

Romans 4

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

4:1 To prove the gospel is witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets Paul appeals to the story of Abraham, taken from the Pentateuch or the Law and the Psalms of David which are united to the Prophets.

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4:3 The quotation is from Genesis 15:6. and illustrates the principle of salvation by grace alone through faith alone rooted in the righteousness of God and established by the redeeming blood work of Christ.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned [considered] of grace, but of debt.

4:4 If a person could be saved by good works then God would be in man's debt. He would owe it to the person who had fulfilled the obligations to save him. But this would be contrary to grace which is mercy shown "*to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly.*"

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth

the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

4:5 The life of Abraham testifies to such saving grace. It was his faith which was counted for righteousness not his works.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

4:6-8 The song of David, the Sweet Singer of Israel adds his voice of praise to the grace and mercy of God apart from works. Ps 32:1-2 "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*"

9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not

circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised.

4:9-12 The blessedness of God's righteous offer of free grace is not just for the Jew, it is for the Gentile also for Abraham was on Gentile ground when grace came to him. Before Abraham received the sign of the seal of the covenant in his body he was justified, not by works but by faith. Anyone who has the faith of Abraham can know the joy of having such faith counted for righteousness.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

4:13-14 Abraham is called "the father of circumcision" for in him the ordinance was instituted. Nevertheless, the promise that he should be heir of the world was not given to him through the Law or based on human merit. Then he would have deserved the inheritance and faith would become a non issue or void. No, the promise came to Abraham on the basis of sovereign grace. His righteousness was a by-faith righteousness.

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there *is* no transgression.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might* be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

4:16 Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe in Jesus as he first believed in the promise of a seed.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

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

22 And therefore it was imputed [credited] to him for righteousness.

4:17-22 The faith of Abraham becomes all the more remarkable when it is remembered that he went past the age of the ability to procreate naturally. Still he staggered not at the promise of God but believed in Him who is the God of resurrection. God works when the flesh is powerless. God kept His promise to Abraham and raised up Christ the true Seed by bringing Him into the world contrary to the laws of nature by the virgin birth and then by bringing Him back from the sphere of the dead, which is also contrary to the laws of nature. By faith Abraham saw this (John 8:56) and believed.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed [credited] to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

4:23-25 The story of Abraham's faith was not preserved simply to exalt him but to demonstrate the principle of grace. God's mercy will come to anyone if there is faith that God has raised Christ the Lord from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is proof that God is satisfied with the Lord's sin offering. At the Cross divine justice was appeased, the demands of the Law were met, the holiness of God was established and the mercy of God was vindicated. Grace is now free to flow and the believing sinner can be declared justified in all things. Halleluiah! What a Savior! Oh how great is our God!

Romans 4

Questions on Romans 4

1. What would it matter if works justified Abraham?
 2. Which two men from the *Old Testament* does Paul use to illustrate the principle of grace?
 3. Who is the blessed man? (Romans 4:8)?
 4. Through what means was the promise made to Abraham (Romans 4:14).
 5. Why did Jesus die and why was He resurrected? (Romans 4:25)
3. Is it important to believe that Jesus is raised from the dead (Rom. 4:24). If so, why?
 4. In what way is Abraham the father of us all? (Rom. 4:16)
 5. How would you describe your own faith in God? Weak? Strong? Questionable?

Answers to Romans 4

1. If works had justified Abraham then God would have been indebted to Him and the principle of grace would have been lost.
2. Abraham and David
3. The blessed man is the one to whom the Lord does not charge with sin.
4. The promise given to Abraham was not through the law but through the righteousness of faith.
5. Jesus died for the offenses of others and He was resurrected so sinners might be justified.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Read and reflect on the death of Christ in the deaths of Christ (Matthew 26:47-28:20).
2. Do you believe in the doctrine of an imputed righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ charged to our account. If not, explain?