



November 26, 2023

***Romans: Rooted in Jesus  
Confidence in God***

Romans 4:13-25

**For Discussion and Reflection**

1. Abraham was promised the land of Canaan: Genesis 12:7,16:18. At the same time, God says, “your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” While there is a promise to Abraham’s descendants to inhabit Canaan, there is also a broader promise that Abraham’s offspring would inherit the world, Romans 4:13. Consider Paul’s teaching in Galatians 3:7-9, 16. Who is key offspring? Who are the children God is referring to? What does this mean about God’s broader plan?
2. Based on this teaching how should we think about Israel in the narrative of God’s kingdom? What illustration did Pastor Tim use? How should we view Israel’s future? Is their future separate from the church or incorporated into the resurrected Christ (Abraham’s great Offspring)?
3. Mediate on 4:14-15. What is the problem with the promise coming to adherents of the law? This is not a trick question. Consider Romans 3:19-20, 23.
4. Paul says, “For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression,” v15. This can be a difficult verse to understand. Consider his teaching in 2:12-16. Paul is not saying that those who don’t have the law won’t face judgment. He is at least saying that those who have the law but “transgress” it, know better. John Calvin says, “He who is not instructed by the written law, when he sins, is not guilty of so great a transgression as he who knowingly breaks and transgresses the law of God.” Who is Paul speaking to? What is he saying to them about their obedience and hope in their performance?
5. The idea that the promise rests on grace through faith opens the door for the inclusion of the Gentiles. The promise comes to the one who, “shares the faith of Abraham.” What does this mean for the Gentile believers in the church? How does Paul identify them in relation to Abraham?
6. Paul places emphasis on Abraham’s faith, saying, “He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body...no unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,” Romans 4:19-20. Paul is not saying that Abraham never had “momentary hesitations.” (Romans, Douglas Moo) Rather, he grew strong as he continued to esteem God. What does this tell you about the nature of faith? How does confidence (hope) in God grow for the believer?
7. Paul is not urging us to examine the strength of our faith or question the authenticity of our faith when we see weakness. Where is he telling us to focus our attention? What were the Jewish believers focusing on? How does v21 focus our attention?
8. How does this teaching change how we view ourselves? One another? How does it reject partiality? How would it change the Roman church?