks more principally.
- He says that the promise did not come because people obeyed the law, but “through the righteousness that comes by faith.”
- **Vv. 14-15** - In these verses Paul explains why Abraham and those who came after him could never have inherited God’s promised blessings through the law.
- “Those who live by law” describes people who might try to base their hope of blessing on doing what the Mosaic Law demanded.
- If those people were able to obtain faith, Paul says, “faith has no value and the promise is worthless.”
- The point that Paul is making is that if the fulfillment of the promise depends on obedience to the law, it will never happen because people will never be able to obey the law adequately.
- Paul goes on in **v. 15** to say what the law actually does. He says, “the law brings wrath.”
- He goes on to say, “And where there is no law there is no transgression.”
  - Is Paul saying in this verse that only where God has revealed his will to people can he accuse them of committing sins?
  - Absolutely not. A sin is anytime we fall short of the conformity to God’s image. (**Romans 3:23**)
  - Here Paul is using the word “transgression” (*parabasis*) which he only uses to depict the disobedience to a law or a commandment that a person has directly been made responsible for. (**2:23; 5:14; Gal 3:19; 1 Tim 2:14**)
  - Transgression is a sin, but not all sin is a transgression. Transgression is a more serious form of sin, because it is direct disobedience, and merits greater judgement.

- **Vv. 16-17** – In these verses Paul is elaborating on his statement that the promise comes “not through law” but “through righteousness that comes by faith.”
- He focuses on the promised blessing being guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring.
- “Offspring” translates the Greek *sperma* which literally means “seed.”
- This word is important both in the original promise in Genesis and here in Romans and in Galatians.
- This usually refers to a person’s physical descendants, but Paul has given it a spiritual significance in **Romans 4:11-12** where Abraham is told to be the father of believers.
- At the end of v. 16 we see Paul split this “spiritual seed into two groups: 1.) “those who are of the law” and 2.) “those who are of the faith of Abraham.”
- Paul here seems to be referring to Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.
- His concern is to show that the promise to Abraham is valid for all believers.
- At the end of v. 16 he affirms that Abraham “is the father of us all” and then he follows that up in v.17a with the quote of Genesis 17:5, “...I have made you a father of many nations.”
- Paul is interpreting this key element of God’s promise to Abraham spiritually, not just physically.
- The end of v. 17 is Paul describing this awesome God we serve by referencing his miraculous ability and his ability to see things that have not yet occurred.
- **Vv. 18-22** – In these verses, we will see Paul moving from a description of the God in whom Abraham believed to a description of that belief itself.
- The emphasis is on Abraham’s (Sarah’s) conviction that God would do what he had promised, even when all the “physical” evidence pointed in the other direction.
- From a human standpoint, there was no hope that he and Sarah would ever have children.
  - He was 100 years old and Sarah’s womb was “dead.” (4:19)
- Abraham was not blind to these facts, however he did not let his faith waiver because of them as it tells us in v.20.
- We all know that Abraham “laughed” in **Genesis 17:17**, but what Paul is illustrating is that overall, Abraham maintained his faith in God’s promised.
- This is why Abraham is found in the Hall of Faith in **Hebrews 11:11-12**.
- **Vv. 23-25** – These verses follow directly from v. 22 where Paul quotes the ending of **Genesis 15:6**: “It was credited to him as righteousness.”
- Paul is again making it clear to his readers that the Old Testament text applies directly to Christians as well.
- We know he is talking about Christians because he says at the end of v. 24, “...for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”
- In v. 25 he gives a description of Jesus to his audience, “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”
- We see Paul referencing the Suffering Servant that **Isiah 53** speaks of as well as highlighting Christ’s resurrection from the dead.
- It is faith in this Jesus, that leads to righteousness, no one nor nothing else.

## Next Week Study

### Romans 5:1-11