

# Promise of God

Romans 4:20-25



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## **FOCAL Read Responsively** Romans 4:20-25

{Abraham} staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; **(21) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (22) And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. (23) Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; (24) But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (25) Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.**<sup>KJV</sup>

**Introduction** Do you believe in the promises of God? Think carefully before you answer that question.

Abraham's daddy was Terah - yet you never hear anything of note when you hear the name “Terah”. He was a man who lived and died, and no more influenced his world than a hand dipped in the Atlantic would change that vast ocean. Terah and his wife had three children. He thought, I suppose, that he was on top of the world then when tragedy struck. His youngest son Haran died, and when he died Terah felt part of his heart die with him. Yes, Haran left him a fine grandson named Lot, but oh, how he missed Haran! Terah did love his other sons Abram and Nahor, but Abram married a barren woman. Surely the gods of Babylon that he worshiped would hear his prayers and change his life **(Joshua 24:2)**. Terah packed up his family and moved from ancient Babylon to a place in Canaan called Charan – a parched, mountainous place **(Genesis 11:31)**. The

false gods of Babylon never heard his prayers. His son Abram never bore him a grandson, and he lived out his years – all 205 of them - **(Genesis 11:32)** in relative obscurity.

Abraham has a name that is honored among Christians, Jews, and even Muslims. Why should one displaced Babylonian named Abraham have so effected this world, when his daddy Terah died in relative obscurity? The key is that Abraham had faith in the promise and provision of the One True God.

We have all seen, been in, and waited on elevators. An elevator exists to take you from one floor to the next in large buildings. In certain cities hundreds of apartments are stacked, floor upon floor, in skyscrapers. You can get on the elevator and reach nearly every floor in the building *except* the penthouse. If you want to get in the penthouse you need a special key that will allow the elevator to reach that place of privilege. You must have the key.

People are all looking for the elevator to a better and higher floor in life. Everyone wants to find the key to the penthouse, the very highest life possible. Some people think that the key to a successful life lies in money, so they work and work until the day they die. Others think that a big family will be a greater blessing. Yet others think that the elevator that will lift them up is a new place to be. Terah tried all of these elevators. He tried money – he was a very rich and successful herdsman. He tried a large family – but Abraham his son was childless and Haran dead. Terah moved to Canaan, thinking that his “luck” would change. Terah's life never changed for

the best because he kept trying the wrong key in the elevator lock. On the other hand Abraham his son **“staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:20-21)**. He heard the One True God call him to salvation and, believing in Him, he was saved. Jesus said **“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56)**. Abraham believed the call of God, responded to that call, and was saved. Abraham had highs and lows in his life, but whether up or down he kept looking UP. He kept his eyes on the Lord Who loved Him and Who gave Himself for Him. The Bible calls **Abraham the father of faith and the father of us all (Romans 4:16)**. He is the pattern, the mirror, the paragon of faith. As Abraham was saved so are all of God's children saved. God established a template for salvation in Abraham that has not been voided even unto this day. Abraham believed the promise of God and, stepping forth in faith, the righteousness of God was credited to his life. God will not save any person on the basis of their works. We must, like Abraham, cast ourselves fully upon God's Grace, believing that He will keep His promise and save us. The Lord must empty us of self and pride before He can do any great work in us. **The first emptying of pride comes at the point of salvation**. Are you willing to admit that you are a sinner, lost and undone, as the Scripture has said **(Romans 3:23)**? Are you willing to rest on God's promise that He has provided the perfect and only Way of Salvation in the Person of Jesus Christ **(John 14:6)**? Are you willing – like the Publican in

Jesus' parable (**Luke 18:13**) to admit your defeat in righteous, to cry out to God in the Name of Jesus “**God be merciful to me a sinner**”? Are you willing to put down all your gods and goddesses and turn to the Only True God, trust in Him and Him alone for salvation? If so, dear one, you have the key to God's elevator. You are prepared to see Him face to face one day in that sweet and beautiful place called Heaven. The way of Terah leads only to disappointment and judgment. The way of Abraham is the Way of Faith. May God draw you to Him with His Word and His Spirit.

### **Saving Faith Believes In The Person of God**

**FOCAL** Romans 4:20 **{Abraham} staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

The difference between Terah and Abraham was that one “believed in a god” whereas the other “believed in The True God”. Many people believe in God. If you ask most of the people in any given city today you will find that most believe in God. Yet the Scripture says:

**James 2:19** **Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.**

To say “I believe in God” is fine. **Thou doest well**. But the devils, the fallen angels who rebelled against God, they **believe and tremble** for they know the person of

God. God is immense – awesome – everywhere – and able to do that which He has promised.

