

Romans 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Analysis

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Paul summarizes Abraham's faith: plērophorētheis (πληροφορηθείς, "being fully assured/convinced"). The verb compounds plēros (πλήρος, "full") with phoreō (φορέω, "to carry/bear")—faith that is fully carried through, complete conviction. The content of this assurance has two components:

1. ho epēggeltai (ὁ ἐπὶγγελεται, "what He has promised")—God's word stands
2. dunatos estin kai poiēsai (δυνατός ἐστιν καὶ ποιῆσαι, "He is able also to do")
—God's power matches His promise.

This is the anatomy of justifying faith: full persuasion that God is both truthful (He has promised) and powerful (He is able to perform).

Abraham believed God could do what humanly was impossible—create life from death. This parallels Christian faith: God raised Christ from the dead (v. 24-25), which was equally impossible by natural means. Justifying faith trusts God to do what He has promised (justify the ungodly, v. 5) because He is able (through Christ's atoning death and resurrection). Faith's object, not its intensity, saves.

Historical Context

The connection between promise and power would resonate with Paul's Roman readers familiar with patron-client relationships. A patron's word was only as good as his ability to deliver on it. Paul presents God as the ultimate Patron whose

promises are absolutely certain because His power is unlimited. This contrasts with human patrons who might promise much but lack the power or will to follow through.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What is the relationship between God's promise and God's power, and why must faith embrace both?
2. How does Abraham's 'full persuasion' differ from mere intellectual assent or wishful thinking?
3. What has God promised you that seems impossible, and do you believe He is able to perform it?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	πληροφορηθεὶς	ὅτι	ὃ	ἐπήγγελλται	δυνατός	ἐστιν
And	being fully persuaded	that	what	he had promised	able	he was
G2532	G4135	G3754	G3739	G1861	G1415	G2076

καὶ	ποιῆσαι
And	to perform
G2532	G4160

Additional Cross-References

Luke 1:37 (Parallel theme): For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Jeremiah 32:17 (Parallel theme): Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Genesis 18:14 (Parallel theme): Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Hebrews 11:19 (Parallel theme): Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Jeremiah 32:27 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Luke 1:45 (Parallel theme): And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:12 (Parallel theme): For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Matthew 19:26 (Parallel theme): But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Psalms 115:3 (Parallel theme): But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Romans 8:38 (Parallel theme): For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,