

HEIRS OF ABRAHAM'S PROMISE BASED ON ABRAHAM'S FAITH | ROMANS 4:13-17

The heirs of the promise receive the promise based on Abraham's faith.

- Verse 13 –
 - Certainly **they which are of the law** is a reference to Israel (compare 3:19 as well as Gal. 3:18). And certainly Israel (the nation) is the recipient of the Abrahamic promise (thus **heirs**). Therefore, Paul's argument is that *the Abrahamic promise was unaffected by the Law, and the Law was therefore unrelated and served a different purpose.*
 - Paul speaks of one particular promise in this passage, not of all promises. He also speaks of one man's faith, not the faith of all. So, "Abraham's promise was through Abraham's faith."
- Verse 14 - It was not the law that made the promise to Abraham valid nor void, Abraham's promise was always one of faith. The Law came 430 years after the promise, and cannot make "null and void" the previous contract. If a promise can't be trusted, it isn't a promise. To be an heir of a promise that is by faith, the promise must remain true for the heir as well as the original recipient.
- Verse 15 – **the law worketh wrath** - Here Paul strengthens his argument that the Jewish nation was not a recipient of the Abrahamic Covenant by Law, but by the faith of Abraham. His argument that **the law worketh wrath** says that the Law could not be the basis of promise. This is the same argument as 3:20, and repeated many times in Scripture (Rom 5:20, 7:13, Col 2:14, Gal 3:10, 1 Cor 15:56, 2 Cor 3:7, 9). With all these negative words about the Law, why do churches continue to try to put men under the Law?
- Verse 16 –
 - **therefore it is of faith** - That is, the promise that Abraham would be the father of all nations is **of faith**. The faith spoken of is the faith of Abraham, not the faith of the nation of Israel, otherwise, once again, the promise would be *unsure*.
 - **might be sure** - If the promise was of anything other than **of faith** of Abraham, then how could anyone be sure of it?
 - Paul's argument is that it is Abraham's faith that secured Abraham's promise, and thus being **of the law** or not is irrelevant. The promise of Abraham was to **the seed...which is of the law** and also the seed which is **of the faith of Abraham** even though being outside of the Law.
 - *Abraham's faith secured Abraham's promise.*
 - Verse 17 –
 - **the father of all nations** - Likewise, children of faith are said to be the children of Sarah in Gal. 4:31.
 - **who quickeneth...**This statement is foundational to *how* God fulfills the Abrahamic Covenant. He does so by His own power and decree.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM EXPLAINED | ROMANS 4:18-22

- Verse 18 – **believed in hope** - What did Abraham believe? Was his belief in the death/burial/resurrection of Jesus? NO! It was "belief in hope." (See also v. 20-21) . The subject matter is not Abraham's personal salvation, but the Abrahamic covenant.
- Faith is simply taking God at His word. Faith is when God offers, you open your hand and receive.
- Verse 19 – **the deadness of Sarah's womb** - God rejected Ishmael, because he was of man's works, not God's grace. Which is more fruitful...children of works or children of grace? Then why do so many

preachers press for works of the law rather than works of grace? So many believe that the Law will produce greater works than grace, and they are not only wrong, but ignoring a key truth of Paul's writings.

- Verse 20 - This is a word of praise to Abraham, but is not a requirement for "saving" faith. It is not faith that justifies, but the *object of faith*. Both weak faith and strong faith will sit in the proverbial "chair" which often serves as an illustration of faith. It is the "chair" that supports, not the faith.
- Verse 23 - see Rom. 15:4
- Verse 24 - The content of Abraham's faith and the content of ours is different. It is not "faith" that saves, it is the object of faith. Abraham did not have the Gospel, but we do. Notice that resurrection is fundamentally important to salvation. It would be clear heresy to deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Note also that liberal Christianity believes that "He lives" only spiritually. Catholic doctrine focuses on the "perpetual sacrifice" and not the resurrection.