

# Romans 4:16-18 Commentary

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ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
<b>SIN</b>	<b>SALVATION</b>	<b>SANCTIFICATION</b>	<b>SOVEREIGNTY</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>
<b>NEED FOR SALVATION</b>	<b>WAY OF SALVATION</b>	<b>LIFE OF SALVATION</b>	<b>SCOPE OF SALVATION</b>	<b>SERVICE OF SALVATION</b>
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

**Romans 4:16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** dia touto ek pisteos, hina kata charin eis to einai ([PAN](#)) bebaian ten epaggelian panti to spermati, ou to ek tou nomou monon alla kai to ek pisteos Abraam os estin ([3SPA1](#)) pater panton hemon,

**Amplified:** Therefore, [inheriting] the promise is the outcome of faith and depends [entirely] on faith, in order that it might be given as an act of grace (unmerited favor), to make it stable and valid and guaranteed to all his descendants—not only to the devotees and adherents of the Law, but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, who is [thus] the father of us all. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV** That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring - not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

**NLT:** So that's why faith is the key! God's promise is given to us as a free gift. And we are certain to receive it, whether or not we follow Jewish customs, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. (NLT Revised 2004 - 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.)([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** The whole thing, then, is a matter of faith on man's part and generosity on God's. He gives the security of his own promise to all men who can be called "children of Abraham", i.e. both those who have lived in faith by the Law, and those who have exhibited a faith like that of Abraham. To whichever group we belong, Abraham is in a real sense our father, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** On account of this it is by faith, in order that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be something realized by all the offspring, not by that which is of the law only, but also by that which is of the faith of Abraham who is father of all of us;

**Young's Literal:** For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

**FOR THIS REASON IT IS BY FAITH THAT IT MIGHT BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH GRACE: dia touto ek pisteos hina kata charin:**

- Ro 3:24, 25, 26; 5:1; Gal 3:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,22+; Eph 2:5,8; Titus 3:7
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FAITH WORKS WITH GRACE

Yes, faith works with grace, but faith only works because of grace! ([Note](#))

**For this reason** - "because of the nature of law, and its inability to work anything but wrath." ([Denney](#)) Or since the Law brings wrath, not salvation, his conclusion is now stated.

**It** - What is "it?" In this context **IT** refers to the inheritance God promised to Abraham not on the basis of works (obedience to the law) but based on righteousness obtained by faith (Ro 4:13).

**Steven Cole** writes "The reason that this promised inheritance is **by faith** is so that it may be in **accordance with grace**. Paul explained this back in Ro 4:4-5, "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor ["favor" is the Greek word for "**grace**"], but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as

righteousness. The point is simple: if salvation comes to us as a wage that we deserve because of our good works, then it is not by **grace**, which is undeserved favor. God would owe it to us, and of course then we could boast in our own efforts which obtained it. Salvation would not be a gift, but a wage. But God only gives it as a free gift, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:27-31)." ([The Nature of Saving Faith Romans 4-16-22](#))

By **faith** - Literally "out of faith" (**pistis** - word study)

**Guzik** - Faith is related to grace in the same way works is related to law. Grace and law are the principles, and faith and works are the means by which we pursue those principles for our relationship with God. To speak technically, we are not saved by faith. We are saved by God's grace, and grace is appropriated by faith. **It is of faith:** Salvation is of faith, and nothing else. We can only receive salvation by the principle of grace through faith. Grace cannot be obtained through works, whether they be past, present, or promised because by definition grace is given without regard to anything in the one who receives it. ([Romans 4 Commentary](#))

**Justification is through faith alone.** That is to say, that the fulfillment of the promise is not according to man's merit, but to God's unmerited favor. The mention of **grace** indicates that there is no intrinsic merit in **faith**. The promise, faith and grace, are set in direct contrast to law, works and merit.

**Wuest** adds that **of faith** is "ablative of source, **out of faith as a source**. That is, the terms laid down by God as to how the inheritance, eternal life, is dispensed by God and appropriated by the sinner, are that the latter exercise **faith** rather than perform works. The channel through which eternal life is given is that of **faith**, and in that sense the channel becomes the source of the transaction whereby God gives eternal life. And salvation is channeled to the sinner thus in order that it can be by **grace**. If the sinner earned salvation by his works, salvation would not be by **grace**, would not be an unmerited gift given out of the spontaneous generosity of the heart of God. But since **faith** is the supplicant's hand outstretched for salvation, the latter can be a gift given in pure **grace**. And this is so adjusted also that salvation is available to both Jew and Gentile. The law was only given to the Jew, and if salvation could have been given on the basis of works, only the Jew could be saved, for the Gentile was never given the law. Abraham, Paul has shown, was saved before the ordinance of circumcision was given and thus before the Mosaic law was instituted. Thus, he becomes the spiritual father of both Jew and Gentile in that both are saved exactly like he by pure **faith** without the necessity of works as a preliminary requirement to salvation. (Word Studies) (Bolding added)

**In accordance with grace** - If God's promise had not been based on faith but on works, it would NOT have been in accord with grace. It would have been merited and that would conflict with grace which speaks of that which is not merited or earned.

**Trapp** - Paul was a great advancer of the grace of God, and abaser of man. For he knew that as wax and water cannot meet together, so neither can Christ and anything else in the work of man's salvation.

**Grace** ([5485](#)) (**charis**) emphasizes that this is a free gift from God and is not based on merit (cp Ro 3:24-note, Ep 2:5-note, Ep 2:8-note, Titus 3:7-note). The power of justification is God's great grace, not man's faith. Faith is the like the hand of a drowning man reaching out to grab the life preserver which God provides. The mystery of course is that God even gives us that faith and yet we have to personally exercise it by making a conscious, volitional choice. Is that a bit mysterious? Absolutely! Our God is an awesome God....and a mysterious God!

**THOUGHT** - Ephesians 2:8-9<sup>+</sup> makes it clear that **faith** is a gift from God, not because we deserve it, have earned it, or are worthy to have it. It is not from ourselves; it is from God. It is not obtained by our power or our free will. Faith is simply given to us by God, along with His grace and mercy, according to His holy plan and purpose, and because of that, He gets all the glory. (See full article [What does the Bible say about faith?](#))

**John Piper** asks "What is it that really, at bottom, guarantees the promise that you will be an heir? The answer is: God's grace. Your faith is essential, but the reason it's essential is that it is the only condition of the heart that accords with grace. And God's grace is the deepest foundation of our guarantee." (Click full sermon [The Faith - Grace - Certainty Connection](#)) (Bolding and color added for emphasis)

**Spurgeon** - Grace and faith are congruous, and will draw together in the same chariot, but grace and merit are contrary the one to the other and pull opposite ways, and therefore God has not chosen to yoke them together. He will not build with incongruous materials, or daub with untempered mortar. He will not make an image partly of gold and partly of clay, nor weave a linsey-woolsey garment: his work is all of a piece and all of grace.

**Pastor Ray Stedman** notes that in Romans 4:16, 17 we see faith in action...

**If law cannot achieve righteousness, what does faith do? First, the promise comes by it.** You actually obtain what you are desiring, this sense of being approved and loved and wanted and accepted before God himself. You are a part of his family and you are forgiven of all the past. All that is achieved by faith, not by seeking to earn it. The promise comes by faith. What works could not do, faith does. That is a fantastic

promise.

As we have already seen in Ro 4:13, the promise includes not only this personal self-worth before God, which Abraham achieved, but it also makes you the heir of all the world. In 1Corinthians 3:23, the Apostle Paul says, "All things are yours... and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's," {cf, 1Cor 3:22, 23 RSV}. The promise also says you will be indwelt, as Abraham was, with the Holy Spirit of God. Galatians 3+ makes clear that Abraham received that promise by faith, and we receive it the same way Abraham did (**Ed**: Ga 3:7, 8, 9, 29). So faith obtains the promise.

### **LAW AND GRACE**

**The Law condemns.**

**Grace enables.**

**The second thing that faith does is to introduce the principle of grace** Law and grace are opposed to one another in certain ways. They do not cancel each other out, they simply do two different things. We need both; we need law and we need grace. Do not ever say, "I am under grace, therefore I have no need for law." The Bible never takes that position. It is Law that helps you come to grace (Gal 3:24, 25+), and without it you never would come. But law and grace do not have the same functions. It is grace that lays hold of the promise.

**Now what is grace?** There are many ways to define it. I love the one that says it is enrichment that you don't deserve: **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense. It is all the richness of life -- love, joy, peace, and the fulfillment of the heart's longing -- all that enriches your life and that you do not deserve. It is given to you, therefore it is a gift. There is an old hymn that puts it well:

"Do this and live!" the Law demands,  
But gives me neither feet nor hands.  
A better word is "Grace doth bring."  
It bids me fly, but gives me wings.

**The Law condemns. Grace enables.** When grace comes in, it guarantees the promise. If you and I had to earn the standing that we have before God -- not only at the **beginning** of our Christian life but **every day** through it -- we would certainly fail somewhere along the line. If it depended upon us, somewhere we would blow it and lose the whole thing. But if it comes by grace, if it is purely a gift and it does not depend upon us at all but upon God alone, then it is **guaranteed** to us -- because He is not going to fail (**Ed**: cp Heb 6:16, 17-note, Heb 6:18-note, Heb 6:19-note). That is why Paul says, "**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.**" There are offspring of Abraham to whom this guarantee is made. We will see more of that in just a moment. ([The Faith of our Father](#)) (Bolding added)

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**Steven Cole** - In 1947 a rumor spread that the Ford Motor Company would give a Ford in exchange for every copper penny dated 1943. The rumor spread so fast that Ford offices throughout the country were jammed with thousands of requests for information. The U.S. mint also received a large volume of inquiries. It all turned out to be a hoax. The statistics of the mint show that in 1943 there were over one billion pennies minted from steel-zinc, but due to a copper shortage, the number of copper pennies was exactly zero. There has been a rumor abroad in the human race for centuries that entrance into heaven can be obtained by good works. But it's not true. The fact is, there are no works made on earth that are acceptable in heaven. All of our works are tainted by sin. The only righteousness that gains entrance to heaven is the righteousness of Jesus Christ graciously imputed to sinners who believe in Him (I adapted this illustration from Donald Grey Barnhouse, Let Me Illustrate [Revell], p. 356). Your eternal destiny depends on your understanding and personally believing the truth that Paul has been hammering on in Romans 4, that we are justified (declared righteous) by faith alone. We are not justified by works or by moral behavior, but rather by faith in the God who credits righteousness to the ungodly apart from works (Ro 4:1-8). This blessing is not based on religious rituals (Ro 4:9-12) or on keeping the Law, which only serves to condemn us (Ro 4:13-15). Rather, as Paul now shows, Saving faith is rooted in God's grace, it rests on God's promise, it revels in God's glory, and it relies on God's power. ([The Nature of Saving Faith Romans 4-16-22](#))

**IN ORDER THAT THE PROMISE MAY BE CERTAIN TO ALL THE DESCENDANTS NOT ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE LAW BUT ALSO TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM WHO IS THE FATHER OF US ALL**

- 2 Pet 1:10+
- Ro 9:8; Isa 51:2

- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In order that ([hina](#)) introduces a purpose clause, and should always prompt the question "For what purpose?" Or "What is the purpose?" See [terms of purpose or result](#)

Read the parallel passages in Hebrews:

Heb 6:13, 14, 15-note For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

Hebrews 6:16; 17-note For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,

He 6:18-note so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

He 6:19-note This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, , , ,

**Promise** (1860) (**epaggelia/epangelia** form **epi** = intensifier or upon + **aggéllō** = tell, declare) means an announcement upon and was primarily legal term denoting summons or a promise to do or give something. It is used only of the promises of God (except Acts 23:21) and refers to a thing promised, a gift graciously given and is not a pledge secured by negotiation.

