

3 Use of *Pistis*; in Rom 4:20 “by Means of Doctrine”; also Heb 11:4–40; Abraham & Sarah, Heb 4:8–19; Abraham, “Fully Convinced” Completes Application of Faith-Rest Drill, Rom 4:21; Doctrinal Conclusion: What God Promised He is Able to Do

Romans 4:20 - That is, with reference to the promise of God, Abraham did not stagger in unbelief but was invigorated by the power poured into him by means of doctrine ...

37. The power is Bible doctrine resident in his soul – promises known as covenants that stipulate God will unconditionally provide Abraham a son, a nation, and a royal line – are all decreed to extend into eternity.
38. The four unconditional covenants may be summarized by alliteration: (1) Lineage: the Abrahamic, (2) Leadership: the Davidic, (3) Land: the Palestinian, and (4) Longevity: the New.
39. The phrase “by means of doctrine” is translated by the NASB, KJV, and NET Bibles with “in faith,” and by the NIV with “in his faith.”
40. The Greek word is the instrumental of means of the noun **πίστις, pistis** which is used in three different ways in the New Testament:
 - 1) As an attribute. It causes trust, faithfulness, reliability, and integrity:

2 Thessalonians 1:4 - We ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith [πίστις, pistis] in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

- 2) In the active voice. It means trust and confidence in the veracity of the Word in three ways:
 - a. For salvation:

Ephesians 2:8a - For by grace you have been saved through faith [πίστις, pistis] ...

- b. In the faith-rest drill:

Hebrews 4:2 - Indeed we have had good news [the gospel] preached to us, just as they [the Exodus generation] also; but the word they heard [Moses' teaching of the Law] did not profit them, because it was not united by faith [for the Word to be beneficial, one must believe what is taught] in those who heard.

- c. In spiritual growth.

Colossians 2:7 - Having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established by faith [πίστις, pistis], just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

- 3) In the passive voice. Doctrine resident in the *kardia*:

Hebrews 11:4 - By means of faith [πίστις, *pistis*] Able offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

41. The use that applies to our verse is number 3: doctrine; that which is believed. "By means of doctrine Abraham was invigorated by the power poured into him."
42. Hebrews 11:4-40 is a long parenthesis in which the writer of Hebrews provides examples of those who "by means of doctrine had the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).
43. Throughout the passage, those chosen to illustrate the principle are introduced by the phrase, "By means of doctrine."
44. Two of these examples are Abraham and Sarah who take up one third of the parenthesis and summarize their mental attitude adjustment to the integrity of God. The passage also confirms the eternal aspect of the covenants:

Hebrews 11:8 - By means of doctrine Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was about to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

v. 9 - By means of doctrine, he lived as a temporary resident of the land of promise, as to a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, joint heirs of the same promise.

v. 10 - For he himself kept waiting with anticipation for a city [the new Jerusalem of the eternal state, Revelation 21:2, cf. Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12] having foundations whose architect and contractor is God.

Hebrews 11:11 - By means of doctrine even Sarah herself received the ability to conceive though she was beyond the proper time of life, since she concluded faithful the One who had promised.

v. 12 - And therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead, as many descendants [Genesis 22:17] "as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore."

v. 13 - According to doctrine, all of these [Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, & Jacob] died not having received the promises [in physical life], but having seen and welcomed them at a far distance [through faith in the promises], and having acknowledged that they were strangers and transients on the earth [this earth was not their home].

v. 14 - For they who say such things as these make it clear that they keep seeking a homeland.

v. 15 - And if they had been thinking of that country [Ur of the Chaldees] from which they had originated—but they did not—they would have had opportunity to return.

v. 16 - But, as a matter of fact, they desire and strive for something better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a city for them [**the new Jerusalem**].

v. 17 - By means of doctrine, Abraham, when he was being tested, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son [**Ishmael is not considered here since he is not the subject of the covenant**].

v. 18 - Toward whom it had been said [**Genesis 21:12**], "In Isaac shall you descendants be called."

v. 19 - Having calculated that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, for which reason he received him back as a type [**of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God**].

45. Patience is the result of wisdom and wisdom is gained by knowledge of the Word. Abraham maximized the use of the faith-rest drill with his doctrinal conclusion in verse 21:

Romans 4:21 - And having been fully convinced that what God had promised, He is able also to accomplish.

