



ROMANS
4:1-25

JUSTIFICATION
BY FAITH
ALONE

Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

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.

1. Both unsaved and saved face a huge challenge comprehending salvation by faith alone apart from personal, human effort or works.
 - a. Unsaved, if they believe there is life after death, heaven & hell, count upon their good life to get them into heaven.
 - b. Christians struggle with the concept because they fear losing their salvation after trusting Christ for salvation and then realizing they are far from perfect in their daily living. And so they develop a concept of “faith plus works” for salvation.



2. Problem: Neither the unsaved relying on their good works to be saved, nor Christians relying on their good works to stay saved, ever know for sure if they have done enough to gain heaven. That is an awful state to be in. Eternity is forever!

Challenge: Be assured that salvation comes by faith alone apart from your personal works.

A. Because Abraham was justified by faith alone, 4:1-5

1. Abraham's justification by works denied, 4:1-2

Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.



2. Proof Abraham was justified by faith, 4:3-5

a. Scripture proof, 4:3

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

λογίζομαι, logizomai, translated 10 times in the chapter as “to count, reckon, impute.” The word speaks of how you think about anything.

Mark 15:28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

This is how they thought of Christ.



Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. 2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Genesis 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.



Genesis 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Had Abraham lived a righteous life up to this point? Probably, by the standards and culture of the world, a works righteousness. But he was not righteous before God, possessing “salvation righteousness,” a righteousness by faith. Now God thought of him as righteous in the most complete sense of the word, treated him as righteous, accepted him as righteous and bound for heaven.



b. Logical proof, 4:4

Romans 4:4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Note: There had been no mention in the transaction with Abraham that he had earned this blessing. God had simply promised; Abraham believed; God counted his belief for righteousness.

c. Spiritual application, 4:5

Romans 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.



B. Because David was justified by faith alone, 4:6-8

Romans 4:6 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. (Interpretive quotation of Psalm 32:1-2)

C. Because Abraham was justified prior to circumcision, 4:9-12



1. Order of events clarified, 4:9-10

Romans 4:9 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.

Abraham was circumcised when 99 years old and Ishmael was 13 years old (Gen. 17:23-26), so at least 14 years had elapsed since Abe believed God at Gen. 15:5 and was counted for righteousness.



2. Circumcision's significance to Abraham, 4:11-12

Romans 4:11 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.

Abraham's circumcision was a sign and seal of the righteousness of the faith which he already possessed before he was circumcised. To others (infants or adults), it is only a sign, but to Abe it was also a seal. Sign = removal of the filth of the flesh. Seal = a confirmation, ratification, or binding action made to Abe after he had believed (Gen. 15:5) and after he had received remarkable promises (Gen. 15:18-21; 17:1-8).



D. Because Abraham obtained the promise by faith apart from the Law, 4:13-22

1. Denial the promise came through the law, 4:13

Romans 4:13 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.

2. Law negates promise, 4:14-15

Romans 4:14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

The law never makes anyone righteous before God, rather it condemns man and brings God's wrath on us.



3. The promise came through faith, 4:16-22

a. The reason, 4:16

1) To be of grace, 4:16a

Romans 4:16a Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace;

2) To be sure to all who are of Abraham's faith, 4:16b

Romans 4:16b 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,



b. The faith, 4:17-21

1) Faith in God's supernatural ability, 4:17

Romans 4:17 (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.

Abraham saw God as one who could make alive one who was dead, and he was dead reproductively.



2) Faith in God's promise when all seems hopeless, 4:18-21

Romans 4:18 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 Sara'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 that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

c. The result, 4:22

Romans 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.



E. Application, 4:23-25

Romans 4:23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed 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.

