



Portion:

Title:

## SCRIPTURES

- Romans 4:13-25
- Heb. 11:17-19; John 3:15-21
- I Corinthians 15:12-19

## THE EMPTY WOMB

- Heirs by Faith
- Hope Contrary to Hope
- From the Womb to the Tomb

## SEED:

“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.** He **did not waver at the promise** of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and **being fully convinced** that what He had promised He was also able to perform. **And therefore** “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”” Romans 4:19-22 NKJV

## FRUIT:

“It shall be **imputed to us who believe** in Him who **raised up** Jesus our Lord **from the dead,**” Romans 4:24 NKJV

“that if you **confess with your mouth** the Lord Jesus and **believe in your heart** that God has **raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9 NKJV

“For **if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen**. And **if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!**” I Corinthians 15:16-17 NKJV

### **NARRATIVE FOR TODAY’S SCRIPTURES: ROMANS 4:13-25**

Last week in [Belief is an Act of Faith](#) (Romans 4:1-12)... Here Paul continues to elaborate on justification, faith, works, righteousness, grace, and circumcision—foundational subjects on which he has already invested a good amount of effort and for which he has built a strong skeletal framework. Now he is going to hang the flesh of Abraham on the bones of these doctrinal essentials. And he will use King David to seal his theological position. There is a lot of repetition here, but it is critical this doctrine is solidified in your mind.

Abraham is the father of faith, promised to father descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens through a son, who would come from his own body as his heir. Paul launches with a question hinting at Abraham’s physical condition at the time he was credited for faith and belief in that promise. He does this to consolidate in our thoughts that faith must always precede action, if it is to be

meaningful to God. Later in this letter he will go as far as to say, "Whatever is not from faith is sin." As such, Abraham's radical step of faith came before circumcision was ever mentioned. This hardly crosses the minds of God's people when they consider the events of the Scriptures, but we must place it right out in the open as part of the sinew that covers the bones of our faith. These are two critical facts. In the flesh, Abraham was neither a Jew, nor was he yet circumcised, when he became the father of the Judeo-Christian faith.

Only after acknowledging these truths can we properly consider what it was that accounted for his righteousness. Paul says it was faith that empowered his obedience, his willingness to believe he would have a son, even in his old age, and that his descendants would fill the earth. Obedience was the byproduct of his faith, not the cause of it. And this idea is subtle, yet instrumental in distinguishing faith from belief. Belief is the first act of faith. Faith fueled his belief. In other words, belief is faith in action. It was his faith-based efforts that made him righteous in God's eyes; faith without the action would not have been sufficient. Again, this is subtle, but the flip-side is also true. If it was his effort, independent of faith, that made him righteous, acceptable to God, then by what he did it might be construed as if God owed him something, instead of what really happened. It was God's grace that fueled Abraham's

faith and the action, in this case the belief he would have a son and that his descendants would fill the earth, was the result. In Hebrews, it literally explains that without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to Him must believe—faith then belief! That letter goes on to tie Abraham's faith to his specific responses. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out. By faith Abraham dwelt in the land of promise. By faith Abraham offered up Isaac when he was tested.

Think of faith as a noun and believe as a verb! Understanding this process will even change the way you see the “sinners prayer” that Paul later introduces in his letter, “that if you confess with your mouth...and believe in your heart...you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. You see grace-empowered faith (a noun), inspires confession and belief—acts of faith (verbs).

Paul's emphasis here, early in the letter, that it was Abraham's belief that was accounted to him for righteousness (a direct reference from Genesis), is the foundation for understanding what he writes later in the letter, that with the heart one believes unto righteousness. Abraham's subsequent efforts were relative to his belief, his first step of faith in God's promise that he would have a son and that his progeny would fill the earth. James offered this clarification using another of Abraham's efforts fueled by faith, that

which defines belief as action; “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” Said more concisely, “Faith without works is dead!” There must be a literal response associated with your faith, otherwise your faith is not real—faith without belief is dead. Nevertheless, if Abraham’s efforts such as: taking Isaac with him; collecting wood for the fire; strapping Isaac to the altar; and drawing his knife to sacrifice him, were fueled under his own strength, then his justification would have been earned, thus eliminating man’s need for God. But, it was not under his own power. It was grace-empowered-faith that inspired Abraham’s willingness to place Isaac on the altar, and to offer him as a sacrifice as God commanded. It’s not faith alone that is accounted as righteousness, it’s acting upon that faith.

Then David enters the equation. If you are not working on your own to be justified, but instead concentrate your effort on the only One who does the justifying, even for pagans who start out in the worst condition, you will conclude that it is only by faith in Jesus Christ that true righteousness is achieved. David celebrates, in song, the indescribable blessing it is to have your lawless actions forgiven and your sins paid for, instead of the cost being charged to your personal account. Regardless of your individual capacity and

discipline, and no matter your level of knowledge and motivation to do the right things, perfect righteousness is that which is imparted to you by God. He imputes His righteousness to you, while He graciously withholds imputing what you really deserve, the condemnation that comes as the price-tag for your sins. And again, if the faith is authentic, there will be evidence.

And although Paul has already made it perfectly clear on many occasions, again he emphasizes that the blessings just described are available to everyone, not just Jews. Heritage and traditions, and even the commands that come with them, do not confer any special path to God's righteousness. Certainly circumcision is oftentimes used to distinguish Jews from Gentiles, however, if we bring Abraham back into focus, again we see that faith came first. Circumcision came afterwards, as a sign of the faith he displayed—faith in action. Read this aloud so it really sinks in; “Abraham was not even circumcised yet when he was deemed righteous.” The father of faith for all who believe was called by God before circumcision was given for a very good reason. It was so all future generations would know that God's righteousness is available by impartation only, and only to those who walk by faith and who respond with belief. The seal of that faith is displayed with an act of obedience, in this example with circumcision. But obedience is always the response, the sign that faith is real!

