

## THE NATURE OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

### Genesis 15:6 (NKJV)

**6** And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

**And he believed in the LORD:** The Hebrew word for “believed” is **aman**, which is the root for Amen! It denotes trust, a strong confirmation, or personal certainty of what it affirms. It expresses complete reliance or dependence upon. It is not mere mental assent, but an active trust.

The nature of the faith is active, as shown in James 2:23; where we see that the reality of Abram's faith was shown in that it WORKED. He was not justified by faith plus works, but by faith alone. However, this saving faith was not dormant – it demonstrated itself in action.

Jesus chided the Jews that if they were truly the children of Abraham, “you would do the works of Abraham.” (Jn. 8:39) Abraham had a faith that worked and was known by its works.

**Note:** A key point is that Abram did not simply believe in the promises of God, but rather believed in the God of the promise. His belief was IN THE LORD. That is, he believed in the character and power of God to bring to pass what He had promised.

**“and He accounted it to him”:** This means that God credited it to Abram's account. He reckoned this to Abram. It means to reckon, consider, or credit.

**“for righteousness”:** Righteousness is that which conforms to God's standard and character. It means to be accounted as RIGHT before God in terms of God's holy standard.

**Note:** God credited righteousness to Abram, based on Abram's faith ALONE! Abram was JUSTIFIED (declared righteous) in God's sight, because he believed God; not because of his works. Abram simply took God at His word – trusting Him completely, accepting God's word as accurate and dependable. But that was a life-changing faith that then demonstrated itself in Abram's life.

So, saving faith is simply, in earnest, taking God at His word. As developed in the NT, it is taking God at His Word concerning the PERSON and WORK of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, it is believing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16, 4:1-5, 22-25; 1 Jn. 5:9-13).

Genesis 15:6 is quoted three times in the New Testament being found in Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23. Thus, Genesis 15:6 is a FOUNDATIONAL verse in properly understanding the nature of saving faith.

The New Testament builds on the FAITH example of Abraham as found in Genesis. Abraham is the greatest example of faith that is found in the Bible. Abraham lived around 2000 B.C. He and his family were from Ur of the Chaldees in modern-day Iraq. They were initially idolaters (cf. Josh. 24:2). In Ur God called Abram and he responded by faith. Genesis 12-25 chronicles his journey of faith.

Abraham is known as the founding father of the Hebrew nation. Abraham is the first person called Hebrew as seen in Gen. 14:13. It is for this reason that the nation of Israel referred to Abraham as "**father Abraham**". In Romans 4 Abraham is called the father of all who believe (cf. Rom. 4:11, 16). In Gal. 3:7 Paul says that "**those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**"

Abraham figures prominently in the three great NT doctrinal books of Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. He is the premier example of "**Justification by faith alone**". The Bible puts Abraham forth as the key model of showing how we are made right before God on the basis of faith alone. The whole chapter of Romans 4 is given over to showing justification by faith alone as seen in Abraham. Romans 4 is a KEY chapter in the NT showing that we are saved by faith ALONE. In reality it amounts to a prolonged explanation of Genesis 15:6. Note the emphasis in Romans 4.

### **Abraham was saved by FAITH...**

alone apart from works – Rom. 4:1-3

alone apart from circumcision/religious rites – Rom. 4:9-12

alone apart from the Law – Rom. 4:13-17

that persevered – Rom. 4:18-22

of the same nature that applies to us – Rom. 4:23-25

The word "**accounted**" is found 11 times in Romans chapter 4. It means counted, imputed, reckoned, considered, credited.

It is a bookkeeping term or an accounting term. It means to "*put to one's account*" or to "*transfer to one's account*". As illustrated in Abram (Gen. 15:6) and quoted in Romans 4:3 the BASIS of God accounting a person

righteous is on the basis of FAITH ALONE! (Compare Gal. 3:6 and James 2:23)

Abraham is the great Bible example of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE!

**Romans 4:1–5 (NKJV)**

**1** What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

**2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

**3** For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

**4** Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

**5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,