

Romans

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Romans 4:18-25



Vss. 18-22

- For our purposes we had to find a break in this passage due to the length of Paul's thought. In truth it is one piece and to understand the remainder of Ch. 4 we must pick up at verse 17.
- Our God is He who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. Truly these are consistent themes in Scripture as God revealed Himself to His people. In Genesis 1, God simply spoke and all that exists, the earth and sun and moon and stars, came into being. The Latin phrase is Ex Nihilo: "from or out of **nothing**". Here with Abraham, the nation of Israel did not exist nor did a race of people known as Jews. God was using Abraham to create something out of nothing. Later with Moses and Joshua, there was no dry land to cross either through the Red Sea or the Jordan River, and then there was. In Ezekiel, God showed the prophet a valley littered with dry white bones and asked the prophet, "Can these bones live?" (Ezekiel 37:3). And over the next few verses, as the prophet spoke exactly what the Lord directed him to say, the dry bones did live. And time and again in the gospels Jesus raises people from the dead, waiting four days with Lazarus so that everyone knew the man was really dead.
- This is the kind of faith Paul is describing in Abraham and pointing out what kind of faith we are to have. "In hope against hope" we are to believe, just as Abraham did.
- So often our hope comes with a tone of desperation. JB Phillips, who did a marvelous translation of the New Testament, once wrote a book entitled, "Your God is Too Small!" where he addressed how wrong it is for followers of a dead, then risen, Savior should hope out of desperation without any real confidence at all. So many churches fail and close for no other reason than their people pessimistically hoping that things would change rather than fully believing in a great God and like Abraham **acting** on that belief and hoping for better days with full confidence that nothing is impossible with God.
- In verses 18-22 Paul moves to the story of the birth of Isaac. God had promised Abraham that he would be the "father of many nations". But Abraham had aged to 100 and Sarah was 90 (Genesis 17:17) and yet, again, with God all things are possible. Paul says that at that age

Abraham was “as good as dead”, but yet “he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God”, **confident** in the hope that what God promises, He is able to do. This is the perfect example of what Paul said to the Corinthians about walking by faith and not by sight, so “it was also credited to him as righteousness” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Vss. 23-25

- Such belief, belief when your common sense and what you see and hear tell you to not believe and to not have hope, is credited as righteousness, not for Abraham only but for us also, because we are people who believe that a man who died by crucifixion 2000 years ago, rose from the grave three days later and was on earth for 40 days after that, is still alive today, both sitting at the right hand of God and present with us here through His Holy Spirit and by believing in Him we will have eternal life with Him forever and will have a rich and abundant life here for the rest of our days on earth! Crazy right? Yes, “to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).
- Jesus was “delivered over”, crucified and put to death, for our sins. But He was raised for our justification, to make us right so that we may live righteous as Christ lived. All it takes to live that life is to believe and have hope when everything around us tells us there is no hope...to walk by faith and not by sight...and God will do the rest.