**This week in Romans 4:13-25...** It's important for all who read this portion of Paul's masterful narrative, which highlights Abraham's position as the father of the Judeo-Christian faith, for them to recognize this all happened before the Law was codified on Mount Sinai. In other words, faith, and all the promises that come with it, came before the law. Again, his emphasis here is to address the elephant in the room. If you were the one people group who the one true God specifically called His own, and that people group, over time, became identified as the conduits through which God's holy commands were delivered to mankind, then it is easy to see why that throughout the 1500 years since Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, they might have become convinced that God's promise is related to the law. Paul expends so much energy to correct this wrong assertion. He accentuates the obvious; the law had not yet been given when God's call went out to Abraham 430 years before the Exodus.

So, you see, if those who became identified as the guardians of the law were the true heirs of Abraham, then right standing before God would not be faith-based, but law-based. And that is simply not true because that point of view would practically make faith irrelevant when it comes to God's promise. And when you step back and take a birds-eye view, it's very logical; God's promise came first through faith, 430 years before the law was ever codified!

Of course the law remains significant, just not for the reasons you might think. It was codified so man would have no excuse when they choose to disobey. It formally defines sin, so that God's condemnation of sinners would not be deemed inequitable. If there is nothing to define sin, then one might assume nothing we do will offend God.

It's important to remember a bit of Paul's journey that brought him to this understanding. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees and he was the chief persecutor of the followers of Y'shua. Then, with a divine download, he realized that it was always about grace through faith that God would fulfill His promise. It had to be that way or the only people who could ever be saved would be those of the circumcision and all those Gentiles can just go to "H" "E" "Double hockey sticks." His eye opening realization is that the promise to Abraham extends to the world through faith (just like it did to Abraham), not through the law which was not even available to Abraham!

He told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and that the entire promise is based on his faith. It's a faith that believes life can come from the dead. For Abraham that was a very practical matter because he had no children of his own; Sarah had been barren and he and his wife were now very old. He had to believe in something that was impossible to see. He had to put his



faith into practice by stepping out against all odds. Abraham literally believed his descendants, beginning with one who would come from his union with Sarah, would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens.

How did Abraham pull off such an impossible assignment? Even though he was nearly a hundred years old, and for all practical purposes Sarah's womb was dead, his faith never wavered. Instead, he was completely convinced that what God promised would come to pass. In fact, the more ridiculous the reality of the situation, the more Abraham was strengthened in his resolve. God is always capable of making good on His word. Abraham's attitude, and one we all ought to adopt, was this: If God says it, I believe it; it's that simple.

And this is where the whole thing congeals into the most beautiful prophetic picture, but only for those who believe in Y'shua's death, burial and resurrection. The entire history of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, the son of promise, and their miraculous journey of righteousness through faith, was pointing toward Christ all along. Just line up the imagery and then sit back in awe and wonder. Imputed faith-based righteousness was not exclusive to Abraham, but is available to all those who would believe after him. But in what must they believe? They must believe in the resurrection of the dead. Y'shua, our Lord, God's only

begotten Son was sacrificed for our sins and placed in a tomb reserved for the dead. He emerged from that tomb alive so we, like Abraham, could be justified by faith in the resurrection of the dead. Isaac, Abraham's only begotten son was also birthed from the dead, but he from the deadness of Sarah's womb. And even though it was through Isaac that this promise to Abraham and his descendants would seemingly be fulfilled, he too was willing to sacrifice his only begotten son!

"Think in Bible." DJH

## **INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MESSAGE:**

*A lot can be said about the most basic tenets of the Christian faith, but maybe none is more essential than life from the dead. That's right, Christianity hinges on the resurrection. It's an absurd assertion to all but those who are already in the faith. Why is that? Man only understands the things of man because within him is the spirit of man. It takes the Spirit of God to know the things of God and thus, the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing. In other words, those who need it don't have the vision to see it!*

*Think about it; if you use a logical thought process to contemplate the redemption story, it is simply ridiculous. God created mankind; he sinned and brought death into the world; He*

*launched a plan to redeem fallen man; it includes Him becoming a man Himself, born as a baby; He would grow up as a normal child, become an adult, and at a specific time would step into His ministry, which would reveal His true nature and purpose. His mission would require Him to be sacrificed on a cross, so His shed blood could cover all the sins of mankind, past, present and future. Then, He'd be buried in a tomb as if defeated, only to resurrect in victory to a new life. And all you need to do to participate in this universal forgiveness of sin program, and to be redeemed to live forever in the presence of a Holy God, instead of the eternal flames of hell, is to believe this story. Accept the invitation to become His bride and you will be saved. Got it?*

*Okay, so we can all agree now that absent an antecedent intervention by God, we don't have a shot at believing in the resurrection. The gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing. And that is the true beauty. God imparts His grace which gifts us the faith to believe and when our blind eyes are set free, we can see! And the deeper we look the more we see. Abraham was promised he'd be the father of many nations and he believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness. It was there all along. Sarah, Abraham's wife was barren; her womb was dead. It had remained empty for her entire life—all eighty-nine years. But then something happened. Life came from death. God allowed this*

*elderly woman and her husband ten years her senior to conceive. From her empty dead womb came life. When her only begotten son was birthed, again her womb was empty. But, this time as a testimony to the resurrection—life from death. And later, the father of this only son, born out of a once dead womb, was asked to sacrifice him, putting to the test the promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in all the heavens and the sands on all the seashores.*

*And is this not what we are asked to believe about Christ? And even a step further, not just the willingness of a Father to sacrifice His Son, but the very deed itself. God's righteousness is imputed to all those who believe this Son was raised from the dead. Simply confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that God has raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead and you will be saved. There is no other way because if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile and you are still dead in your sins!*

## HEIRS BY FAITH

### 1. Before the Law there was Faith

#### A. Faith before Law

(1) The elephant in the room!