**Barclay** informs us that "There are two Greek words which mean **promise**. **Huposchesis** means a promise which is entered into upon conditions. "I promise to do this if you promise to do that." **Epaggelia** means a promise made out of the goodness of someone's heart quite unconditionally. It is epaggelia that Paul uses of the promise of God. It is as if he is saying, "God is like a human father; he promises to love his children no matter what they do." True, he will love some of us with a love that makes him glad, and he will love some of us with a love that makes him sad; but in either case it is a love which will never let us go. It is dependent not on our merit but only on God's own generous heart." ([Romans 4 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Faith** was made a condition of the **promise**, that its fulfillment, apart from human merit, might be secured for the recipients. Had its fulfillment depended upon human works or merit, it could not have been assured or **certain**, because we would always wonder "how many works are enough?"

**Matthew Poole** wrote that if the promise "were of the law, it would be unsure and uncertain, because of man's weakness, who is not able to perform it."

To reiterate, if the promise were based on our works, we could never be certain it would be fulfilled, because we would never know when we had done enough "good works." And of course we could never do enough to merit God's favor nor earn salvation.

Steven Cole - If salvation were based on our good deeds, how could we ever know when we've done enough? As I pointed out in our last study, this is the problem with the Roman Catholic system of adding our works to faith in order to accumulate enough merit for heaven. When have you done enough service to the poor? When have you given enough money? When have you been honest enough? When have you demonstrated that your love for God is pure and fervent enough? When have you arrived at loving your neighbor as you in fact love yourself? If you base salvation on good works, you'll always be plagued with doubts.

**May be certain** (949) (**bebaios** from **bainō** = to walk) describes the promise which is (see below) like an legal guarantee and thus is a (stable) promise we can rely on even when our (unstable) feelings might cause us to do otherwise (see related snippet from Spurgeon's sermon below). Furthermore, the original Greek text places **certain** before **the promise** which adds emphasis to the assurance that this promise can be relied upon. No bank failures here, beloved!

**Vincent** adds that **bebaios** means "Stable, valid, something realized, the opposite of made of none effect, Romans 4:14."

In secular Greek **bebaios** meant fit to tread on (having a firm foundation). In classical Greek from the 5th cent. B.C. **bebaios** acquired the meaning of firm, durable, unshakeable, sure, reliable, certain; and in the legal sphere, valid, legal. **bebaios** conveys the idea of being certain on basis of being well established. The idea is of something that is firm, stable and thus something that can be relied upon or trusted in.

Strachan says that **bebaios** "has a legal sense. It is the legal guarantee, obtained by the buyer from the seller, to be gone back upon should a third party claim the thing."

In Greek commerce **bebaios** refers to what is legally guaranteed. In the Greek papyri it was used in a technical sense for a legal guarantee of the settlement of a business transaction.

**Of the Law** - This refers to Jews who have believed in Messiah, not all Jews. The point is that "the faith of Abraham is reproduced in all the justified, whether Gentile or Jew." ([Denney](#))

**Steven Cole** - When Paul mentions in verse 16, "those who are of the Law," he is referring to believing Jews, not to all Jews. If he meant all Jews, he would be contradicting what he has just said (4:15), that the Law brings about wrath. So he means that since the promise of becoming an heir of righteousness is by faith, it is available to all who believe. Gentiles do not need to keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved. Rather, Jews and Gentiles alike must believe in Jesus to be saved. ([Nature of Saving Faith Romans 4-16-22](#))

**Barclay** has an interesting note on the Law - **The trouble about law has always been that it can diagnose the malady but cannot effect a cure.** Law shows a man where he goes wrong, but does not help him to avoid going wrong. There is in fact, as Paul will later stress, a kind of terrible paradox in law. It is human nature that when a thing is forbidden it has a tendency to become desirable (**Ed:** Dear reader, can we not all say a sad "Amen!"). "Stolen fruits are sweetest." Law, therefore, can actually move a man to desire the very thing which it forbids (cp Ro 7:15-16). The essential complement of law is judgment, and, so long as a man lives in a religion whose dominant thought is law, he cannot see himself as anything other than a condemned criminal at the bar of God's justice. (cp Ro 3:19-20) Whenever law is introduced, transgression follows. No one can break a law which does not exist; and no one can be condemned for breaking a law of whose existence he was ignorant. If we introduce law and stop there, if we make religion solely a matter of obeying law, life consists of one long series of transgressions waiting to be punished. Think of law, think of transgression, and inevitably the next thought is wrath. Think of God in terms of law and you cannot do other than think of him in terms of outraged justice. Think of man in terms of law and you cannot do other than think of him as destined for the condemnation of God. So Paul sets before the Romans two ways. The one is a way in which a man seeks a right relationship with God through his own efforts. It is doomed to failure. The other is a way in which a man enters by faith into a relationship with God, which by God's grace already exists for him to come into in trust. ([Romans 4 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Of the faith of Abraham** - This refers to Gentiles who believe in Messiah. (cp Ro 4:11 note)

