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The Means of Justification

4: 18-25

The means of justification DIG: Abraham's life may have been filled with love for God, good works, and obedience to religious rules. But none of those things made him acceptable to God. What did? How did Abraham receive God's promise? How can others receive it? What obstacles did Abraham overcome to believe God's promise? What does it mean to have strong faith? How has God credited you with righteousness? How have you responded?

REFLECT: How does Abraham's example inspire you to have deeper faith in ADONAI? What are some of the ways that your faith could influence others? What was the last time someone else's faith made a difference in your life? Explain. What are some things that can keep your faith from growing? What do you usually do when you experience doubts? What can you learn from Abraham about dealing with obstacles to your faith?

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8 NIV).

Almost everyone in **Abraham's** day, as in our own day, had faith of one kind or another. Some of them **believed** in idols, others **trusted** in luck or fate, and many simply had **faith** in themselves. **Abraham's faith**, however, had a **divine** object. **He** had **faith** in **YHVH**, and **he** acted on it. The faith people witness in our lives may not automatically communicate the object of our **trust**. They will see the effects of our **faith**. If they ask, we must be ready to tell them that our **faith** rests in **Yeshua Messiah**. We have **faith** because we **believe** in **Him**.¹⁰⁰



Trusting in Yeshua Messiah: For he was past hope, yet in hope he trusted that he would indeed become a father to many nations, in keeping with what he had been told, “So many will your seed be” (Romans 4:18; Genesis 15:5). What was **his hope**? To have a son. He had no human grounds for **hope**, but **he** had divine grounds for **hope** because **God** made a promise.

Abraham believed in spite of circumstances: Figuratively, so far as fathering a child and fulfillment of **God’s** promise of descendents was concerned, **Abraham’s trust did not waver when he considered his own body - which was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old (ninety-nine to be exact) - or when he considered that Sarah’s womb was dead too (she was about ninety).** The door was absolutely and forever closed so far as having descendents was concerned. However, **his faith** was not weak even though **his** body was weak. **He did not, by lack of trust, decide against God’s promises. On the contrary, by trust he was given power as he gave glory to God (4:19-20), for he was fully convinced, despite their obvious obstacles of being so old, that what God had promised He could also accomplish (4:21).** The thought is not that **Abraham’s faith** was strengthened so that **his** physical powers again became able to bring **children** into the world. No. **Isaac** was the result of a biological **miracle** performed by **God** in answer to **Abraham’s faith**. The glory would thus be to **God**.¹⁰¹

It is a profound lesson to learn that **God’s** promises can only be fulfilled by **God’s** power, and human efforts to affect **His** will, no matter how sincere or clever those efforts might be, are doomed to failure, and dishonor **God** rather than bring **Him**

glory. In warning the **Galatian** believers against the **legalistic** Judaizers (see the commentary on **Galatians**, to see link click [Ag - Who Were the Judaizers](#)), **Paul** said: **Tell me, you who want to be in submission to the system that results from perverting the Torah into legalism, don't you hear what the Torah itself says? It says that Avraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. The one by the slave woman was born through the miracle-working power of God fulfilling His promise (Galatians 4:21-23). Ishmael illustrates the product of legalistic human self-effort, whereas Isaac represents the product of God's sovereign and gracious provision. Paul reminded the Galatian believers that, because of their trust in Yeshua Messiah, they were: like Isaac, children of promise (Galatians 4:28 NASB). They were God's children by the working of His divine grace, not by the work of their own human efforts.**¹⁰²

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, How awesome **You** are! Praise **You** that our salvation is not based on any good works we do. Our **faith** is the key to salvation. True **faith** springs from a heart of love and will work itself out in good works, but it is the loving **faith** that is the key. Praise **You** that **Yeshua** willingly laid down **His** life (**John 10:15**) as the **Lamb of God. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:12-14 NIV).***

*We praise **You** for such love you showed in being our sacrifice so we could receive the **righteousness of God. He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).** We lift our eyes from the trials and problems of life. **For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (Second Corinthians 4:17-18 NIV).** We choose to focus on how awesome and wonderful **You** are and we look forward to praising you eternally in heaven! We love **You!** In the holy name of **Your Son Yeshua** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

The relevance to salvation is clear. **ADONAI** must wait until the unbeliever is **dead** and unable to save himself before **He** can release **His** saving power. As long as the unbeliever thinks he is strong enough to do anything to please **God**, he cannot be saved by **grace**. It was when Abraham admitted that he was **dead**, that the power of **Ha'Shem** performed a miracle. It is when the lost sinner confesses that he is spiritually **dead** and unable to help himself that **the LORD** can save him.¹⁰³

Paul concluded **his** illustration about **Abraham** by saying, for **him**, **faith** was **trusting** in **YHVH**. **This is why it was credited to his** spiritual bank **account as righteousness (Romans 4:22; Genesis 15:6, 17:17 and 21-27, 18:14, 21:2)**. In his own sinful flesh, **Avraham** was totally unable to meet **God's** standard of perfect **righteousness**. But the gospel of salvation, **the Good News of God (Romans 1:1)**, is that **the Lord** will take the **faith** that **He Himself** has enabled a person to possess, and count that **faith** as **divine righteousness** on the believing sinner's behalf. **For you have been delivered by grace through trusting, and even this is not your accomplishment - but God's gift (Ephesians 2:8-9)**.

The application of Abraham's faith: But **Avraham** also had a literal resurrection **faith**. **It was necessary for what Judaism regards as his greatest "work."** **His** willingness to sacrifice **his** only **son Isaac**, through whom **Ha'Shem** had said the promise would be fulfilled (**Genesis 17:21 and 22:1-9**). This act is referred to throughout the High Holy Day services, and Genesis 22 is one of the regular Torah readings on Rosh ha'Shanah, a feast on which **the shofar** is blown one hundred times, and **the shofar** is associated with the resurrection of the dead (**Matthew 24:31; First Corinthians 15:52; First Thessalonians 4:16, and Revelation 8:2**). **Abraham's** willingness to offer up **Isaac** as a sacrifice is mentioned twice in the B'rit Chadashah as an example of great **faith (Hebrews 11:17 and James 2:21)**. Here, it establishes the background for the conclusion of our study into **Abraham's faith**, which says that we, who have become believers in **Yeshua**, have the same kind of resurrection **faith** that **Abraham** did.¹⁰⁴

But the words, "it was credited to his spiritual bank account . . . ," were not written for him only. **They were written also for us, who will certainly have our account credited too, because we have trusted in him who raised Yeshua our Lord from the dead (4:23-24)**. This is a radical statement, for it says that **Abraham** was not special. Whereas Jewish *midrashim* attribute unique ability, holiness and power to **him**, enabling **him** to have **trust** far beyond what ordinary people can attain to, **Paul** insists that such **trust** is available to everyone. This is the Good News, that through **faith** in **Yeshua Messiah** anyone can have the

same close, personal relationship with **El Shaddai** that **Avraham** had! Apart from salvation, indeed, many believers have received promises from **ADONAI**, just as **Abraham** did, and have seen **God** fulfill them.

The content of our **hope (verse 18)** is that because we have fully identified with **Yeshua, who was delivered over to death because of our offences and raised to life in order to make us righteous**, we too will be resurrected to sinless, eternal life with **ADONAI (Romans 4:25; Isaiah 53:4 and 12)**. **He** was **delivered** up on account of our offences – to make atonement for them; and **He** was **raised to life** on account of our **justification** – that it might become an established fact. The next chapter elaborates on this theme.¹⁰⁵