(a) Faith and all the promises that come with it, came before the law.

1. “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.**” Romans 4:13 NKJV

2. Paul highlights Abraham’s position as the father of the Judeo-Christian faith.

a) He was called before the Law was codified on Mount Sinai.

b) Where did God’s people go wrong in their understanding?

1) There is one people group who the one true God specifically called His own.

2) Over time, they became identified as the conduits through which God’s holy commands were delivered to mankind.

3) Throughout the 1500 years since Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, they became

convinced that God's promise was associated with obedience to the law based on self-determination and self-discipline, as opposed to grace-empowered-faith-based-obedience.

- c) Paul consistently corrects this wrong assertion.
  - 1) Remember what we learned in the first half of Romans 4. Faith comes first as a gift from God; then belief is faith in action. (See [Belief is an Act of Faith](#))
- d) He accentuates the obvious; the law had not yet been given when God's call went out to Abraham 430 years before the Exodus and Mt. Sinai.

Table 1.1

Patriarch: Age	Timeline showing dates from God's promise to Abraham to the exodus from Egypt	Passage	Years from the Promise	Years to the Exodus
Abraham: 75	God makes the promise to Abraham and he leaves Haran.	<i>Genesis 12:1–4</i>	0	430
Abraham: 75-85	God tells Abraham his descendants "will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there and they will be afflicted for 400 years."	<i>Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6</i>	0–10	420–430
Abraham: 85	Abraham has lived in Canaan for 10 years and takes Hagar as his wife and she conceives Ishmael.	<i>Genesis 16:3–4</i>	10	420
Abraham: 86	Ishmael is born.	<i>Genesis 16:15–16</i>	11	419
Abraham: 100 Ishmael: 14	Isaac is born.	<i>Genesis 21:5</i>	25	405
Abraham: 105 Isaac: 5 Ishmael: 19	Isaac is weaned and Ishmael mocks/persecutes Isaac.	<i>Genesis 21:8–9; Galatians 4:29</i>	30	400

Abraham: 140 Isaac: 40	Isaac marries Rebekah.	<i>Genesis 24:1–67; 25:20</i>	65	365
Abraham: 160 Isaac: 60	Esau and Jacob are born.	<i>Genesis 25:26</i>	85	345
Abraham: 175 Isaac: 75 Jacob: 15	Abraham dies.	<i>Genesis 25:7</i>	100	330
Isaac: 151 Jacob: 91	Joseph is born.		176	254
Isaac: 168 Jacob: 108 Joseph: 17	Joseph is sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt.	<i>Genesis 37</i>	193	237
Isaac: 180 Jacob: 120 Joseph: 29	Isaac dies.	<i>Genesis 35:28–29</i>	205	225
Jacob: 121 Joseph: 30	Joseph is made second in command by Pharaoh.	<i>Genesis 41:46</i>	206	224
Jacob: 130 Joseph: 39	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers two years into the famine with five years left. Jacob meets Pharaoh.	<i>Genesis 45:4–6 Genesis 47:9</i>	215	215
Jacob: 147 Joseph: 56	Jacob dies.	<i>Genesis 47:28–49:33</i>	232	198
Joseph: 110	Joseph dies.	<i>Genesis 50:26</i>	286	144
	Only 64 years pass from the time Joseph dies to when Moses is born..	<i>Exodus 6:16–20</i>		
Moses: 3 months	Moses is placed in a basket and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.	<i>Exodus 2</i>	350	80
Moses: 80	Moses and Aaron speak to Pharaoh beginning the exodus from Egypt.	<i>Exodus 7:7; Exodus 12:40–41; Galatians 3:16–17</i>	430	0

## **B. How do you identify an heir?**

(1) Look for their faith!

(a) If heirs could be identified by their adherence to the law, it would make faith irrelevant when it comes to God's promise.

1. **“For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.”** Romans 4:14-15 NKJV
2. If those who became identified as the guardians of the law were the true heirs of Abraham, then right standing before God would not be faith-based, but law-based.
  - a) As you just learned in detail, God’s promise came first through faith, 430 years before the law was ever codified!
  - b) Of course the law remains significant, just not for the reasons you might think.
  - c) It was codified so man would have no excuse when they choose to disobey.
  - d) The law formally defines sin, so that God’s condemnation of sinners would not be deemed inequitable.
- (2) If there is nothing to define sin, then one might assume nothing we do will offend God. (Peek ahead to Romans 7)
  - (a) No Law! No Sin! No Savior!



1. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, **I would not have known sin except through the law.** For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. **For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.** And the commandment, which was to **bring life, I found to bring death.** For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. **Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.**" Romans 7:7-12 NKJV
2. Viewing God's laws from the correct perspective.
  - a) Paul had gained the proper understanding of the true value of the law. It was not intended to identify heirs, but sin!
    - 1) *"But now we have been delivered from the law, having **died to what we were held by** [believing salvation is achieved by obeying the law voids faith], so that we should serve in the **newness of the Spirit** [recognizing salvation is by grace*

through faith] *and not in the oldness of the letter.*“ Romans 7:6 NKJV

- b) Where there is no law there is can be no violation of the law, which means no one is guilty before God!
- c) There is no way to identify sin if there is not system that defines God's standards. So, without laws sin does not exist!
- d) In other words, you'd believe you were perfect if you did not have God's standards to use as a comparison to your decisions and actions.
- e) However, once you acknowledge God's law is the standard, you are able to realize your sin and how you are heading for certain death unless you procure a remedy.
- f) At one point Paul considered the law the perfect path for life, only to realize its purpose was actually to expose the death sentence that awaits all those who transgress it.
- g) That makes our need for a savior universal. We need a system that qualifies heirs in a way that does not require adherence to the law based on our own strength and self-determination.

- h) The law powerfully points to our need for Y'shua and that makes it holy and just and good.
- (3) Without God's intervention you would not even recognize the remedy because it makes no sense to the natural mind.
- (a) That is why it is crucial that faith come first!
1. "For **the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." I Corinthians 1:18 NKJV
  2. "But **God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. **For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?** Even so no one knows the things of God **except the Spirit of God**. Now we have received [again], not the spirit of the world [the spirit of the man], but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God [the option to be animated by the Holy Spirit and not the human spirit]." I Corinthians 2:10-12 NKJV
  3. "But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him**; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Corinthians 2:14 NKJV

4. No one knows the things of God **except the Spirit of God.**

- a) A lot can be said about the most basic tenets of the Christian faith, but maybe none is more essential than life from the dead.
- b) Christianity hinges on the resurrection and yet, it's an absurd assertion to all but those who are already in the faith.
- c) Man can only understand the things of man because the spirit of man is all he has access to.
- d) Those who need accept the resurrection don't have the vision to see it!
- e) It takes the Spirit of God to know the things of God and that is why the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing.

5. Without the Holy Spirit, the redemption story is simply ridiculous.

- a) God creates mankind and he sins and brings death into the world...
- b) God launches a plan to redeem fallen man...
- c) He will become a man Himself by being born as a human baby who has no earthly father (the Holy Spirit will impregnate a young virgin)...

- d) He will grow up as a normal child, become an adult, and at a specific time He will step into His ministry.
  - e) This will reveal His true nature and purpose.
  - f) His mission will require Him to be sacrificed on a cross, so His shed blood can cover all the sins of mankind, past, present and future.
  - g) Then, He will be buried in a tomb as if defeated, only to resurrect in victory to a new life.
  - h) All you need to do to participate in this universal forgiveness of sin program, and to be redeemed to live forever in the presence of a Holy God, instead of the eternal flames of hell, is to believe this story.
6. What does believing this look like?
- a) Accept the invitation to become His bride.
  - b) Accept that He is God in the flesh, born from a virgin mother.
  - c) Accept that His blood will pay the price for your sins (first you must agree that you are a sinner).
  - d) Accept that He was crucified, died, and was buried in a tomb.
  - e) And here is the game changer... Accept that He resurrected after three days and three nights!

f) And... you will be saved because...

1) *"We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that **just as Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, **certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection**,"* Romans 6:4-5 NKJV

g) Got it?

(b) You won't (without faith) because this story sounds like complete madness! You won't get it because no one can know the things of God except the Spirit of God and that is why it is by grace through faith that the gospel of salvation suddenly makes sense (no longer foolishness)!

1. *"For **by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that **not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.**"*

Ephesians 2:8 NKJV

2. Absent an antecedent intervention by God, we don't have a shot at believing in the resurrection.

a) The gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing.

b) God must first impart His grace which gifts us the faith to believe and when our blind eyes are set free, then the gospel is no longer foolishness!

1) *"Therefore it [the promise] **is of faith that it might be according to grace...**"* Romans 4:16a

NKJV

2) *"Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1 NKJV

(1) Faith then Law! Why? (Coming full circle!)

(a) *"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.**"* Romans 4:13 NKJV

1. "Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, **no one annuls or adds to it**. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "**And to your Seed,**" **who is Christ**. And this I say, that **the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ**, that it should make **the promise of no effect**. For **if the inheritance is of the**

**law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:15-18 NKJV**

2. The Promise WAS ALWAYS pointing to Christ!
  - a) No one and no thing can change a covenant that comes first! The order matters and faith came first!
  - b) The promise was about a seed, singular, and that seed was that through Abraham’s line the Messiah would come.
  - c) And as we have already elaborated in detail, the law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham! (See Table 1.1 above)
  - d) And that giving of the law did not nullify the promise to Abraham, but rather it enhanced it, as we will see below in Galatians 3:19 and Romans 4:18-19. The law accentuated our need for a savior and that is a VERY GOOD THING!
3. Being the seed of Abraham through faith also levels the playing field, meaning your background need not keep you from Yahweh, whether you were a pagan or a Hebrew.
  - a) Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he an Israelite; Jews and the nation of Israel came much later.



- b) Abraham-Isaac-Jacob; Jacob renamed Israel; Israel had 12 sons; Judah was the forth son, Judah and Levi (third son) became the southern Kingdom of Judah after King Solomon died.
- c) They were called by the slang term “Jew” later on.
- d) So you can see, Abraham was neither a Jew nor an Israelite, nor circumcised when he was called.
  - 1) Remember: *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”* Romans 4:1 NKJV (See [Belief is an Act of Faith](#))
- e) Bottom line: all people become righteous by faith whether a Jew, Greek, Hebrew, or pagan because it is Yahweh...
  - 1) *“who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”* (Romans 4:17)
  - 2) And... *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11:1).
- f) When you believe, you can see things that do not yet exist as if they already do...