**Cole** - Paul says that faith (as opposed to Law or human performance) guarantees this promise. If salvation were based on our good deeds, how could we ever know when we've done enough? As I pointed out in our last study ([Religion Can't Save You](#)), this is the problem with the Roman Catholic system of adding our works to faith in order to accumulate enough merit for heaven. When have you done enough service to the poor? When have you given enough money? When have you been honest enough? When have you demonstrated that your love for God is pure and fervent enough? When have you arrived at loving your neighbor as you in fact love yourself? If you base salvation on good works, you'll always be plagued with doubts. And so we must all come to God with "the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Ro 4:16). This faith is rooted in God's gracious promise to declare righteous all who believe in Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sin. It is available to all people, without distinction. Perhaps, like the Jews in Paul's day, you come from a religious background. God must open your eyes to see that you are a guilty sinner who cannot earn salvation by your own efforts. If you respond to God's gracious promise by faith, He will credit the righteousness of Christ to your account. Or, perhaps like the Gentiles, you come from a pagan background. You have lived to pursue pleasure through sin. But if God opens your eyes to see that you are a guilty sinner and that He offers a full pardon to those who believe in Jesus' death as the payment for sin, He will credit Christ's righteousness to you the instant you believe in Jesus. The faith of Abraham guarantees the promise to all. ([Nature of Saving Faith Romans 4-16-22](#))

**Abraham** is the father not only of the Jews, physically speaking, but of all who are justified by faith, spiritually speaking.

Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. (Gal 3:7+).

... For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (**At conversion/regeneration we were "immersed into" the spiritual body of Christ, and He becomes our new spiritual identity as well as our new supernatural life** - Col 3:4-note, cp Jn 14:6; 2Co 4:10,11; 1Jn 4:9, 5:11,12, 2Ti 1:1-note) 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:26-29+)

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** has a sermon on this passage entitled [The Hold-Fasts of Faith](#) which he introduces with these comments...

Abraham had received an assurance from the Lord that he was to be the father of many nations. His faith in this promise underwent great trials. Where there is the sweet honey of promise, there the wasps of doubt will be gathered together. A promise calls for faith; but through our natural depravity, it awakens unbelief; and there is a struggle around the sacred promise, such as that represented in the prayer, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief."



Satan, with slimy Battery, decoys men into a belief of his lie; but the God of truth gives us his bare promise, and bids us believe it; and when questions suggest themselves, he does not relax his claim, but bids us still believe. True faith, as the work of God, is not a thing to be put down: it is a conquering grace, and makes a brave fight against wicked unbelief.

While doing so, faith has her eyes open, and she, in due season, spies out grounds of confidence. She looks at God himself; she considers the days of old; she remembers her own experience of the right hand of the Host High; and thus she lifts her eyes to the hills, whence cometh her help. When faith has discovered a helpful truth she makes immediate use of it as a holdfast, even as Abraham did in the case now before us.

The great difficulty with Abraham was death. Death was around him on every side. God had promised him life, and life more abundantly; for he was to be the father of many nations, and have a seed as many as the stars of heaven for multitude; but as to all possibility of his being a father, his body was now dead. He was a hundred years old, and withered with age: how could he become a father of nations? Sarah, also, as to being a mother, was practically dead, for she was ninety years old. How should she bear sons unto Abraham? Further on the Lord bade him, when Isaac was miraculously born, to offer him as a sacrifice, and Abraham was willing to do even that at God's command. He believed that in Isaac should his seed be called, and therefore he looked that God should "raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." The patriarch's faith settled down upon God's power to quicken the dead, and he found in that unquestioned truth a foundation for the firmest confidence. The truth of God's power to quicken the dead met all the difficulties of Abraham's position. He argued: What if my body be dead? God can quicken it. What if my wife be, in this matter, as one dead? By God's power she can receive strength. What if my son, when growing up, should be dead on the altar? He that made me the promise can raise him up from the dead; for what he has promised he is able to perform. Abraham's faith was a nail fastened in a sure place. He knew Jehovah as "God, who quickeneth the dead"; and that resurrection word was, to his faith, a shout of victory. (Read the full message - [The Hold-Fasts of Faith](#))

**Romans 4:17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, Who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** kathos gegraptai (3SRPI) [hoti](#) Patera pollon [ethnon](#) tetheika (1SRAI) se} katenanti ou episteusen (3SAAI) [Theou](#) tou zoopoiontos (PAPMSG) tou [s](#) nekrou [s](#) kai kalounto [s](#) (PAPMSG) ta me onta (PAPNPA) [os](#) onta; (PAPNPA)

**Amplified:** 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 brings into existence what didn't exist before. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NET** (as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"). He is our father in the presence of God Whom he believed – the God Who makes the dead alive and summons the things that do not yet exist as though they already do.

**NLT:** 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 brings into existence what didn't exist before. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** as the scripture says: 'I have made you a father of many nations'. This faith is valid because of the existence of God himself, who can make the dead live, and speak his Word to those who are yet unborn. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** even as it stands written, A father of many nations I have established you permanently, before Him whom he believed, before God who makes alive those who are dead and calls the things that are not in existence as being in existence;

**Young's Literal:** (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

**AS IT IS WRITTEN A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU: kathos gegraptai (3SRPI) hoti patera pollon ethnon**

- Ge 17:4,5,16,20; Ge 25:1-34; 28:3; Heb 11:12
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ABRAHAM'S FATHERHOOD CONFIRMED

**Denney** - Romans 4:16-22. The Apostle can now develop, without further interruption or digression, his idea of the representative (and therefore universal) character of Abraham's justification. The New Testament cannot be said to subvert the Old if the method of justification is the same under both. Nay, it establishes the Old (Romans 3:31). This is the point which is enforced in the closing verses of chap. 4.

