

Take-Home 5: Abraham Believed God

Romans 4 · Keep this sheet; bring it back each week

What We Found

We built Abraham's timeline with our own Bibles. The reckoning came at night under the stars: "he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6), when Abraham had was uncircumcised, centuries before the law, and the arithmetic proved it: eighty-six at Ishmael's birth (Gen 16:16), ninety-nine at circumcision (Gen 17:24). Circumcision was "a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised" (4:11), which makes Abraham father of all who believe.

And the faith God reckoned was alive the whole way: it set out when called (Heb 11:8), "in hope... believed against hope" (4:18), "grew strong... as he gave glory to God" (4:20), and was "completed by works" at Moriah, where James says Genesis 15:6 "was fulfilled" (Jas 2:22-23). Paul dates the free beginning; James dates the living fulfillment; Scripture holds one faith, obedient from the first step. Written "for ours also": righteousness "will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (4:24-25).

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. CLEMENT OF ROME

The first-century Roman church held up "Abraham, who was called 'the friend,'" as one "found faithful in that he rendered obedience unto the words of God," who "through obedience went forth from his land" (1 Clement 10); and asked why Abraham was blessed, Clement answers: was it not because he wrought righteousness and truth through faith? (1 Clement 31). Obedience, righteousness, faith, in one breath.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

St. Irenaeus teaches in substance, in *Against Heresies*, that Abraham was the Word's follower before the Word was made flesh: faith as a setting out after God at his command, which is why all who follow Christ in faith are Abraham's true children.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

St. Thérèse teaches, in substance, that nothing so honors God as bold confidence in him (her emphasis, not a ranking): expecting everything from God as a child from its father. Her little way is Romans 4:20-21 lived: no distrust, full conviction, glory given to God by daring to expect much from him.

Live It This Week

- One clear night this week, go outside, look up, and pray Genesis 15 from the inside: thank God, by name, for a promise of his given in Scripture that you are still waiting to see fulfilled.

- Do one prudent act of obedience this week that leans on God's promises being true, and note what it does to your faith.
- Pray daily: Lord, I believe you are able to do what you have promised (4:21); help my unbelief.

Memory Verse

"No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."

Romans 4:20-21 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Romans 5 once, slowly. Catechism references for this session: CCC 144-146, 2572. Keep your sealed My Guess sheet safe; it opens in Session 8.