

# THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

**December 6, 2009**

**“And Abraham Believed God...”**

By Greg Litmer

Recently I heard a fellow call the gospel of John, “the gospel proclaimed,” and the letter to the Romans, “the gospel explained.” I thought that was an interesting way of looking at it and was prepared to hear more until I heard the fellow’s approach to Romans 4--a pivotal chapter in the book. The gentlemen focused on Romans 4:3, and completely missed the point. Romans 4:3 says, **“For what does the Scripture say? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”** The fellow attempted to use Abraham to prove that salvation comes at the point of belief; he even added the word “alone” in his explanation of the verse.

The quotation found in Romans 4:3 was first spoken in Genesis 15:6. It was made concerning Abraham believing that God would give him an heir, a son in his old age. This statement was made even as Abraham was in the land of Canaan, and that is a very vital point.

As I think of the letter to the Romans, referring to it as “the gospel explained” is really a good way of looking at it. It is, at least in my opinion, the most profound and in-depth presentation of salvation by grace through faith in Scripture. It is also one of the most profoundly misunderstood and misused.

Romans is all about faith. It is all about salvation through faith. It also makes it clear that the faith that saves is not simply belief, and Abraham, the father of the faithful, is a classic example of that truth.

We are first introduced to Abraham, called Abram at the time, in Genesis 11. He was living in Ur of the Chaldees, a city located in the lower southeastern portion of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River. Stephen, in Acts 7:2-4, makes it clear that while he was living in Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham received his call from God. That passage says: **“And he said, Hear Me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, Depart from your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you. Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, God removed him into this country in which you are now living.”**

God called Abraham. He told him to leave the land that he knew and journey to a land that he did not know. Hebrews 11:8 tells us, **“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he**

**went out, not knowing where he was going.”** Abraham journeyed through Mesopotamia to Haran, a city located in the Northwest portion of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. At the death of his father, God called him again. This is the call recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 that contains the land, nation, and seed promises. Do you now what Abraham did when he received this call? He obeyed. Genesis 12:4 tells us, **“So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”**

The pertinent question, and the key to understanding Abraham’s place as the father of the faithful, is this: Would the statement found in Genesis 15:6, and quoted in Romans 4:3, ever have been made if Abraham had remained in Ur of the Chaldees? For that matter, would it have been made if Abraham had remained in Haran when the second call came? The obvious and undeniable answer to those questions is *no!* If Abraham had simply believed God alone, and had not obeyed Him, then there would have been no saving faith, only belief. Belief alone has *never* been good enough.

In Need of Prayers	Information
<p>Sharon Tirey has <b><i>completed</i></b> her cancer treatments!</p> <p>Taylor Osterling is home and currently stable.</p> <p>Lilly Fitzwater’s new room number is 32.</p> <p>Michelle Oxendine (friend of Jim Edwards) is dealing with some health problems.</p> <p>David Day (Bobbie Atkisson’s grandson) has been deployed to Iraq. His wife will follow this month.</p> <p>Cecil Ellis continues to struggle with poor circulation. One leg has been amputated and there was a chance the other would be as well. I have not heard whether that has had to happen or not.</p>	<p>Remember Ron Catchen, Chuck McDavitt, and David Blakeman.</p> <p>The plan for the auditorium class is to study lessons 8-9 this morning. If we do not finish both of them be prepared to examine the remainder of lesson 9 Wednesday, as well as lesson 1, which is quite short.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>University Height Church of Christ</b>  <b>445 Columbia Avenue</b>  <b>Lexington, Ky 40508</b>  <b>859-255-6257</b>  <b><a href="http://www.uheightschurch.com">www.uheightschurch.com</a></b></p>