**As it is written** - Paul appeals to the witness of the OT to support his statement regarding Abraham's fatherhood (Ro 4:16 "Abraham... the father of us all"), quoting Moses' " "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations." (Gen 17:5, cp Ge 12:1-3+, Ge 13:16, Ge 15:5+) Are you familiar enough with the OT to quote from it to present the Gospel? Remember that Paul clearly stated that "the Scripture (this term in NT virtually always refers to the OT Scripture), foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the Gospel beforehand** to Abraham, [saying], "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU." (Gal 3:8+)

**Written** (1125) (**grapho**) is in the **perfect tense** indicating that it was written in the past and stands in effect, speaking of the permanence (and trustworthiness) of God's holy word (cp Jesus' affirmation in Mt 24:35, Mk 13:31, Lk 21:33+)

**A father of many nations** - How could Abraham be **a father of many nations**? Paul explains that it was ultimately through His offspring, the Messiah, writing " Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as [referring] to many, but [rather] to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (Gal 3:16+)

**I have made you** - The **perfect tense** indicates Abraham had at a specific point in time been made the **father of many nations** and that this promise was permanent.

**Made** (5087) (**tithemi**) literally means to place or put but here conveys the sense of to appoint as in Luke 10:1 (cp Acts 10:42, 13:48, Jn 15:16). Abraham was assigned to a particular role and still has that assigned role (**father of many nations**). **Made** is in the in the **perfect tense** which speaks of the permanence of this designation and ultimately attests to immutability (unchangeable nature) of God and His eternal faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham.

**IN THE SIGHT OF HIM WHOM HE BELIEVED, EVEN GOD, WHO GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD AND CALLS INTO BEING THAT WHICH DOES NOT EXIST: katenanti ou episteusen (3SAAL) theou tou zoopoiontos (PAPMSG) tous nekrous kai kalountos (PAPMSG) ta me onta (PAPNPA) os onta (PAPNPA):**

- Ro 4:2; 8:11; Mt 3:9; Jn 5:21,25; 6:63; 1Cor 15:45; Eph 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; 1Ti 6:13
- Ro 8:29,30; 9:26; Isa 43:6; 44:7; 49:12; 55:12; Acts 15:18; 1Cor 1:28; Heb 11:7; 1Pet 2:10; 2Pet 3:8
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**In the sight of Him whom he believed** - Abraham believed God. Faith as defined in Abraham's experience (Ro 4:18, 19, 21) was not an intellectual exercise nor was it passive assent to what God had said but it was a total reliance and dependence by Abraham on God's Word of promise. The key is the object of faith. Don't miss that truth here. Next, he shows us the obstacles to faith. And then he tells us the objectives of faith -- where faith will bring us. God is the object. The quality of your faith depends upon the object in which that faith has placed its trust. The amount of faith you have has nothing to do with it. That is why Jesus told us that even if we have a little tiny faith, like a grain of mustard seed, it will work. The object of your faith is the important thing.

**Believed** (4100)(**pisteuo**) in the aorist tense speaks of a past historical event. Note that Pisteuo is a key word in Romans 4, especially the last section (used in Ro 4:3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24) Abraham considered God's Word of promise to be true and therefore worthy of his wholehearted trust. Abraham had a firm conviction as to the goodness of God and of His omnipotence to bring about what He had promised. The first use of pisteuo in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** (Greek translation of the OT Hebrew) is found in Genesis 15:6 where "Abraham believed (Hebrews = 'aman; Lxx = pisteuo) in the LORD and He (the LORD) reckoned to him as righteousness." In short, Abraham was saved "by grace... through faith; and that not of (himself), (it was) the gift of God; not as a result of (Abraham's) works (Ed: of which Ishmael, the child of the flesh [Gal 4:23+], would have been an example), that no one



should boast." (Eph 2:8-9-note).

**Spurgeon** - What a God we trust in — a God who quickens the dead. We have no faith unless we believe in such a God as this. We shall need such a God in order to bring us safely to his right hand at last.

**Who gives life to the dead** - In context, Paul refers to God's promise to Abraham (and Sarah) to bring forth life from her aged, "dead" womb, and so Isaac was conceived in her old age. Had he not been born as promised, the covenant promise of being a father to many nations could not have been fulfilled. One might ask "But what about Ishmael? He was Abraham's offspring." Yes, but he was not born of Sarah, but from the handmaid Hagar. And so Abraham believed God would keep His promise. The writer of Hebrews explains that "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, **even beyond the proper time of life**, since she considered Him faithful who had promised (**Ed**: So not only did Abraham have faith, but Sarah also had faith); therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, [as many descendants] **AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.** (Heb 11:11-12-note) And even as God gave a physical life (Isaac, the son of promise), so too He gives spiritual life to all who believe in His Son, Paul testifying that "when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." (Col 2:13-note)

**Calls into being that which does not exist** - Isaac did not exist but God called him. We see the spiritual counterpart in Romans 8 where Paul says "whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these **He also called; and whom He called**, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." (Ro 8:30-31-note)