- 1) ***“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.” 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.”*** Romans 4:18-19 NKJV

(2) And let's come full circle...

(a) The law was added to clearly demarcate sin!

1. What purpose then does the law serve? **“It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”**

Galatians 3:19 NKJV

2. Does this mean the law is NO LONGER needed?

- a) We saw a detailed answer to this already in Romans 7:7-12, but it bears reviewing, as there has been a stronghold over the proper understand of this for many centuries!
- b) Sin is defined by the law; without it there would be no sin!
- c) If there is no sin, then you are alive and well.

- d) However, if the law comes in and defines sin, it proves you have a death sentence.
  - e) That is what makes God's commands holy and just and good!
  - f) It makes your need for a savior universal.
  - g) But, the system still needs to qualify heirs by faith, which came first, because a later covenant cannot annul an earlier covenant.
  - h) We need a mechanism that supersedes adherence to the law based on our own strength and self-determination.
  - i) And that is what the law is meant to do—to powerfully point to our need for Y'shua whose grace empowers our obedience, and that makes the law holy and just and good.
- (3) And if you think that once you are born-again you no longer have a need to be pointed toward Y'shua, think again.
- (a) The law will remain your tutor...
    - 1. "And **if you are Christ's**, then you are **Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**" Galatians 3:29 NKJV

2. "Now I say that the heir, **as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave**, though he is master of all, but **is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.**" Galatians 4:1-2 NKJV

(b) What time is that?

1. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But **when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons.** And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" **Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son**, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4:3-7 NKJV
2. "My **little children**, for **whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you**," Galatians 4:19 NKJV
3. Why was Paul laboring for them and would be laboring for you even now?
  - a) Because the final fulfillment of...no longer needing a guardian (the law) because you are no longer

children (same treatment as slaves), is when Christ is fully formed in you!

b) That is the purpose of the Church and we are still in the formation period! Don't agree? Just look around! The guardian is necessary until we grow up!

1) *"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers [the Church], for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **till** we all come to the **unity of the faith** and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to a **perfect man**, to **the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ** [Christ is fully formed in you]; that we should **no longer** be **children**, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may **grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—**" Ephesians 4:11-15 NKJV*

## HOPE CONTRARY TO HOPE

### 2. Calling things which do not exist into existence...

#### A. ...that it might be according to grace!

(1) Seed defined!

(a) Children of Faith

1. “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.” Romans 4:16 NKJV

2. It’s important to remember a bit of Paul’s journey that brought him to this understanding.

a) He was a Pharisee of Pharisees and he was the chief persecutor of the followers of Y’shua.

1) *“though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a **Hebrew of the Hebrews**; concerning the law, a **Pharisee**; concerning zeal, **persecuting the church**; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”*

Philippians 3:4-6 NKJV

- b) Then, with a divine download, he realized that it was always about grace through faith that God would fulfill His promise. (See Acts 8-9)
- c) It had to be that way or the only people who could ever be saved would be Jews and all those Gentiles would just be destined for hell.
- d) His eye-opening realization is that the promise to Abraham extends to the world through faith (just like it did to Abraham), not through the law which was not even available to Abraham!

(2) Life from the dead!

(a) So shall your descendants be...

1. “(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; 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.”**”  
Romans 4:17-18 NKJV
2. God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and that the entire promise is based on his faith. (See Genesis 15)

- a) It's a faith that believes life can come from the dead.
- b) For Abraham that was a very practical matter because he had no children of his own; Sarah had been barren and he and his wife were now very old.
- c) He had to believe in something that was impossible to see.
- d) He had to put his faith into practice by stepping out against all odds.
- e) Abraham literally believed his descendants, beginning with one who would come from his union with Sarah, would be as numerous as the stars in the heavens.
- f) *"Look to the Heavens Abram, and count the stars; this is how expansive your ancestors will be."*  
(Genesis 15:5)
- g) Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah) were well beyond child-bearing years, so it could not be in, or because of, the natural things of this world that Abram could have believed such a promise.
- h) It was only by faith that he could believe that the one true Mighty God could fulfill such a promise.



And by belief he took action and is that which was accounted as righteousness...

- 1) ...that out of Sarah's dead womb would resurrect descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens and the sands on the seashores.

## FROM THE WOMB TO THE TOMB

### 3. Life from the Womb

#### A. Sarah's Womb

(1) Fully Convinced (and therefore!)

(a) How did Abraham pull off such an impossible assignment?

1. "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.** **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief,** but was **strengthened in faith, giving glory to God**, and being **fully convinced** that **what He had promised He was also able to perform."** Romans 4:19-21 NKJV
2. Abraham was nearly a hundred years old, and for all practical purposes, Sarah's womb was dead, but his faith never wavered.

- a) He was completely convinced that what God promised would come to pass.
- b) In fact, the more ridiculous the reality of the situation, the more Abraham was strengthened in his resolve.
- c) He was sure that God was always capable of making good on His word.
- d) Abraham's attitude, and one we all ought to adopt, was this: *"If God says it, I believe it; it's that simple."*

(2) Is this just a history lesson? Let it not be!

(a) The account of Abraham was to teach us that the promises of Yahweh are fulfilled in all those who have faith.