1. This verse expresses Abraham's conviction about the rectitude of divine integrity and is expressed by the aorist passive participle of the verb, **πληροφορέω, plērophoreō**: "having been fully convinced":

aorist:	Constative: contemplates Abraham's execution of the faith-rest drill in its entirety. Abraham had reached the high ground of the spiritual advance for an Old Testament believer.
passive:	Abraham received the action of having confidence by means of doctrine resident in his soul which he utilized in achieving the doctrinal conclusion: "what God had promised, He is able also to accomplish."
participle:	Circumstantial: refers to any person who advances to spiritual maturity.
2. This verb indicates that Abraham had reached spiritual maturity according to the spiritual life of the Old Testament which is maxing out the faith-rest drill.
3. The next word is the conjunction introducing indirect discourse: **ὅτι, hoti** which is used after verbs related to mental activity to introduce the content of the idea and is translated *that*.¹
4. The next word is the relative pronoun **ὃς hos**, translated *what*. "... having been fully convinced that what."

¹ "This is a specialized use of the direct object clause after a verb of perception. The ὅτι clause contains *reported speech* or *thought*. When the ὅτι introduces indirect discourse, it should be translated *that*" (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 456).

5. Following is the “reported speech or thought,” the perfect middle indicative of the verb **ἐπαγγέλλω, epangellō**, translated *promise*:

perfect: Iterative: denotes a promise being made at intervals rather than continuously (i.e., Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:5; 17:18–19; 21:12). An advancing or mature believer doesn’t have to be told or promised continuously; only when a person is insecure is there a constant demand for a daily reiteration of the promise. Therefore, this is the idiom of the perfect of repeated action in which the action is completed but the results of the action are only mentioned at certain intervals, not constantly.

middle: Indirect: God as the Agent produces the action from the source of His divine integrity.

indicative: Declarative: expressing a dogmatic fact.

6. The dynamic middle voice emphasizes the part taken by the subject. Since the subject is God, His promise from His integrity is a source of power. The middle voice has a reflexive connotation and is therefore translated: “... that what He Himself had promised.”
7. Promises are a part of the believer’s logistical grace support and thus originate from the divine attribute of justice. Therefore, promises are provided in Scripture as part of a believer’s spiritual logistics. He has the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit and the availability of Bible teaching either from the pastor of a local church or through electronic contrivances that transmit his teaching to those who are positive to the Word.
8. The requirement for the believer is to become aware of the promises by means of Bible study and their retention in the *kardia* for application to life and circumstances.
9. Earlier in the verse we noted that the verb *plērophoreō*: *having been fully convinced* is in the passive voice meaning that Abraham received this confidence from his doctrinal inventory of ideas.
10. The source of his persuasion is found in the divine attribute of omnipotence found in the immutability of the promises – the Word of God is alive and powerful – indicated next by the present active indicative of the verb **ἐμί, eimi** and the predicate adjective **δυνατός, dunatos**: *is able*.

present: Static: a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing. The justice of God has the ability and the power in coordination with divine omnipotence to accomplish whatsoever He pleases.

In all cases, our point of contact with the essence of God is the justice of God through which we receive either blessing or discipline.

active: The justice of God produces the action of having the ability to accomplish the fulfillment of the promise, i.e., the Abrahamic Covenant.

indicative: Declarative: the statement of fact.

11. With the verb is the predicate adjective for divine power, the noun **δυνατός, *dunatos***, translated *able*. It indicates both the omnipotence of God and Abraham's persuasion of God's ability to fulfill the promise.

12. The final word in the verse is the aorist active infinitive of the verb **ποιέω, ποιεῖν: *to accomplish***:

aorist: Gnostic: for an axiomatic statement.

active: God produces the action from His justice.

infinitive: Indicates the actual result of Abraham having arrived at spiritual maturity.

13. The major premise of this passage is that whatever God promised to Abraham, or any other biblical figure, had the backing of the integrity of God through the justice of God and therefore Scripture's promises are likewise available to you.

14. But—you must know the promises in order to utilize the promises. The Bible provides thousands of promises but the believer must have an interest in learning them in order to use them.