**Barclay** - This passage turns Paul's thoughts to another outstanding example of Abraham's willingness to take God at his word. The promise that all families of the earth would be blessed in his descendants was given to Abraham when he was an old man. His wife, Sarah, had always been childless; and now, when he was one hundred years old and she was ninety (Genesis 17:17), there came the promise that a son would be born to them. It seemed, on the face of it, beyond all belief and beyond all hope of fulfilment, for he was long past the age of begetting and she long past the age of bearing a son. Yet, once again, Abraham took God at his word and once again it was this faith that was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. ([Romans 4 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Steven Cole** - In Genesis 17, Abraham was 99 years old. Although God had promised to give him a son through Sarah almost 25 years before, they still had no son. Now, the human prospects of having a son seemed impossible. Abraham was almost 100 and Sarah was about 90. She had been barren all her life and now both of them were past the age of conceiving a child. At this point, the Lord appeared to Abraham and promised to establish His covenant with him, which included making him the father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4). In light of this, God gave Abram (his name up to this point, which means "exalted father") a new name, Abraham, which means, "the father of a multitude." Then (in Genesis) the citation that is in our text follows (from the LXX), "**A father of many nations I have made you.**" As Abraham stood there before God, although the promise was outside of the realm of human possibility, **Abraham believed** in God, whom Paul here (Ro 4:17) describes as the one "who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist." That faith was not without its struggles, as we will see. But the point is, **Abraham believed God's promise, even though the fulfillment of it was humanly impossible and seemed very unlikely. To believe in God's promise is the same as believing in God's person.** If I promise to do something for you, but you don't believe my promise, in effect you're calling me a liar. You're saying that I won't do what I've promised. If God promises something and we refuse to believe it, we've called God a liar! Paul is emphasizing God's promise (Ro 4:13, 14, 16, 20; the verb is in Ro 4:21). **Leon Morris** writes (The Epistle to the Romans Apollos/Eerdmans], p. 212), "Abraham had nothing going for him except the promise of God. But for the man of faith that was enough." **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** puts it (Romans: Atonement and Justification [Zondervan], p. 211), Abraham believed "the bare Word of God" and "nothing else whatsoever." He adds, "Faith is content with the bare Word of God, because He is God." It's easy to sit here and think, "Well, I'd believe God, too, if He appeared to me as He did to Abraham and promised me something." But, would we? The promise flew in the face of every human consideration. First, Sarah, who had been barren all of her life, had now gone through menopause. And Abraham was 100. So when God told him that he would be the father of a multitude of nations and that Sarah would be the mother of nations, Abraham laughed and asked God that Ishmael might be the heir. But God insisted that the heir would come through Sarah (Gen. 17:15-19). Then there was this embarrassing matter of changing his name. Abram was embarrassing enough. When people met him they would probably ask, "Abram, 'exalted father,' huh? How many children do you have?" Abram would look down, clear his throat and say, "One." He'd probably not explain that the one son was not through his wife, but through her servant. Abram probably saw a lot of people roll their eyes as they thought, "Exalted father, and he's 99 and only has one child? Yeah, sure!" But now, after God appears to him, the next day Abram announces, "I have a new name. God gave it to me last night." Everyone is waiting, thinking, "Maybe he's finally going to take a name that reflects reality!" Then Abram says, "My new name is **Abraham, father of a multitude!**" Maybe some of his servants turned their backs quickly and put their hands over their mouths to suppress their laughter. They thought, "The old man is losing it!" But Abraham believed God and His promise, even though it was humanly impossible ever to be fulfilled. We look back in history and can see how the promise was fulfilled literally through the many descendants of Isaac and Jacob, Ishmael and Esau, and through Abraham's sons through Keturah (Ge 25:1-4).

But the promise has been fulfilled even more so through the spiritual descendants of the Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, with the Gospel going around the world to every nation. But Abraham didn't live to see any of this. He "died in faith, without receiving the promises" (Heb. 11:13). **John Calvin** perceptively observes (Calvin's Commentaries [Baker], on Ro 1:20, p. 180): "All things around us are in opposition to the promises of God: He promises immortality; we are surrounded with mortality and corruption: He declares that He counts us just; we are covered with sins: He testifies that He is propitious and kind to us; outward judgments threaten his wrath. What then is to be done? We must with closed eyes pass by ourselves and all things connected with us, that nothing may hinder or prevent us from believing that God is true." Before we leave this point, let's apply it to God's promise of salvation. He promises to justify and give eternal life to the ungodly person who believes in Jesus. Where do we learn about this promise? Our only source is the Word of God. You won't learn how to have eternal life by studying nature. You won't deduce it from philosophy or logic. You won't learn it by studying human behavior. Rather, the only source is the written Word of God, conveyed to us by the apostles and prophets. Do you believe it? Have you put your trust for eternal life in God's promise as recorded in His Word? If not, you're calling God a liar! **Another application** of this is: When you talk to people about the Gospel, cite God's Word and encourage people to read it, especially the Gospel of John. John tells us that he wrote his gospel (John 20:31), "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). The Word is powerful to save sinners (James 1:18). ([The Nature of Saving Faith Romans 4-16-22](#))

**Ray Stedman** gives this illustration of faith and the object of one's faith: "You may leave this service this morning and go out to the parking lot with the utmost faith that when you get into your car and drive down the driveway and into the street your car is going to work just as it was working when you parked it there this morning. But maybe, while we were sitting here this morning, someone took off the hubcaps and removed the lug bolts from the front wheels of your car, and then put the hubcaps back on so you cannot see any difference. That may have happened. And though you have the utmost confidence that your car is going to work properly, when you get onto the street and turn the corner, sooner or later the front wheels are going to fall off. You might end up dead -- killed by faith! On the other hand, some of you who have been worried a bit by what I have just said may go out to your car after this service and take off the hubcaps and examine the lug bolts to make sure they are there. And even then, not too confidently, you may start your car and drive it rather timidly down the driveway, still thinking that something might go wrong and it may fall apart. But if no one has tampered with it, you are perfectly safe -- even though you have little faith -- because the object of your faith is strong. That is why you should not talk about your faith; talk instead about the God in whom your faith is fixed!" (Read the full sermon [The Faith of our Father](#))