We are told that Abraham “**staggered not at the promise of God**”. The words **staggered not**<sup>1</sup> is the Greek **διακρίνω**, *diakrinō*, (pronounced *dee-ak-ree'-no*), which means “**to judge or weigh between two things, to debate two points of view**”. Abraham had two things placed before him: he had the promise of God and he had the reality of his wife's barren state. He could have wasted his time by *pondering the promise given* – that's what **diakrino** means. He could have thought, “Well, that's what God said – BUT”. He could have, as **Adam and Eve** did, *begin to question the Eternal Mind of God*. He could have debated God. But saving faith made Abraham understand that **what God has promised, this He will do**. Abraham believed that God is able and acted on that belief.

**If you understand the Person of God then you will trust the promise of God**. Abraham rejected the gods of his culture and believed on the One True God. The God Whose name is Holy, Jehovah-jireh will provide what He has promised. When God makes a promise then God expects us to believe it. He is able.

**Abraham was sexually dead, as was Sarah, but he believed that God would fulfill His promises**. God is

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<sup>1</sup> Aorist Passive Indicative of G1252, **διακρίνω**, *diakrinō*, *dee-ak-ree'-no*, From G1223 and G2919; to *separate thoroughly*, that is, (literally and reflexively) to *withdraw* from, or (by implication) *oppose*; figuratively to *discriminate* (by implication *decide*), or (reflexively) *hesitate*: - contend, make (to) differ (-ence), discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver.

able to raise the dead – He has proven this time and time again. God told Abraham “**I will make of you a mighty nation, and from you all the nations of the world will be blessed**”. Our context tells us:

**Context** Romans 4:13 **For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

The promise that God made to Abraham was not based on *his ability*. Abraham was dead – sexually dead – and could not have children. The Mosaic Law was not yet given, so the Law had nothing to do with the fulfillment of the promise. The rite of circumcision was *not yet instituted*, so no ritual of law was necessary for the fulfillment of the promise. God just expected Abraham to **believe in Him Who is able to do what He had promised**. Abraham **staggered not at the promise of God**. He heard God's promise, considered God able, then cast himself on that pillow of faith!

Oh, how often have we destroyed ourselves or lost a great blessing by questioning Providence! How many souls are now, like **the rich man who knew Lazarus (Luke 16:23)**, **lifting up their eyes in hell looking for relief, begging for a cool drop of water**. How many have heard God's pronouncement that “**all have sinned and come short**” but have turned away, weighing the present lives and morality against the judgment of Almighty God. Oh dear friends, too many people allow pride and self determination to elevate them high above

(at least in their minds) the God Who is called **El Shaddai**, the God Who provides our needs.

**Illustrate** You are adrift in a lifeboat, and at hand you have a teaspoon and an outboard motor. Will you, for pride's sake, use the teaspoon to row to shore while refusing the motor? How foolish! Yet this picture is no more foolish than the person who will reject the promise of God while clinging to the idea that “I can do it my way”. If I want to make it through the storms of life then I need to rely on Him **Who can calm the storm (Mark 4:39)**. Abraham was dead – and yet wanted children. The Creator must give him life. When **Lazarus** died, the Lord Jesus Christ did not fish among the remains of the tomb to find a spark of life that He could animate. Though **his sister Martha** said:

**John 11:39 ... Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.**

Our Lord was not deterred by this. He needs no spark of life to give life. The only thing the Master required that life return to Lazarus is that **the stink be uncovered**. The sin must be revealed, the deadness and lack of life confessed and highlighted. Jesus says (**John 11:39**) **Take ye away the stone**”. Take away the stone from your heart. Roll it back and look inside the tomb. Are you not truly **dead in your trespasses and sins**? Do you not feel the Spirit of God telling you that something is not right. Do you not feel Him convicting you that your **righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6)**. We were all **dead in trespasses and sins** before we, like Abraham our forefather, turned to God in faith. God is

able to save all who come unto Him.

### **Saving Faith Does Not Believe In The Vessel of Clay**

**FOCAL** Romans 4:20 {Abraham} staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; **but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

Abraham's faith **gave glory to God and God alone**. To Whom are you giving glory? God had pronounced Abraham dead in himself, but offered to make him alive. Abraham believed what God said, believed that God was able, and trusted Jehovah-Jireh for life.

Every Christian was, at one time, **dead in trespasses and in sins**. The Scripture says:

**Colossians 2:13-14** And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses. (14) He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.**<sup>HCSB</sup>

Abraham was both spiritually as well as sexually dead, but he trusted God like a little child and was blessed. God loves it when we trust Him. God loves it when we believe in Him and make Him greater than our

circumstances. Jesus said:

**Luke 18:17** **I assure you: Whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**<sup>HCSB</sup>

**Illustrate** Become like a little child, trusting the Father's provision and promise. Think of little children for a minute. Little children never wonder where the food on the table comes from. They never wonder if momma or daddy will bring in meat and vegetables, never wonder what their parents even *do for a living*. Little children expect their mom and dad to provide their needs. If you will be saved you must quit questioning the Lord's promise. If you will be blessed in your Christian walk, you must quit trusting the clay vessel and begin to trust the Potter.

