

BIBLE & BAGEL

Romans – Our Common Faith

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When studying the Bible it is very necessary to understand the sequence of events, when certain events took place and which events happened first. I remember once listen to a preacher who, as he was preaching talked about Hannah giving her baby son, Samuel to Eli the priest so he would serve the Lord. The preacher in illustrating this point said he could imagine little Samuel walking through the large doors of the Temple. I spoke with him after the service and reminded him that the temple did not exist in Samuel's day; it was built by Solomon many years later. This may have not caused any harm, but we see in today's study that getting the events in the wrong order made the Jews proud such that they misunderstood God's purposes.

Romans 4:13-15

13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. NKJV

The Jews boasted in having the Torah and thought they were justified through it, Apostle Paul points out that the promise given to Abraham was not through the Torah, (Torah was given through Moses) but Abraham as we have seen earlier was justified by faith. If it was the Torah that made them heirs then faith and the promises of God given before the Torah was of no effect. The Torah brings the judgment of God and the only way to escape judgment is to have no Torah because then there would be no transgression.

The Greek word for "transgression" is "parabasis" which means a violation or overstepping boundaries which is also what it means in English. The Hebrew word is "pasha" which is defined as a revolt. So if the Torah was given so that we would know what are the boundaries that we shouldn't cross.

Farmers build fences for two reasons one to keep their own animals within their property, and two to keep predatory animals out so their own livestock would be safe. The farmers' animals are only safe as long as they stay within the fence. When the animals step out of the fence they are open to attack from predators. We too have a predator lurking around waiting to destroy us, he is called the devil¹, we must stay within the fences God gave us by His Word to stay safe.

Romans 4:16-22

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."* 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving*



glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." NKJV

Since the promise was given before the Torah it was for all of Abraham's descendants; not just the Jews but all nations because the promise was given by the grace of God i.e. His generosity, Abraham did not earn it. The promise to Abraham was that he would be a father to many nations and he would have descendants from every nation. Abraham proved his faith by believing God's word even though it seemed impossible because of His and Sarah's age, yet he believed that God was able to do the impossible.

Because of Abraham's faith we Gentiles have become his descendants by putting our faith in a descendant of Abraham, Yeshua (Jesus) and we have become spiritual children sharing in the heritage that God has given the sons of Abraham. Abraham, our father, is an example for us that we must live by faith. God can create things out of nothing, so what is there that we need that He cannot provide or do for us. If God says that something is going to happen, even if in the natural it seems impossible, God can do it, just look at Abraham.

Romans 4:23-25

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. NKJV

So the account of the promise given to Abraham was written for all of us so that just as righteousness was imputed to Abraham, that same righteousness would be imputed to us who believe in God who raised Yeshua from the dead, Yeshua who was sacrificed for our offenses and raised from the dead to justify us (make us right with God).

The word "impute" is the Greek word "logizomai" which gives the picture of stock-taking. If God were to take stock of our lives before we believed in Yeshua we would be found terribly short but in Messiah we are found to be right because He paid for our deficiencies. Praise the Lord!

ⁱ 1 Peter 5:8