Abraham looked at the One Who made the promise, at God Himself. It is not a question of how little or how big one's faith is. The ultimate question is how big is one's God? He is the God Who makes dead things live, Who takes things that once were alive, vibrant, and full of life, but have died and become hopeless, and brings them to life again. He is the God Who "calls things that are not, as though they were." He calls into existence the things that do not exist. God alone can make the dead to live

Deut 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1 Sa 2:6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

2 Ki 5:7 And it came about when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending [word] to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

Ps 68:20 God is to us a God of deliverances; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.

Faith in God as the One Who brings life out of death enabled Abraham to look forward with assurance to an innumerable seed. This is the essence of Biblical **hope** - not a "hope so" but a "**hope sure!**".

**MacArthur** - This is another reference to the forensic nature of justification. God can declare believing sinners to be righteous even though they are not, by imputing His righteousness to them, just as God made or declared Jesus "sin" and punished Him, though He was not a sinner. (2Cor 5:21-note, Ro 8:2-4+)

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**World Records** - (Kent Hughes writes) One of the favorite books around our house is the Guinness Book of World Records. It has been on our shelf for years. Now and then I see one of my boys reading it to stock up on trivia. How much did the heaviest man weigh? (1,069 pounds.) How tall was the tallest man of modern times? (8'11". He wore a size 37AA shoe.) What is the world's record for bearing children? (Sixty-nine. The record was set by a Russian peasant woman who achieved great honor in her country. She had eight sets of twins, seven sets of triplets, and four sets of quads.) This is terribly important information for the trivia buff, hence our valued dog-eared copy! But, alas, I did find an error in the esteemed Guinness Book because it states that the oldest mother on record gave birth in October 1956 at the age of fifty-seven, thus setting the world record. However, this is entirely wrong! The last part of Romans 4 focuses on the events surrounding the true world record for the oldest mother and the world-changing

implications of that birth... In 4:17–25 Paul explains the nature of true faith by describing what went on inside Abraham relative to the miraculous, world-record-setting birth of Isaac. It is as if Paul was able to unfasten the wing nuts holding down the top of Abraham's head and give us an intimate look at the inner workings of this great man of faith. (Hughes, R. K. Romans : Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word).

**Romans 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** os par' elpida ep' elpidi episteusen ([3SAAI](#)) eis to genesthai ([AMN](#)) auton patera pollon [ethnon](#) kata to eiremenon, ([RPPNSA](#)) [houtos](#) estai ([3SFMI](#)) to sperma sou;

**Amplified:** [For Abraham, human reason for] hope being gone, hoped in faith that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been promised, So [numberless] shall your descendants be. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**BBE:** Who without reason for hope, in faith went on hoping, so that he became the father of a number of nations, as it had been said, So will your seed be.

**HCSB** Against hope, with hope he believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what had been spoken: So will your descendants be.

**NET:** Against hope Abraham believed in hope with the result that he became the father of many nations according to the pronouncement, "so will your descendants be."

**NJB** Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed that he was to become father of many nations in fulfilment of the promise: Just so will your descendants be.

**NLT:** Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping -- believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Abraham, when hope was dead within him, went on hoping in faith, believing that he would become "the father of many nations". He relied on the word of God which definitely referred to 'your descendants'. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** who, being beyond hope, upon the basis of hope believed, in order that he might become father of many nations, according to that which has been spoken with finality, In this manner will your offspring be

**Young's Literal:** In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

**IN HOPE AGAINST HOPE HE BELIEVED: hos par elpida ep elpidi episteusen (3SAAI):**

- Ro 4:19; 5:5; 8:24; Ru 1:11, 12, 13; Pr 13:12; Ezek 37:11; Mk 5:35,36; Lu 1:18; Acts 27:25
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**In hope against hope** - From the human perspective, it seemed impossible (Ro 4:19, Ge 17:5). Having shown that justification is through faith not works (Ro 4:1-8), and that it is by grace, not the keeping of law (Ro 4:9-17), Paul now concludes by showing that it results from divine power, not human effort (Ro 4:18-25).

**Denney** explains "Abraham's faith (is being) described. It was both contrary to hope (as far as nature could give hope), and rested on hope (that God could do what nature could not)." ([Romans 4 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Webster** actually has a separate entry for "**hope against hope**" which it defines as "*to hope without any basis for expecting fulfillment*", not exactly how the Bible would define it!

**Hope (1680)(elpis)** is described by an absolute assurance of future good. Abraham was certain that God would do good to him and specifically that He would fulfill His promise. Notice how this sense of "hope" overlaps with the concept of faith. Both have to do with something one cannot yet see or possess.

Some Biblical examples of **"hope against hope"** (Ezek 37:11 Mk 5:35,36, Lu 1 :18)

Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' (Ezekiel 37:11)

While He was still speaking, they came<sup>^</sup> from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" 36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe." (Mark 5:35-36)

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." (Luke 1:18)

**He believed** ([4100](#))(**pisteuo**) is a key truth in the last section (used in Ro 4:3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24)

**Trapp** - It is the nature of faith to believe God upon his bare word; and that against sense in things invisible, against reason in things incredible: sense corrects imagination, reason corrects sense, but faith corrects both. It will not be, saith sense; it cannot be, saith reason; it both can and will be, saith faith, for I have a promise for it.

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**A STORY ABOUT HOPE from Our Daily Bread** - Her eyes saw the leafless trees in winter, but because her mind was clouded by Alzheimer's disease she thought the trees were dead. "Someone should cut down those trees," she would repeat day after day. "They aren't coming back." How often we see our "leafless" circumstances with a mind clouded by past experience and disappointment. We may look at a friendship, a marriage, a family feud, and say to ourselves, "Cut it down. Sever the tie. Make the break. It's hopeless!" But God wants us to see with hope because of His presence and power. We can't bring life to these seemingly impossible situations, but He can. What leafless, lifeless situation do you see today? Don't believe everything your mind tells you about it. Instead, ask God for eyes of faith that see with hope. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our physical eyes do not always see  
The work God is doing today,  
But hope in God's Word will surely bear fruit,  
Though often there is a delay. --Hess

**Hope, like an anchor, is fixed on the unseen.**

**IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT BECOME A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH HAD BEEN SPOKEN SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE: eis to genesthai (AMN) auton patera pollon ethnon kata to eiremenon houtos estai (3SFMI) to sperma sou:**

- Ro 4:17 Ge 17:5
- Romans 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**In order that** - Whenever you encounter this phrase, pause and ponder and query, asking at least "What is Paul explaining?" Here he explains the Divine purpose which was that he might become the spiritual father of all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles.

**According to that which had been spoken** - As in Ge 15:5 and Ge 17:5 = "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you **the father of a multitude of nations.**"

Paul quotes the **Septuagint (LXX)** (rather than Hebrew) from Ge 15:5 ("And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**"). The OT passage helps us interpret "**so shall...**" - his descendants shall be as the stars of heaven.

**Ray Stedman sums up this section** - Whenever you have faith or are called to exercise faith, there are obstacles. For example, Abraham faced hopeless circumstances (Ro 4:19, 20) That is, the promise itself was the second obstacle to faith because it had such staggering possibilities. It was too good to be true! It was beyond belief that God would make him heir of all the world and give him a standing before God that he didn't deserve. It was too good to be true, so it was an obstacle to faith. Isn't that interesting? There are two obstacles to faith: hopeless circumstances and staggering possibilities. Let us see what Abraham did with them: **What were the hopeless circumstances Abraham faced?** Paul tells us there were two: Abraham's body and Sarah's womb. Abraham's body was a 100 years old and was sexually dead. The promise of God hung on the fact that there must be a child born to Abraham and Sarah. Through that child would come all the descendants from the nations of the world that would be blessed by Abraham.

And, more important yet, through that child would come the Seed, which was Jesus Christ, whom Abraham saw and rejoiced in, and who would make possible the gift of righteousness. Everything hung on the birth of a baby. Abraham looked at the circumstances and saw his hundred-year-old body and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. She was ninety years old and had never had a baby. They had been trying for years and years, and no baby had come. These were the hopeless circumstances. Now, here is the beauty of Abraham's faith. Paul says that he faced the facts. In this translation it says that "without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact..." Many of us think that faith is evading the facts -- escapism, some kind of dreamy idealism that never looks at facts, a kind of unrealistic adventuring in which you hope everything is going to work out. It is never that! **Abraham looked at the facts. He faced them head-on.** He considered his dead body and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. He sat and thought about it, and he saw how hopeless the situation was. There was no chance at all! His body was a hundred years old and Sarah's womb was ninety years old and had never borne children. She was far past the age of childbearing. It was hopeless. **There was no hope, yet Abraham believed in hope. How? Because when he looked at his dead body he remembered that he had a God who raises the dead. And when he thought about Sarah's barren womb, he remembered that he had a God who calls into existence the things that do not exist. That would take care of everything, wouldn't it? And so, against all hope, he believed in hope, because of the God in whom his faith was fixed.** Then he did one other thing. It is not mentioned here. He told Sarah what God said. He came in and she said, "Well, dear, your eggs are ready. What have you been doing?" He said, "Oh, I've been having devotions, and what a wonderful time I had! God told me something." She said, "Well, what was it?" Abraham said, "Well, I don't really know how to put this." "What do you mean?" Sarah asked. "Well," he said, "you'd better sit down. God told me something very startling that is going to happen to us." "That's interesting!" she said. "What is it?" Then, like a man, he just blurted it out. "You're going to have a baby!" And Sarah said, "What?" Abraham said, "That's what God said. You're going to have a baby." "What, me?" "Yes, you!" "Why, how can it be? Abraham, did you stop at the wine shop on your way home this morning?" And Sarah laughed. It says so in Genesis. Sarah laughed, "Ha! God said that I'm going to have a baby?" {cf, Ge 18:12}. But then Sarah did something else. God had said something to Abraham that applied to Sarah and Abraham must have told her. He said: **"Is there anything too difficult for God?"** {cf, Ge18:14}. When God says that He will do something, is there anything too difficult for God? And you know, when Sarah began to feel pregnant, her faith laid hold of that promise again. And when the baby came, Sarah was a woman of faith, because she had been thinking of the God for whom nothing is too difficult. There is the faith of Abraham. How did he deal with these staggering possibilities? It is unbelievable that all nations should be blessed through them. He would be heir of the world, he would be called the friend of God. Could it be? But Abraham remembered that he had a God who gives life to the dead and a God who calls into existence things that do not exist. And so he believed. ([The Faith of our Father - Romans 4-13-25 - RayStedman.org](http://RayStedman.org))