1. "And **therefore** "it was accounted to him for righteousness."" Romans 4:22 NKJV
2. And that faith, as we learned in [Belief is an Act of Faith](#), is demonstrated by action.
  - a) *"Was not Abraham our father **justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?**"* James 2:21 NKJV

- b) Where this was heading all along is that righteousness would be imputed to all those who believe the testimony of Y'shua.
- c) He was dead, buried, and then raised from the grave by Yahweh. That could not happen naturally, without the power of God (His grace) at work.
  - 1) *"and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power [grace] toward us who believe,** according to **the working of His mighty power [grace] which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead** and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,"*  
Ephesians 1:19-20 NKJV
- d) Imputed righteousness is that which is ascribed to you because of Y'shua's virtue (actions), not because of your own actions. And thus you are justified (put in right standing with Yahweh) by faith alone.
  - 1) Of this you must be **fully convinced, even in the deadness of Sarah's womb!**

**B. It was there all along for us to see!**

- (1) Imputed to us who believe that life can come from the dead (life from Sarah's Dead Womb)

- (a) Raised from the dead, like Isaac was raised from Sarah's dead womb!
1. **"Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."** Romans 4:23-25 NKJV
  2. And this is where the whole thing congeals into the most beautiful prophetic picture, but only for those who believe in Y'shua's death, burial and resurrection.
    - a) The entire history of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, the son of promise, and their miraculous journey of righteousness through faith, was pointing toward Christ all along.
    - b) Just align the imagery and then sit back in awe and wonder.
    - c) Imputed faith-based righteousness was not exclusive to Abraham, but is available to all those who would believe after him.
    - d) But in what must they believe?

- 1) They must believe in the resurrection of the dead.
  - 2) Y'shua, our Lord, God's only begotten Son was sacrificed for our sins and placed in a tomb reserved for the dead.
  - 3) He emerged from that tomb alive so we, like Abraham, could be justified by faith in the resurrection of the dead.
  - 4) Isaac, Abraham's only begotten son was birthed from the dead, but he from the deadness of Sarah's womb.
  - 5) And even though it was through Isaac that this promise to Abraham and his descendants would seemingly be fulfilled, he too was willing to sacrifice his only begotten son! (See Genesis 22)
- e) And the deeper we look the more we see.
- 1) Abraham was promised he'd be the father of many nations and he believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness.
  - 2) It was there all along. Sarah, Abraham's wife was barren; her womb was dead. It had remained empty for her entire life—all eighty-nine years.

- 3) But then something happened. Life came from death. God allowed this elderly woman and her husband ten years her senior to conceive.
  - 4) From her empty dead womb came life.
  - 5) When her only begotten son was birthed, again her womb was empty. But, this time as a testimony to the resurrection—life from death.
  - 6) And later, the father of this only son, born out of a once dead womb, was asked to sacrifice him, putting to the test the promise that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in all the heavens and the sands on all the seashores.
- f) And is this not what we are asked to believe about Christ?
- 1) And it even goes a step further, not just the willingness of a Father to sacrifice His Son, but the very deed itself.
  - 2) God's righteousness is imputed to all those who believe this Son was raised from the dead.
  - 3) Simply confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that God has raised up the Lord Jesus

from the dead and you will be saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

- 4) There is no other way because if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile and you are still dead in your sins! (I Corinthians 15:12-19)
- 5) The Empty Womb: Isaac resurrected from the dead womb (because Isaac was born; Genesis 21:1-3).
- 6) The Empty Tomb: Y'shua resurrected from the dead tomb (He is not here, for He is risen; Matthew 28:6).

(2) The only begotten Son(s)

(a) Isaac

1. **“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac** [Genesis 22:1-19], and he who had received the promises offered up **his only begotten son**, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” Hebrews 11:17-19 NKJV

(b) Y'shua

1. "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world **that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of **the only begotten Son of God.**" John 3:15-18 NKJV

(c) Condemnation for all those who don't believe in the only begotten Son.

1. ""And this is the **condemnation**, that **the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil **hates the light** and does not come to the light, **lest his deeds should be exposed.** But **he who does the truth comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."" John 3:19-21 NKJV
2. The light has come into the world...
  - a) He was born; He was crucified; He was buried; and He resurrected from the tomb!



(3) And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then you are still dead!

(a) How do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1. **“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”**

I Corinthians 15:12-19 NKJV

2. No Resurrection?

a) If Sarah’s womb never gave birth to Isaac...

- b) And if the tomb in which Y'shua's lifeless body was placed is still occupied by a dead man's bones, a man who lied about who He was...
  - c) Then we have no hope and that is **most pitiable!**
3. But fear not...
- a) The Womb is Empty! Isaac resurrected from the dead womb. (Genesis 21:1-3).
  - b) The Tomb is Empty! Y'shua resurrected from the dead tomb (He is not here, for He is risen; Matthew 28:6).

## **Summary: HEIRS BY FAITH**

### **1. Before the Law there was Faith**

#### **A. Faith before Law**

- (1) The elephant in the room!
  - (a) Faith and all the promises that come with it, came before the law.
- 1. Paul highlights Abraham's position as the father of the Judeo-Christian faith.
  - a) He was called before the Law was codified on Mount Sinai.
  - b) Where did God's people go wrong in their understanding?

