

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 4:18-22

Student Notes

- **Last Time:** Paul use of two of the greatest manifestations in the Old Testament to demonstrate the power of God – and his reliability.
 1. God created the world out of nothingness.
 2. God raised Christ out of what appeared to be the finality of death.
- **Paul intention:** To apply these two manifestations to his argument about Abraham being the Father of both the Jews and the Gentiles. (His corollary argument is the reason why Abraham's faith was reasonable.)

Verse 18: "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

"Against all hope" -- Abraham's faith proved all the more remarkable, since, as the scriptures tell us, he faced two painful, stubborn facts: 1. That he could not father a child. 2. That Sarah could not conceive a child.

- **A Double Death:**

In order to keep his promise to Abraham, God would have to deal with the double death of Abraham and Sarah's bodies. Paul points to this as both an act of creation and resurrection. This is the kind of God he believed in.

Hebrews 11:19: "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

First, Abraham has to believe for a son he cannot possibly father – unless God supernaturally enable him and to do so. Then, Abraham must believe God is able to raise Isaac back to life after his sacrifice.

- **The Alternative Possibility: Verse 20**

“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God...”

Two well-known Greek words that characterize the possible alternative responses to God’s promise to Abraham: Unbelief: “apistia”. Faith: “pistis”.

- **Faith: The Bridge Between God’s Power and Faithfulness:**

Abraham’s unwavering faith created a bridge between God’s power and faithfulness. (See: Luke 5:10-13).

Using Abraham’s faith in God’s power and faithfulness, Paul is reminds us that whether people keep their promises or not depends not only on their power, but also on their will, to do so.

As Abraham faced overwhelming physical obstacles, he did not deny them or underestimated them. Instead, he reminded himself of God’s power and faithfulness.

“He was fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised, and his faith was credited to him as righteousness.”

Next: How Paul applies this to us.