

GOD'S PROMISE IS REALIZED BY FAITH

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Romans 4:13-25 (Genesis 17:1-8)

Heavenly Father, grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may trust in and treasure the promised inheritance of ruling in Your Ordered New Creational Kingdom with our King, Your Son, Jesus Christ in Whom we pray. AMEN.

That faith is a gift of God is often demonstrated when we are experiencing the most intense suffering and doubt. When tested in such ways, God's People are amazingly and graciously empowered to trust in His promise, despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation. Our faith is also strengthened by looking at what God has already done for us; not by looking at our present performance; not by boasting in our wisdom, wealth, and strength. We confidently look to God's righteousness revealed in the Gospel, which He promised long ago but is now fully realized in the person and work of Jesus. Therefore, we can trust in the power of the Gospel in our lives, and in the lives of others, when facing difficulties and doubts; because, these struggles intend to test and strengthen our faith. It is through such testing and uncertainty that **God's Promise is Realized by Faith**, and Paul demonstrates this for us today through the example of Abraham, once again. God's promise is realized through faith in Him, the Creator God over ALL, and He has made a promise to ALL who have Abraham's faith. This God is faithful to His promises; because, He is powerfully able to fulfill them. So, we can have faith in Him against ALL apparent hopelessness.

1. **The God of ALL *The One Creator God Over ALL will Justify ALL through the Same Faith in Jesus (3:29-30) READ***

- a. Recall that both the circumcised and uncircumcised being united as children of Abraham through faith reveals the greater reality that Jew and Gentile are united under the One True God through faith. The One Creator God of ALL justifies BOTH the Circumcised AND the Uncircumcised by the Same Faith...in Jesus.

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2. The Promise to ALL God's Promise is to ALL of Abraham's Offspring, which are those Who have his faith. (4:13-17)

a. *Verses 13-15* **READ** The Promise of inheriting the world to Abraham and his offspring is through the righteousness that comes by [of] faith, not the Law.

i. God promised Abraham and his descendants they would bless all the nations of the earth.

1. This inheritance does not come through the Law, which only brings wrath because of our sin as transgressions against God's revealed righteous standards. Rather, this promised inheritance comes through the righteousness that comes by faith in the One God over ALL Who made the promise.

b. *Verses 16-17* **READ** That the Promise of God is received by faith, alone, reveals that:

i. It is a gift (grace) from God according to His faithfulness and not works of the Law (16a)

ii. *KEY condition for receiving this promise - The promise is for ALL who have the faith of Abraham (16b-17). Remember, the God of Abraham is the God of ALL, and He is the One True Creator God.

1. God "gives life to the dead [whether Abraham's old age, Sarah's womb, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, or Jesus crucified, dead and buried] and calls into being things that were not."

a. This is a powerful God Who is able to fulfill His promise!

3. Hope Against ALL Hope *Abraham's Example for Our Encouragement in a Sure Hope when Things Appear Hopeless* (4:18-25)

a. Our faith trusts in God's promise despite the outward appearance of our circumstances (18-22) **READ**

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- i. Abraham's Example - Demonstrates his faith (or, belief) that God had the power to do what He promised, and this faith was credited (reckoned, counted, imputed) to Abraham as righteousness. This is Abraham's righteous status by faith, and this is his foundation for faithful living because of the sure hope he will receive God's future promise despite his present hopeless situation.
 1. Abraham's hope against ALL hope strengthened his faith and gave glory to God! And, even more...
- b. ...Our faith is in the truth that God raised Jesus from the dead who was delivered over to death for our sins (23-25) **READ**
 - i. Do we trust in the truth of this Gospel by living our lives as people graciously declared righteous with a ruling inheritance over the world, or do we live as fools deceived by the world's lies for earthly treasures and temporal security? How else would you define "the obedience of faith" to which servants of King Jesus are called as co-rulers with Him? Why hope in God's promise at all?
 1. Because, God is faithful to His Word, and He has the power to raise the dead. This was gloriously demonstrated in Jesus Christ. The power of the Gospel that Jesus was raised to life for our justification sustains our hope in God's promise when we are tested in apparently hopeless and helpless situations.

We have learned that we are justified by faith apart from legal and religious works. Today, we learn that we receive God's promise by faith apart from the Law and apart from the sight of our circumstances. Our unfaithfulness will not compromise God faithfully fulfilling His promised plan for His human image bearers to bless and rule the world. Not even Adam's unfaithfulness thwarted God's promised plan. In

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Genesis 1:28, God commanded Adam to be fruitful and multiply. Unfortunately, Adam's sin disordered this process and brought disaster; because, his sin severed humanity's relationship with God Who is our source of wisdom and life. Now, humanity is mortally weak and lacking the wisdom we need to properly order the world and mediate God's presence. Nevertheless, God will fulfill His promised plan for Creation. So, God called Abraham, and in Genesis 17:6, which we read this morning, God said, "**I** will make you very fruitful; **I** will make nations of you." God will do what Adam failed to properly do and what we cannot do for ourselves because of our foolishness and mortality. Abraham's son Isaac, and grandson Jacob, and then corporate Israel inherit this promise as recorded in Genesis 22:18, when God promised to Abraham "through your offspring ALL nations of the earth will be blessed". This is the promise Israel possessed in the oracles of God entrusted to them.

We have learned that the Gospel God promised beforehand through the prophets has been fulfilled in a descendant of David. This descendent of King David is also the One Great Descendant of Abraham and the True Israel. This Great Offspring of Abraham is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One Seed of Abraham Who has inherited the entire world, and He now reigns as the Son of Man. Jesus, as the God-man, does for humanity what we cannot do for ourselves while also fulfilling God's promised plan to us in faithfulness. This same Jesus was raised for our justification, so that we, by faith, may be recipients of our ruling inheritance within God's wise and life-giving presence as He promised from the very beginning. See, God's Promise is Realized by Faith – especially faith that hopes when all appears hopeless.

By our faith in God's promised Gospel, a faith like Abraham's, we inherit God's promised plan of ruling and subduing the world in King Jesus' Name, so all nations may be blessed. We receive this promised

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privilege by faith; because, God has reconciled us to Himself through the Gospel. This reconciliation graciously grants us the access we lost in Adam to the divine life and wisdom God alone can give for our orderly rule of His New Creational Kingdom. Furthermore, God reconciles us by declaring us righteous by faith in Jesus Who was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification. God does this all for us, as the One Who is BOTH Just AND the One Who justifies, so He remains faithful to His promised plan even amid our own unfaithfulness and unrighteousness. Therefore, Christians live "the obedience of faith" by God's grace. We trust God despite apparent hopelessness, despite what others may say about our faith in Jesus, and despite the world's temptation for us to compromise to its idolatrous wisdom and strength. By God's grace demonstrated in His past faithfulness, we can hope against ALL apparent hopelessness, and nothing is more hopeless than death; because, God has demonstrated His power over death and has promised us resurrection lives and bodies. This new resurrection life begins now by the Holy Spirit Who is our down-payment and guarantee of God's promise that our bodies will be raised to glory when King Jesus Returns to consummate His Kingdom.

When faced with hopelessness and doubt, we need one another to be mutually encouraged with our faith in this promised inheritance. We also must eagerly proclaim this Gospel; because, this is the means Christ's New Creational Kingdom Order spreads blessing to all nations. Those who receive this Gospel by faith are declared righteous, reconciled and ruling heirs of the New Creation as servants of King Jesus. This, again, is all God's doing. Therefore, it is all by God's grace. This is Good News for the ungodly to be received by faith. AMEN.