- 1) There is one people group who the one true God specifically called His own.
  - 2) Over time, they became identified as the conduits through which God's holy commands were delivered to mankind.
  - 3) Throughout the 1500 years since Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, they became convinced that God's promise was associated with obedience to the law based on self-determination and self-discipline, as opposed to grace-empowered-faith-based-obedience.
- c) Paul consistently corrects this wrong assertion.
- 1) Remember what we learned in the first half of Romans 4. Faith comes first as a gift from God; then belief is faith in action. (See [Belief is an Act of Faith](#))
- d) He accentuates the obvious; the law had not yet been given when God's call went out to Abraham 430 years before the Exodus and Mt. Sinai. (See Table 1.1)

## **B. How do you identify an heir?**

- (1) Look for their faith!

- (a) If heirs could be identified by their adherence to the law, it would make faith irrelevant when it comes to God's promise.
  - 1. If those who became identified as the guardians of the law were the true heirs of Abraham, then right standing before God would not be faith-based, but law-based.
    - a) As you just learned in detail, God's promise came first through faith, 430 years before the law was ever codified!
    - b) Of course the law remains significant, just not for the reasons you might think.
    - c) It was codified so man would have no excuse when they choose to disobey.
    - d) The law formally defines sin, so that God's condemnation of sinners would not be deemed inequitable.
- (2) If there is nothing to define sin, then one might assume nothing we do will offend God. (Peek ahead to Romans 7)
  - (a) No Law! No Sin! No Savior!
    - 1. Viewing God's laws from the correct perspective.

- a) Paul had gained the proper understanding of the true value of the law. It was not intended to identify heirs, but sin!
- b) Where there is no law there is can be no violation of the law, which means no one is guilty before God!
- c) There is no way to identify sin if there is not system that defines God's standards. So, without laws sin does not exist!
- d) In other words, you'd believe you were perfect if you did not have God's standards to use as a comparison to your decisions and actions.
- e) However, once you acknowledge God's law is the standard, you are able to realize your sin and how you are heading for certain death unless you procure a remedy.
- f) At one point Paul considered the law the perfect path for life, only to realize its purpose was actually to expose the death sentence that awaits all those who transgress it.
- g) That makes our need for a savior universal. We need a system that qualifies heirs in a way that

does not require adherence to the law based on our own strength and self-determination.

h) The law powerfully points to our need for Y'shua and that makes it holy and just and good.

(3) Without God's intervention you would not even recognize the remedy because it makes no sense to the natural mind.

(a) That is why it is crucial that faith come first!

1. No one knows the things of God **except the Spirit of God.**

a) A lot can be said about the most basic tenets of the Christian faith, but maybe none is more essential than life from the dead.

b) Christianity hinges on the resurrection and yet, it's an absurd assertion to all but those who are already in the faith.

c) Man can only understand the things of man because the spirit of man is all he has access to.

d) Those who need accept the resurrection don't have the vision to see it!

e) It takes the Spirit of God to know the things of God and that is why the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing.

2. Without the Holy Spirit, the redemption story is simply ridiculous.
  - a) God creates mankind and he sins and brings death into the world...
  - b) God launches a plan to redeem fallen man...
  - c) He will become a man Himself by being born as a human baby who has no earthly father (the Holy Spirit will impregnate a young virgin)...
  - d) He will grow up as a normal child, become an adult, and at a specific time He will step into His ministry.
  - e) This will reveal His true nature and purpose.
  - f) His mission will require Him to be sacrificed on a cross, so His shed blood can cover all the sins of mankind, past, present and future.
  - g) Then, He will be buried in a tomb as if defeated, only to resurrect in victory to a new life.
  - h) All you need to do to participate in this universal forgiveness of sin program, and to be redeemed to live forever in the presence of a Holy God, instead of the eternal flames of hell, is to believe this story.
3. What does believing this look like?
  - a) Accept the invitation to become His bride.

- b) Accept that He is God in the flesh, born from a virgin mother.
  - c) Accept that His blood will pay the price for your sins (first you must agree that you are a sinner).
  - d) Accept that He was crucified, died, and was buried in a tomb.
  - e) And here is the game changer... Accept that He resurrected after three days and three nights!
  - f) And... you will be saved because you were buried and resurrected with Him! Got it?
- (b) You won't (without faith) because this story sounds like complete madness! You won't get it because no one can know the things of God except the Spirit of God and that is why it is by grace through faith that the gospel of salvation suddenly makes sense (no longer foolishness)!
1. Absent an antecedent intervention by God, we don't have a shot at believing in the resurrection.
- a) The gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing.
  - b) God must first impart His grace which gifts us the faith to believe and when our blind eyes are set free, then the gospel is no longer foolishness!
- (1) Faith then Law! Why? (Coming full circle!)



- (a) “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.***” Romans 4:13 NKJV

1. The Promise WAS ALWAYS pointing to Christ!

- a) No one and no thing can change a covenant that comes first! The order matters and faith came first!
- b) The promise was about a seed, singular, and that seed was that through Abraham’s line the Messiah would come.
- c) And as we have already elaborated in detail, the law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham! (See Table 1.1 above)
- d) And that giving of the law did not nullify the promise to Abraham, but rather it enhanced it, as we will see below in Galatians 3:19 and Romans 4:18-19. The law accentuated our need for a savior and that is a VERY GOOD THING!

2. Being the seed of Abraham through faith also levels the playing field, meaning your background need not keep you from Yahweh, whether you were a pagan or a Hebrew.

- a) Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he an Israelite; Jews and the nation of Israel came much later.

- b) Abraham-Isaac-Jacob; Jacob renamed Israel; Israel had 12 sons; Judah was the forth son, Judah and Levi (third son) became the southern Kingdom of Judah after King Solomon died.
  - c) They were called by the slang term “Jew” later on.
  - d) So you can see, Abraham was neither a Jew nor an Israelite, nor circumcised when he was called.
    - 1) Remember: *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”* Romans 4:1 NKJV (See [Belief is an Act of Faith](#))
  - e) Bottom line: all people become righteous by faith whether a Jew, Greek, Hebrew, or pagan because it is Yahweh...
    - 1) Who gives life to the dead
    - 2) And faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
  - f) When you believe, you can see things that do not yet exist as if they already do...
- (2) And let's come full circle...
- (a) The law was added to clearly demarcate sin!
    - 1. Does this mean the law is NO LONGER needed?

- a) We saw a detailed answer to this already in Romans 7:7-12, but it bears reviewing, as there has been a stronghold over the proper understand of this for many centuries!
- b) Sin is defined by the law; without it there would be no sin!
- c) If there is no sin, then you are alive and well.
- d) However, if the law comes in and defines sin, it proves you have a death sentence.
- e) That is what makes God's commands holy and just and good!
- f) It makes your need for a savior universal.
- g) But, the system still needs to qualify heirs by faith, which came first, because a later covenant cannot annul an earlier covenant.
- h) We need a mechanism that supersedes adherence to the law based on our own strength and self-determination.
- i) And that is what the law is meant to do—to powerfully point to our need for Y'shua whose grace empowers our obedience, and that makes the law holy and just and good.

(3) And if you think that once you are born-again you no longer have a need to be pointed toward Y'shua, think again.

(a) The law will remain your tutor **until the time appointed by the father.**

(b) What time is that?

1. Why was Paul laboring for them and would be laboring for you even now?

a) Because the final fulfillment of...no longer needing a guardian (the law) because you are no longer children (same treatment as slaves), is when Christ is fully formed in you!

b) That is the purpose of the Church and we are still in the formation period! Don't agree? Just look around! The guardian is necessary until we grow up! *Into a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Christ is fully formed in you; and that we should no longer be children!*

**Summary: HOPE CONTRARY TO HOPE**

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**A. ...that it might be according to grace!**

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(a) Children of Faith

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  - 4) There is no other way because if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is

not risen, your faith is futile and you are still dead in your sins! (I Corinthians 15:12-19)

5) The Empty Womb: Isaac resurrected from the dead womb (because Issac was born; Genesis 21:1-3).

6) The Empty Tomb: Y'shua resurrected from the dead tomb (He is not here, for He is risen; Matthew 28:6).

(2) The only begotten Son(s)

(a) Isaac, **his only begotten son...**

(b) Y'shua, **His only begotten Son...**

(c) Condemnation for all those who don't believe in the only begotten Son.

1. The light has come into the world...

a) He was born; He was crucified; He was buried; and He resurrected from the tomb!

(3) And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then you are still dead!

(a) How do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1. No Resurrection?

a) If Sarah's womb never gave birth to Isaac...

- b) And if the tomb in which Y'shua's lifeless body was placed is still occupied by a dead man's bones, a man who lied about who He was...
  - c) Then we have no hope and that is **most pitiable!**
2. But fear not...
- a) The Womb is Empty! Isaac resurrected from the dead womb. (Genesis 21:1-3).
  - b) The Tomb is Empty! Y'shua resurrected from the dead tomb (He is not here, for He is risen; Matthew 28:6).

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. **Why is it critical to maintain a clear understanding that faith came before the law was given on Mt. Sinai?**
  - A. Romans 4:13 addresses that "elephant in the room." How?
  - B. Review Table 1.1 and write a short narrative about the timeline between the call of Abraham and the Exodus.
2. **In Romans 4:14-15 it emphasizes the risk involved with believing God's inheritance comes through the law.**
  - A. What is that risk and how will understanding the timeline help mitigate that risk?

- 3. Romans 7:6-12 helps mitigate the risk of taking your proper understanding of faith before law too far.**
- A. What does it explain about the law that ensures that this will not happen?
  - B. How does Paul's explanation highlight the goodness of the law?
- 4. Without God's intervention you would not even recognize the remedy to what the law reveals because it makes no sense to the natural mind.**
- A. How does I Corinthians 1:18 and 2:10-14 support this statement?
  - B. How then are the blinders removed? (See: Ephesians 2:8; Romans 4:16; 5:1)
  - C. What then must we come to recognize? (See Romans 6:4-5)
- 5. In light of Romans 4:13, explain Galatians 3:15-18.**
- A. What purpose then does the law serve? (See: Galatians 3:19; Romans 7:6-12)
  - B. Use the following passages to negate the idea that once you are born-again you no longer have need of the law to point you toward Y'shua. (See: Galatians 3:29; 4:1-7; 4:19; Ephesians 4:11-15)
- 6. To what is Paul referring when he says God gives life to the dead in Romans 4:17-18?**

A. How is faith involved?

**7. Of what is Abraham fully convinced in Romans 4:19-22?**

A. How does Ephesians 1:19-20 speak to the same situation?

**8. Use Romans 4:23-25 to...**

A. Relate Sarah's empty womb to the Y'shua's empty tomb. (See also Genesis 21:1-3 and Matthew 28:6)

B. How is Isaac the image of Y'shua? (See: Hebrews 11:17-19 and John 3:15-18)

C. What will come of those who don't see it? (See John 3:19-21)

**9. Why is understanding Sarah's empty womb paramount to also understanding the critical nature of the resurrection?**

A. Include a narrative written using I Corinthians 15:12-19 to enhance your answer.