**Context** Romans 4:3 ... **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

Abraham gave **glory to God** by believing the promise. Though his body was dead, though he was an old man without heirs, though Sarah had no way to give him a child – Abraham moved and followed where God led. He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved.

**FOCAL** Romans 4:21 ... **And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**

Abraham was **fully persuaded**<sup>2</sup> that God is able. This is the Greek, **πληροφορέω**, plērophoreō, (pronounced *play-rof-or-eh'-o*), which means **to be completely assured of that God could accomplish or carry out that fully which He had promised**. Abraham did not have confidence in himself, nor in Sarah, for he knew that they were unable to do anything to fulfill the covenant of promise. He had no confidence in the arm of man, but every confidence in the arm of God. God has said it – He has promised it. **God is not a liar, nor is He ever unfaithful to His promise.**

**Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?**

Abraham trusted God and was saved because both the trust as well as the fulfillment of the promise glorified God.

### **Saving Faith Does Not Sleep**

**FOCAL** Romans 4:20 {Abraham} staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, **giving glory to God;**

<sup>2</sup> Aorist Passive Participle of G4135, **πληροφορέω**, plērophoreō, (pronounced *play-rof-or-eh'-o*), From G4134 and G5409; to *carry out fully* (in evidence), that is, *completely assure* (or *convince*), *entirely accomplish*: - most surely believe, fully know (persuade), make full proof of.

Father Abraham provides us a pattern of how the saved life should be lived. Now it is certain that Abraham did not always live his life in the Christian manner. There were times when Abraham made bad decisions, just as any human will do. For instance, when the promise of a son was not fulfilled after a few years, he allowed his wife **Sarah to convince him to go in to Hagar**, his wife's servant. The child that was born, **Ishmael (Genesis 16:11)** was rejected by God as Abraham's heir. As a matter of fact this error by Abraham would cause the rise of the foes of Israel, the Arabs, a people who would hinder Israel to this very day. Abraham was not perfect – but neither is the Christian. Yet Abraham *proved* his faith in God by how he lived his life. The Lord told Abraham:

**Genesis 12:1-3 ... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: (2) And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: (3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**

**Illustrate** Abraham had no children, and yet asked God no questions. God said “go” and Abraham, believing God was able, went. These three words, **“So Abraham departed” (Genesis 12:4)** emphasize the life of faith.

Saving faith *is never asleep*. Saving faith is always active, **giving glory to God**. A corpse does not glorify God, nor does a person asleep glorify God. What glorifies God is when the Lord says “Go” and you go. Saving faith cries “awake, awake and do as the Master bids”. Saving faith knows that it is

**Romans 13:11-12 ... now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**

Abraham's life was a life of going, a life spent in glorifying God. Abraham did not fear what was around the corner for God said “Go”. If God has said that “**I will make of thee a great nation**” then the source of that nation is as safe at home in a recliner as he is in a pit of rattlesnakes. Hasn't God said:

**Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.**

Those who live by faith knowing their righteousness is

of God know that they are sons of God. God protects His own.

As Abraham moved deeper and deeper into the land of Canaan troubles periodically arose. One day a **dispute came between his and his nephew Lot's herdsmen** Abraham did not fear. He looked at his nephew and said:

**Genesis 13:9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.**

“You choose, Lot, you choose! God has promised me a mighty nation, promised that all nations would be blessed because of me. Whichever way you choose God guides my steps. You choose Lot, you choose!”

The eye of faith never looks for greener pastures, but is always looking to God Himself. **The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want (Psalm 23:1)**. As long as father Abraham followed the Heavenly Father he knew that all things would work out for the best. When **four kings attacked Sodom and kidnapped Lot (Genesis 14:12)** Abraham took 318 men (**Genesis 14:14**) and rescued his nephew.

Abraham believed God. He went through a painful ritual of circumcision (**Genesis 15:5-6**) though he had no heir. In our day and age we often find it hard to convince new believers to submit to *water baptism* – yet Abraham

submitted to painful circumcision without hesitation.  
Why? Because

**Context** Romans 4:19 ... **being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:**

Abraham believed that the God Who made all things, Who brought light out of darkness, fusion out of confusion, order out of chaos, this same God could surely create new life out of death.

If you are saved by faith in God, then your destiny is to be like Abraham. God wants to do great things through your surrendered life – will you not yield to Him? Remember Terah, Abraham's daddy. Do you want to end this life like him, never having made a difference, never changing your world for the better. Or do you want to come to the end of this journey and be like Abraham, a world changer, a glorifier of God? The difference between the two is whether you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Have you surrendered to Him your entire life? May God the Holy Spirit touch your hearts with these words.



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