

(16) 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, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations" --- in the presence of God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

(18) In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

(20) No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for our also. It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Think on These Things

- 1) In some translations, v.16 begins with "Therefore" --- requiring us to remember and apply the previous words (of chapter 4, last week's lesson). These point out that Abraham is, by faith, the father of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised. According to this verse, why does salvation depend on faith?

- 2) To whom is the promise of salvation guaranteed?

- 3) Abraham, at age 75, was promised an heir to inherit God's promise (Genesis 12:4-7). And God kept His promise --- about 25 years later!! (In the interim, Abraham fathered a child at age 86 with Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, at Sarah's prompting – Genesis 16:15-16.) God came to Abraham at age 99 to confirm his "heir" would come from Sarah – Genesis 17:1-2, 17-22. What was the challenge to Abraham's faith as you read verses 18-19 above? Do you remember Sarah's response (Genesis 18:9-15)?

- 4) Instead of becoming “weak” in his faith by doubting God’s promise due to his & Sarah’s physical realities (v.19), what does the scripture say happened to his faith (v.20)? Why do you think this happened?

- 5) Do you now understand how deep the faith of Abraham was? Do you have faith like this? Are you holding onto a promise from God that --- years later --- remains unfulfilled? If yes, would you be willing to share it with the class?

- 6) Why was Jesus delivered up to death? Why did the Father raise Him up?

People and situations I want to pray for this week: