

# Book of Romans



## Chapter 4

*Theme: Abraham; David;  
Abraham justified by faith*

Michael Fronczak  
564 Schaeffer Dr.  
Coldwater, Michigan 49036

Bible Study Resource Center.com  
Copyright © 2018

## Romans Chapter 4

Paul is essentially offering a Midrash (an interpretive discussion) of Genesis 15:6 to bolster his case that the Gospel saves both Jews and gentiles under exactly the same terms. This Genesis passage tells the story of Abraham being reckoned by God to be righteous on account of his trust. But there is yet another aspect that helps us to understand where Paul was going with his line of thought. So let's take a bit of a detour to discuss something that although fundamental to our faith is not necessarily easy to grasp. We'll begin this way: while so far Paul has asserted that the Father will righteous people (justify them) on account of trust in Yeshua as Lord and Messiah, he really has not proved this to be the case according to Scripture (meaning Old Testament Scripture since there was no New Testament to refer to). The core of Paul's argument is that people (Jews and gentiles) can only be righteous only by an abiding trust in Yeshua's deed of going to the cross, and not by the works or deeds of following the Law of Moses. But most importantly, this applies to both gentiles and Jews.

This line of argument would have put him at loggerheads with the Jews living in Rome whether they were Believing or non-Believing Jews. Even more, on the surface (and especially to gentiles who didn't understand such nuances), it put him in a head-on collision with James, brother of Yeshua, who was the supreme leader of the early Church. James operated from his headquarters in Jerusalem where he led the Believing Jews of the Holy Land, while Paul worked throughout Asia leading the Believing Jews of the Diaspora as well as the Believing gentiles.

In the New Testament book named after him, James focused his writings as much on the works of a Believer as he did on trust in Messiah. Martin Luther noticed this and was so disapproving of what James had to say that he wanted the Book of James removed from the New Testament canon because Luther found no place in the Gospel of Christ for the role of deeds. Therefore he saw the Book of James as contradictory to Paul's writings and therefore as also contradictory to Luther's doctrine of faith and faith alone as the means to attain salvation. Part of Luther's stance stemmed from the fact that he was basically anti-Semitic and thus the Book of James was a bit "too Jewish" for his liking.

We're going to spend just a short time looking at what James said that particularly upset Luther because to him it ran completely counter to what we've been reading that Paul had to say in the Book of Romans; and therefore also counter to Luther's doctrine of grace. But it also highlights for us the conundrum that has always existed within the Christian and Messianic faith (even from Paul's day) about finding the proper balance between the roles of trust versus works. As I read this to you notice that it is almost as though James is responding directly to Paul's midrash about Abraham in Romans chapter 4, as James also refers to Genesis 15:6 and supplies his own reasoning for God reckoning Abraham as righteous.

James 2:14-26 CJB 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such "faith" able to save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food, 16 and someone says to him, "Shalom! Keep warm and eat hearty!" without giving him what he needs, what good does it do? 17 Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead. 18 But someone will say that you have faith and I have actions. Show me this faith of yours without the actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions! 19 You believe

that "God is one"? Good for you! The demons believe it too- the thought makes them shudder with fear! 0 But, foolish fellow, do you want to be shown that such "faith" apart from actions is barren? 21 Wasn't Avraham *avinu* declared righteous because of actions when he offered up his son Yitz'chak on the altar? 22 You see that his faith worked with his actions; by the actions the faith was made complete; 23 and the passage of the Tanakh was fulfilled which says, "Avraham had faith in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness." He was even called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is declared righteous because of actions and not because of faith alone. 25 Likewise, wasn't Rachav the prostitute also declared righteous because of actions when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another route? 26 Indeed, just as the body without a spirit is dead, so too faith without actions is dead.

So, while Paul says in Romans 3:24 that: Romans 3:24 CJB 24 By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua..... we find James say 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such "faith" able to save him?..... faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead.

On face value it sounds as though these two statements are at odds with one another. But in reality, there is no fundamental contradiction between Paul and James; rather they are expressing two sides of the same coin. Essentially, they are approaching the same matter (the balance of faith and works as expected by the Gospel of Christ) from different angles. Paul, due to who he was addressing (the Romans) and what he was trying to prove, puts more emphasis on how one initially attains righteousness; while James, due to who he was addressing (Holy Land Jews) and what he was trying to prove, puts more emphasis on how one maintains the righteousness that they have received. Let me repeat: Paul is dealing with Believing Diaspora Jews and gentiles; James is dealing almost exclusively with Believing Jews in the Holy Land. These are very different cultures with equally different religious concerns.

What is especially challenging, however, is that James says that Abraham was righteous on account of his deeds (putting his son Isaac on the altar as the example); while Paul says that Abraham was righteous on account of his trust. It is my opinion that we are dealing mostly with semantics and the fact that the organic unity between the Law and the Gospel can be quite difficult to pull apart and then discuss each as separate things. But when we do, it is even more difficult to then try to determine which is more important than the other: the faith of the Gospel or the works of the Law. Because while James is speaking of deeds and actions in terms of physical, tangible obedience to the various written regulations of the Law of Moses, Paul is speaking of the spirit that undergirds the Law of Moses and the goal that the Law strives for; and that righteousness is attained by means of God's grace.

The seeming distance between Law and trust (if not the un-crossable gulf that Christianity has made it) is highlighted by the fact that a half-century after Paul's and James' era, the Jews continued the route of deeming obedience to the Law as preeminent, while gentile Christians decided that trust was preeminent. The debate became so polarizing that Jews determined that righteousness was attained and maintained solely from obedience to the Law; while gentile Christians determined that righteousness was attained and maintained solely from trust (a classic case of both sides throwing the baby out with the bathwater). Neither of these determinations mirrors actual Scriptural truth but rather they express manmade doctrines, prejudices, cultural differences and political considerations. In reality Paul says that while God righteouses us

according to our trust, the Law remains alive and well and that it goes without saying that properly doing the provisions of the Law (deeds) remains paramount in the life of a Believer. Romans 2:5-6 CJB 5 But by your stubbornness, by your unrepentant heart, you are storing up anger for yourself on the Day of Anger, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed; 6 for he will pay back each one according to his deeds.

Conversely James says that if indeed you have actually been righteoused by God, then your faith will surely show up in your deeds. If your deeds don't reflect the faith you claim, then you are simply deceiving yourself about your faith. 21 Wasn't Avraham avinu declared righteous because of actions when he offered up his son Yitz'chak on the altar? 22 You see that his faith worked with his actions; by the actions the faith was made complete;

So now back to focusing on Paul and Romans chapter 4. In verses 4 and 5 Paul makes it abundantly clear that God accepts those who sin (Jews and gentiles) without requiring them FIRST to prove their trust in Him either through deeds of kindness or through doing the commandments of the Law. Let me say it this way: it is NOT through trust plus deeds that one is initially righteoused by God (that one is saved by God). However, it certainly is that once one puts their trust in God and God righteouses them (saves them) DESPITE his or her deeds, then the expected result is to express that trust by means of being obedient to Him through works and deeds as defined by the Law. Or, perhaps more succinctly, works and deeds as defined by the spirit of the Law. First trust, then deeds. This order can never be reversed, nor can one only have trust OR do deeds as a Believer. And in this, James and Paul are in full agreement; they just express it a bit differently.

It helps us to understand what Paul was dealing with in his letter to the Romans when we learn that the Jews of his day absolutely would not have seen obtaining righteousness as a possibility without first faithfully doing the works of the Law. He was also dealing with a Jewish society (both the Diaspora and the Holy Land Jews) who didn't distinguish any significant difference between the Law of Moses and Tradition (Halakhah). So even using the term "The Law" was full of ambiguity and it required some careful explanation.

One of the main thrusts of Paul's argument is what he sees as misinterpretation of Genesis 15.6 by his fellow Jews. That is, when it is said that Abraham believed God, and God reckoned it as righteousness, Paul says that this is speaking of Abraham's faith and NOT his faithfulness. What's the difference you may ask? The issue between the meaning of faith and faithfulness has become especially murky in the modern West because of the way we commonly use those words. In our day faith can mean a particular religion ("what faith do you belong to?") or even an ideology. It can mean a reasonable expectation or a hope for something and even a wish for something. Faithfulness means loyalty to a person (usually a marriage partner) or an organization, involving either sincere intentions or in actuality. But Biblically speaking faith is a term that speaks of a person's trust and confident belief even without tangible proof to back it up; it speaks of a mindset that usually involves a spiritual condition. Faith and trust in the Bible are so closely tied together that they are virtually synonyms. On the other hand, Biblical faithfulness speaks of person's loyalty to a covenant. In the case of Jews, it was loyalty to the divine covenants of Abraham and Moses. Put another way: faithfulness is far more than only a mindset, hope or intention; it is the actual performance of the terms of a covenant agreement. Faithfulness is expressed in physical actions; faithfulness is accomplished through works and deeds. Biblically this definition applies both to God and to man.

So, in applying this understanding to our issue of James versus Paul, Paul is approaching the Gospel more in terms of faith; James is approaching the Gospel more in terms of faithfulness.

Paul's approach is about mindset; James' approach is about actions. And yet in living reality, the faith and faithfulness of a true Believer are to operate together as one. The actual existence of a true saving faith in a Believer will always be evident through our faithfulness. And the active faithfulness of a Believer is the necessary tangible proof of our true saving faith. As it pertains to the Gospel, trust (or faith) and Law can be separated in theory in order that we can discuss each of them; but in reality, they are so tightly interwoven that they operate together as one complex entity. It is the same challenge with trying to discuss the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can be separated in theory in order that we can discuss each one of them; but in reality they are fused together as one complex entity (God is *echad*.....God is one).

I know this concept can be a bit difficult to think about but I've spent so much time with it because it is fundamental to understanding the core nature of our faith, and how we gain and maintain membership in our faith. So, I'll use an example that I used many years ago to illustrate it. I'll say upfront that it is not a precise illustration, but it is close enough to help communicate the concept. Becky is my wife. But she is also mother. In addition, she is grandmother. Further she is a friend to many and she is also a child of God. I can speak of the separate and various roles and elements of Becky my wife, Becky the mother, Becky the grandmother, Becky the friend, and Becky the child of God. I can even emphasize one over the others or give more weight to one over the others. And she can climb in and out of those roles as circumstance dictates. But that is only theoretical because at the same time I can't physically separate Becky into those several parts and identify one part of her as wife, another part as mother, and so on. That is because Becky is *echad*, one. God makes it clear that He is one; humans are similar, and James and Paul show us that within the Gospel Law and trust operate that way as well. I hope that helps.<sup>1</sup>

**McGee** THEME: Abraham; David; Abraham justified by faith

In this great section of justification by faith, we have seen the doctrine. Paul has vividly stated that man is a sinner. Then he revealed that God provides a righteousness for sinners, and justification by faith has been explained. Now he will illustrate this truth with two men out of the Old Testament: Abraham and David.

In Paul's day Abraham and David were probably held in higher esteem by the nation Israel than any other two whose lives are recorded in the Old Testament. Abraham was the founder of the Hebrew race, and David was their greatest king. Paul uses these two Old Testament worthies as illustrations to establish his statement in chapter 3 that there is concord and agreement between the Law and the gospel. Although they represent two diametrically opposed systems, neither contradicts nor conflicts with the other. And they are not mutually exclusive. Even under the Law and before the Law, faith was God's sole requirement. Abraham, before the Law, was justified by faith. And David, under the Law, sang of justification by faith. Paul is not presenting some strange new doctrine which cancels out the Old Testament and leaves the Jew afloat on the sea of life holding onto an anchor rather than being in a lifeboat. Paul is showing that Abraham and David are in the same lifeboat, which he is offering his own people in his day, labeled "justification by faith." The Law was a pedagogue -- it took the man under Law by the hand to lead him to the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle Paul had presented his case that God declares people righteous on the principle of faith instead of works. If his position is true, he should be able to illustrate it from the past. This

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>2</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

he did with Abraham, the patriarch of Israel (cf. John 8:39), and David as well (cf. comments on "the Law and the Prophets," Rom. 3:21).<sup>3</sup>

Now we see in the first five verses that Abraham was justified by faith.

### **<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?**

How was Abraham saved?

[The first of six occurrences of the question, "What shall we say then?" (6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30).]

He refers to Abraham as our forefather. ("Forefather," is used only here in the NT.) Undoubtedly this was to distinguish Abraham's physical ancestry from his spiritual fatherhood, mentioned later in 4:11-12, 16.

"Pertaining to the flesh" is modifying verb, not the noun.

"What then shall we say then that Abraham hath found according to the flesh."

[Cf. Gen 12:10-20. Abraham receives a lesson in ethics from Pharaoh. (Yet he later pulls the same stunt in Gen 20 with Abimelech, King of Gerar.)] (Subsequent silence from heaven for 13 years...)<sup>4</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

In Jewish terms, Romans chapter 4 is essentially a Midrash (an interpretive discussion) of Genesis 15:6. There we read: Genesis 15:6 CJB 6 He (Avraham) believed in ADONAI, and he (God) credited it to him as righteousness.

So, Paul is going to justify his assertion that trusting faithfulness is what actually confirms the Law of Moses (and doesn't abolish it) by citing Abraham. And he begins by addressing a standard premise of Judaism that clearly existed then and exists to this day that is called in Hebrew *z'kut avot*: the merits of the Fathers. This was a belief that was part and parcel with the concept that Jewishness itself guaranteed righteousness before God. However, it peeled the onion back another layer by claiming Jewish righteousness on the basis of the righteousness of their ancestors. The key words of verse 1 are "by his own efforts" (as pertaining to the flesh). In other words, the Jews believed that Abraham was righteous on account of his deeds and that Abraham's righteousness had a great deal to do with their own righteousness.

First let me comment that it is sadly fascinating that Abraham is all but disconnected from modern Christianity, even though Paul has appealed to Abraham on more than one occasion to prove not only the efficacy of the Gospel, but also of the Law. Abraham is seen by the Church as more connected to Judaism and to Islam. And yet here in the New Testament Paul shows us that the plan of redemption that we all count on is directly connected to Abraham. But even more if Paul can prove to his readers that if Abraham had no claim to glory (because he did not receive his righteousness through his deeds), then neither can anyone else claim glory from their own deeds.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>4</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

**Guzik:** What then shall we say: In building on the thought begun in Romans 3:31 Paul asks the question, “Does the idea of justification through faith, apart from the works of the law, make what God did in the Old Testament irrelevant?”

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found: In answering that question, Paul looks at Abraham, who was the most esteemed man among the Jewish people of his day – even greater than the “George Washington” of the Jewish people.<sup>6</sup>

**McGee:** Let's rearrange the modifiers and phrases to help us follow the thought of Paul: Therefore, what shall we say that Abraham, our first father, has found according to the flesh, that is, by natural human effort? The therefore that opens this chapter connects this argument with what Paul has been talking about back in the third chapter. The gospel excludes boasting and establishes the Law, as we have seen. Abraham and David confirm Paul in this thesis. Paul uses the idiomatic phrase "What shall we say?" here and in the other argumentative portions of this epistle. In the first division, Paul did not attempt to prove or argue that man is a sinner. For this reason, we did not find this phrase there. Also, in the last section of this epistle, which is practical, it is entirely omitted.

"Abraham, our first father" reveals that the nation Israel began with Abraham. "First father," I think, is a peculiar expression. It reveals the importance attached to Abraham, who was first chronologically and also first in importance. Many years ago, when I was a pastor in Nashville, several friends that I had known before I studied for the ministry -- they were Jewish friends -- invited me to come up one evening to speak to a group in the Young Men's Hebrew Association. So, I spoke to them on the glories of the Mosaic Law. I was amazed to find that they reckoned their ancestry from Abraham -- they never went past Abraham. Quite a few of their questions revealed that, and finally I asked them some questions. I asked, "Don't you count Noah or Adam in the line?" These young Jewish friends laughed and said, "No, we stop with Abraham. He's our first father."

"Pertaining to the flesh" could modify Abraham, or it could modify the verb has found. What has he found according to the flesh? Abraham has found that Abraham's works according to the flesh did not produce boasting but produced shame and confusion. That was Abraham's works. He had nothing to boast of. Oh, don't misunderstand; I think Abraham was a great man, and especially in that matter of Lot. He wouldn't let the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah reward him. But in another section Abraham didn't believe God, and he ran down to Egypt. This matter of that little Egyptian maid that he got and the son that came from her, these are things that are not to be boasted of by Abraham.

Now notice how Paul develops this.<sup>7</sup>

**BKC:** Paul introduced his illustration of Abraham with the first of six occurrences of the question, What then shall we say? (6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 30) He referred to Abraham as our forefather. ("Forefather" is used only here in the NT.) Undoubtedly this was to distinguish Abraham's physical ancestry from his spiritual fatherhood, mentioned later in 4:11-12, 16. What had this patriarch discovered in this matter? What lesson could Paul's readers learn from the biblical record of Abraham's experience?<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>7</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>8</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**CJSB: 1-3** Then what should we say Avraham, our forefather, obtained by his own efforts? Sha'ul addresses the merits of the fathers. Based on Deut. 4:37 and Exod. 32:13, Midrash Rabbah states: "In the *'olam haba'* [world to come] Isra'el will sing a new song, as it is said, 'Sing unto Adonai a new song, for he has done marvelous things' (Ps. 98:1). By whose merit will they do so? By the merit of Avraham, because he trusted in the Holy One, blessed be he, as it says, 'And he trusted in Adonai'" (Gen. 15:6; Exodus Rabbah 23:5).<sup>9</sup>

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

**Missler:** What kind of people were reading this? A mix of ordinary believers, amidst lots of confusion: Cf. Acts 15:1ff. [Works or faith? (Legalism = works + faith)] The Rabbis had taught that Abraham had a surplus of merit from his works that was available to his descendants. Paul built on that idea and agreed that, assuming that Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about (cf. boasting or bragging in 2:17, 23; 3:27). But, Paul insisted, his boasting could only be before other people, not before God.<sup>10</sup>

**BKC: 2-3:** The Rabbis taught that Abraham had a surplus of merit from his works that was available to his descendants. Paul built on that idea and agreed that, assuming that Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about (cf. boasting or bragging in 2:17, 23; 3:27). But, Paul insisted, his boasting could only be before other people, not before God. If a person could establish his finite righteousness by works—though that was impossible—he could never boast of it in God's presence. Paul then turned to an authority his readers would acknowledge and asked, What does the Scripture say? He quoted Genesis 15:6, which states that Abraham's faith in God and His promise was credited to him as righteousness. Because he believed, God imputed righteousness to his account ("credited," *elogisthē*, from *logizomai*, is an accounting term). Paul had quoted this verse before (Gal. 3:6).<sup>11</sup>

**McGee:** If Abraham were justified (declared to be righteous) by works -- that is, the works of the flesh "he hath whereof to glory," but not before God. He can glory in self, but he cannot glory before God. It was assumed that Abraham had good works that counted before God. And the fact of the matter is that Abraham had many good works. But the startling thing was to discover that these good works were not the ground of salvation but were the result of his salvation and the result of being justified by faith. You see, James and Paul did not contradict each other when James said, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (James 2:21). The works that James described are not the works of the flesh under the Law, because Abraham wasn't under the Law. They were works of faith. Abraham believed God, and he offered up Isaac. But did he actually do it? No, God stopped him and would not let him go through with it. Why? Because it was wrong. You see, Paul and James quote the same verse: Abraham believed God, and He counted it unto him for righteousness (cf. Gen. 15:6; James 2:23; Rom. 4:3). But James goes to the end of Abraham's life, to the time that he offered up Isaac. Abraham stood on the same ground on which the weakest sinner stands. Granted that he did have works in which to boast, but he could never

---

<sup>9</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>10</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>11</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

boast before God, because God does not accept the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh cannot stand before His holiness, and certainly Abraham's works were tainted.<sup>12</sup>

**Guzik:** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about: If anyone could be justified by works, they would have something to boast about. Nevertheless, such boasting is nothing before God (but not before God).

This boasting is nothing before God because even if works could justify a man, he would in some way still fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

This boasting is nothing because before God, every pretense is stripped away and it is evident that no one can really be justified by works.<sup>13</sup>

### **<sup>3</sup>For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

Gen 15:6. Abraham was reckoned to righteousness by his faith when he was still on Gentile ground, two chapters before the covenant sign of circumcision was placed upon his flesh. Steps of faith of an uncircumcised Abraham (from his "call," Gen 12, to his circumcision, Gen 17):

- 1) Revelation of the God of glory in Ur of Chaldees;
- 2) Obedience to God's command to leave his country, kindred, father's house; [tarrying at Haran until his father died (Acts 7:4; Gen 11:3)];
- 3) Altar worship in Canaan (Gen 12:7, 8);
- 4) Choosing his portion with God [vs. Lot's separation (Gen 13)];
- 5) Victory over the kings (Gen 14);
- 6) Received by Melchizedek, "God Most High" and rejecting riches from men (Gen 14);
- 7) Believing God's word concerning his seed, counting on God to do the impossible, and thus "accounted righteous" (Gen 15).

"Counted, reckoned": *logizomai*, an accounting term. (41X in NT; 35X in Paul's epistles; 11X here in Chapter 4.)<sup>14</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Next Paul says that if Abraham was righteoused by God because of his works, then he certainly would have something to brag about. But that is not what happened; rather Abraham put his trust in God and God credited this trust as Abraham's righteousness. The point Paul is making is that the Law didn't yet exist in Abraham's day (it wouldn't for another 6 centuries). So it can't be by doing works of the Law that God saw Abraham as righteous. Rather if any work was involved, the "work" was merely that of trusting. In 2nd Temple Judaism it was indeed believed that Abraham was righteous before God on the ground of his deeds. In the Book of Jubilees (which was written sometime in the 2nd century B.C.) we read that "Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life". So, Paul was disagreeing with standard Jewish beliefs of his day. He says in verse 3, "But this is not how it is before God", meaning Abraham did NOT establish his righteousness before God through his

---

<sup>12</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>14</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

works and deeds. Instead Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 as how Abraham came by his righteousness; and it was simply credited to him by God on account of Abraham's trust.<sup>15</sup>

**McGee:** Paul appeals to the Scripture as final authority. He even personifies it here -- the Scripture is God speaking. What does the Scripture say? There is no other authority to which he can appeal. It was Dr. Benjamin Warfield who made this statement: "The Bible is the Word of God in such a way that whatever the Bible says God says."

How I wish that more men who claim to be evangelical really believed the Word of God -- that it is the Word of God, that it is God speaking. Paul quotes from the Old Testament directly about sixty times in this epistle. This quotation is, of course, from Genesis 15:6: "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Paul is saying, "Hear what the Scripture says; God is speaking to you in His Word." How tremendous this is.

This promise was given to Abraham at a time when he raised a question with God: "...what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless...?" (Gen. 15:2). God gave him no assurance other than a confirmation of the promise that his seed would be like the stars. In other words, Abraham simply believed God. He took the naked Word of God at face value, and he rested in it. Newell puts it like this: "There was no honor, no merit, in Abraham believing the faithful God, who cannot lie. The honor was God's. When Abraham believed God, he did the one thing that a man can do without doing anything! God made the statement, the promise, and God undertook to fulfill it. Abraham believed in his heart that God told the truth. There was no effort here. Abraham's faith was not an act, but an attitude. His heart was turned completely away from himself to God and His promise. This left God free to fulfill that promise. Faith was neither a meritorious act by Abraham, nor a change of character or nature in Abraham; he simply believed God would accomplish what He had promised: 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Gen. 12:3)." How wonderful!

"Counted unto him for righteousness." God counted, reckoned, it to him. God put it to Abraham's account. He imputed it over to him for righteousness. It was not righteousness, but that is how God reckoned it.<sup>16</sup>

**Guzik:** For what does the Scripture say? The Old Testament does not say Abraham was declared righteous because of his works. Instead, Genesis 15:6 says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Paul makes it clear: Abraham's righteousness did not come from performing good works, but from belief in God. It was a righteousness obtained through faith.

Generally, the Jewish teachers of Paul's day believed that Abraham was justified by his works, by keeping the law. Ancient passages from the rabbis say: "We find that Abraham our father had performed the whole Law before it was given" and "Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord." The rabbis argued that Abraham kept the law perfectly before it was given, keeping it by intuition or anticipation.

The Apostle Paul does not say that Abraham was made righteous in all of his doings, but God accounted Abraham as righteous. Our justification is not God making us perfectly righteous but counting us as perfectly righteous. After we are counted righteous, then God begins making us truly righteous, culminating at our resurrection.

---

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>16</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

“Counted is *logizomai*. It was used in early secular documents; ‘put down to one’s account, let my revenues be placed on deposit at the storehouse; I now give orders generally with regard to all payments actually made or credited to the government.’ Thus, God put to Abraham’s account, placed on deposit for him, credited to him, righteousness... Abraham possessed righteousness in the same manner as a person would possess a sum of money placed in his account in a bank.” (Wuest)

Genesis 15:6 does not tell us how other men accounted Abraham. Instead, it tells us how God accounted him. “Moses [in Genesis] does not, indeed, tell us what men thought of him [Abraham], but how he was accounted before the tribunal of God.” (Calvin)

Remember that righteousness is also more than the absence of evil and guilt. It is a positive good, meaning that God does not only declare us innocent, but righteous.<sup>17</sup>

The point of the previous verse is not that Abraham could boast before men. Instead, there was no basis for boasting at all, for Abraham stood in the right before God by believing, not by doing, as Gen. 15:6 proves.<sup>18</sup>

#### **<sup>4</sup>Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**

Grace = to the undeserving.

**McGee 4-5:** It is a general rule that a workman is paid wages for the services that he renders. A man works for so much an hour, or he is paid so much for a particular job. Obviously Abraham was not a workman, for he did not earn what he received. His salvation was received on the only other basis, and that was undeserved favor -- by the grace of God -- and he believed God. "But to him that worketh not" that is, there is nothing that you can do that will merit salvation. But you believe on Him, that is, on God, who declares the ungodly righteous. And the only kind of people God is saving are unrighteous people. Somebody says, "You mean that He doesn't save good people?" Well, do you want to name one? God will save any man who is good. But Scripture, as we've already seen, says, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). This is according to God's standard, not according to my little standard or your standard. If you want to name somebody who is good, you will make God out a liar. Are you prepared to do that? And, of course, you would have to prove your point.

"His faith is counted for righteousness." Faith is the only condition. God accepts faith in lieu of works. There is no merit in faith, but it is the only way of receiving that which God freely offers. Faith honors God and secures righteousness for man. God put down righteousness in Abraham's account to his credit. His faith counted for what it was not -- a righteousness from God. This is important to see.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>18</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>19</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**4-5:** The apostle then discussed the significance of this Scripture quotation. He pointed out that a worker's wages are what are owed him because he earned them, and are not graciously given to him as a gift. Conversely, a person who is not working but is believing on (these participles are in the pres. tense) God who justifies the wicked (*asebē*, "the ungodly, impious"; cf. 5:6), his faith is credited as righteousness (cf. 4:3). Abraham was the latter kind of person as the Scripture stated. He was justified not because he worked for it but because he trusted God.<sup>20</sup>

**Guzik:** Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace: The idea of grace stands opposite to the principle of works; grace has to do with receiving the freely given gift of God, works has to do with earning our merit before God.

Wuest on *charis*, the ancient Greek word translated grace: "Signified in classical authors a favor done out of the spontaneous generosity of the heart without any expectation or return. Of course, this favor was always done to one's friend, never to an enemy... But when *charis* comes into the New Testament, it takes an infinite leap forward, for the favor God did at Calvary was for those who hated Him."

Not counted as grace but as debt: A system of works seeks to put God in debt to us, making God owe us His favor because of our good behavior. In works-thinking, God owes us salvation or blessing because of our good works.

God isn't praising laziness here. "The antithesis is not simply between the worker and the non-worker but between the worker and person who does not work but believes." (Murray)<sup>21</sup>

Paul uses an example from everyday life. If salvation were based on works, then God, in granting a person salvation, would merely be repaying what he owed that person, just as an employer gives a worker wages for his work.<sup>22</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

"...to the one who does not work, but believes..." (NASB. Present tense: continuous action.

"Who keeps on not working...")

"counted" = *logizomai*,

*logizomai*, accounting term. Can the Bible contradict itself?

[Martin Luther: 1) If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.

2) Always interpret the obscure passages by the clear passages.]

Does James' epistle contradict this doctrine?<sup>23</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

So to explain how it was that Abraham was credited with righteousness, Paul provides a simple analogy. He says that a person who works for a wage doesn't receive his pay because of a favor. He doesn't receive his pay as a gift or as an act of grace by his overseer. He's earned it by his own hard labors; the reward is due to him and so he rightfully can glory in it. On the other hand,

<sup>20</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>22</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>23</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

if a person does not work but rather merely trusts in God to make people who are not godly into people who are righteous, then that person has earned nothing and so is owed nothing. The trust they have in God is simply imputed to them, by God, as righteousness. What that person received (righteousness) was not owed to him; it was given as a favor, a gift.<sup>24</sup>

**Guzik:** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness: Righteousness can never be accounted to the one who approaches God on the principle of works. Instead it is given to the one who believes on Him who justifies the ungodly.

Him who justifies the ungodly: This is who God justifies – the ungodly. We might expect God would only justify a godly man but because of what Jesus did on the cross, God can justify the ungodly.

It isn't as if God is happy with our ungodly condition. We are not justified because of our ungodliness, but despite our ungodliness.

Morris quoting Denney: "The paradoxical phrase, Him that justifieth the ungodly, does not suggest that justification is a fiction, whether legal or of any other sort, but that it is a miracle."

Faith is accounted for righteousness: Just as Abraham, so our faith is accounted for righteousness. This was not some special arrangement for Abraham alone. We can enter into this relationship with God also.

By this we understand that there are not two ways of salvation – saved by works through law-keeping in the Old Testament and saved by grace through faith in the New Testament. Everyone who has ever been saved – Old or New Testament – is saved by grace through faith, through their relationship of a trusting love with God. Because of the New Covenant we have benefits of salvation that Old Testament saints did not have but we do not have a different manner of salvation.<sup>25</sup>

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

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

In verse 6 Paul drags King David into the picture to use what he had to say as yet another proof that works and deeds are not what makes a person righteous before God. In fact, Paul is using Psalm 32 to help to properly interpret Genesis 15.6. Only the first 2 verses of Psalm 32 are quoted by Paul. But it was a rabbinic principle that only quoting part of a passage indicated that all of the Scripture passage was being referred to and thus ought to be read into the discussion. So let's hear what David had to say about the source of righteousness (including for those, like himself, who were Jews and had the Law) by reading all of the rather short Psalm 32.

**CJB Psalm 32:1** By David. A maskil: How blessed are those whose offense is forgiven, those whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed those to whom ADONAI imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no deceit! 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away because of my groaning all day long; 4 day and night your hand was heavy on me; the sap in me dried up as in a summer drought. (Selah) 5 When I acknowledged my sin to you, when I stopped concealing my guilt, and said, "I will confess my offenses to ADONAI"; then you, you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Selah)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

6 This is what everyone faithful should pray at a time when you can be found. Then, when the floodwaters are raging, they will not reach to him. 7 You are a hiding-place for me, you will keep me from distress; you will surround me with songs of deliverance. (Selah) 8 "I will instruct and teach you in this way that you are to go; I will give you counsel; my eyes will be watching you." 9 Don't be like a horse or mule that has no understanding, that has to be curbed with bit and bridle, or else it won't come near you. 10 Many are the torments of the wicked, but grace surrounds those who trust in ADONAI. 11 Be glad in ADONAI; rejoice, you righteous! Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

So, Paul uses this Psalm of David to make a key point: God forgives and gives righteousness to those who have sinned; and yet people who have sinned do not deserve forgiveness. However in verse 2, God "imputes" or "reckons" (depending on your Bible version) no guilt to the sinner, thus righteousness could in turn be given to that sinner who God now no longer sees as a sinner.<sup>26</sup>

**McGee:** David lived under the Law -- Abraham did not because no law had been given during his lifetime. The Mosaic system didn't come along until four hundred years later. However, although David lived under the Law, David could never be saved under the Law. And therefore, David described the blessedness that God reckons righteousness without works -- because David had no works. The works that he had were evil. And therefore, righteousness must be totally apart and separate from works. Righteousness must come on an entirely different principle.<sup>27</sup>

**Guzik:** Just as David also describes: King David of the Old Testament knew what it was like to be a guilty sinner. He knew the seriousness of sin and how good it is to be truly forgiven. He knew the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. If David were judged on works alone, the righteous God must condemn him; nevertheless, he knew by experience that blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven.

"No sinner, and try he ever so hard, can possibly carry his own sins away and come back cleansed of guilt. No amount of money, no science, no inventive skill, no armies of millions, nor any other earthly power can carry away from the sinner one little sin and its guilt. Once it is committed, every sin and its guilt cling to the sinner as close as does his own shadow, cling to all eternity unless God carries them away." (Lenski)

To whom God imputes righteousness apart from works... blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin: David agrees with Abraham regarding the idea of an imputed righteousness, a goodness that is given, not earned.

"Our adversaries the papists oppose the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; they cavil at the very word... and yet the apostle useth the word ten times in this chapter." (Poole)<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>27</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

**<sup>7</sup>Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**

**McGee:** This is a direct quotation from Psalm 32, verses 1 and 2. And this is one of the great penitential psalms of David -- Psalm 51 is the other one. These verses are the outcome of David's great sin and his confession and acceptance which followed.

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven." Are you one of the blessed ones today? Well, I'm glad to be in that company, in that number. "Blessed" expresses, oh, that glorious, wonderful joy of sins forgiven! This is the greatest statement of all, and David knew this by experience.

"Iniquities" is lawlessness. David deliberately broke the law. He didn't do it ignorantly. He knew what he did, and he was forgiven.

"Are forgiven" refers to a definite and complete act of remission. A hard-boiled judge may under certain circumstances remit sins. But this speaks of the tenderness of God by taking the sinner into His arms of love and receiving him with affection. His sins are covered. How? Because Jesus Christ died and shed His blood, my friend.<sup>29</sup>

**Guzik:** Blessed is the man: In the Psalm quoted (Psalm 32:1-2), David speaks of the blessedness, not of the one who is justified through works, but of the one who is cleansed through imputation. This is centered on what God places upon us (the righteousness of Jesus), not on what we do for God.<sup>30</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**

Paul is quoting Ps 32:1, 2. Martin Luther called Psalm 32 "a Pauline Psalm." It clearly teaches the doctrine of justification apart from human merit. Augustine of Hippo had these words painted on a placard and placed at the foot of his bed where his dying eyes could rest upon them.

"Not impute" = not take into account.

"Impute" = *logizomai*, accounting term. Ps 51:9. Isa 43:24, 25.<sup>31</sup>

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

The verse 8 instruction about "the way you are to go" is referring to the Law of Moses, the Torah. But notice this is not associated with HOW one becomes righteous. Going the way one is to go, and receiving righteousness, are two different things. "Going the way one is to go" does NOT cause righteousness. But....receiving righteousness DOES open a person's heart to God's instruction and His wise counsel as found in the Law so that he can "go the way one is to go".

Verse 10 of Psalm 32 is something we should carefully note. It says that grace surrounds those who TRUST in God. Please notice that David lived 1000 years before Christ, and yet he appeals to grace. I've said it before, but it bears repeating: grace is not a New Testament innovation. Christ did not open the era of grace. Grace is an Old Testament principle naturally brought forward into the New Testament era. Grace is more than a principle; it is an attribute of God. In fact, the Levitical sacrificial system was grace in action because God decided that He

---

<sup>29</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>31</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

would accept the blood of sinless animals to pay for the sins of guilty human beings who owed Him the debt of their own blood. Grace versus Law (as it is often framed in Christianity) is an oxymoron. The Law WAS grace because God gave Israel a way to atone for their trespasses, and to return to peace with Him, which didn't involve the human trespasser losing their own life nor did it involve them "earning" their way back into God's good graces. So we...all of us....need to be ambassadors to the Church in general to help them to understand the goodness of God and the history of true grace that extends back to the beginning of humankind on this earth.<sup>32</sup>

**McGee:** In other words, joyful is the man whose sin the Lord will not put to his account. David was a great sinner. And God put away his sin, as Nathan informed him. Nathan said to David, "...The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2Sam. 12:13). Nevertheless, David was chastened. David set his own penalty when he responded to Nathan's account of the rich man who took the poor man's ewe lamb: "And he shall restore the lamb fourfold..." (2Sam. 12:6). Four of David's children were killed -- the child of Bathsheba, Amnon his firstborn, Absalom, and Adonijah. Sorrow plagued David all the days of his life. David's guilt was not put on his account, though -- another bore it for him. Little wonder that he could say, "Joyful is the man whose sin the Lord will in no wise put to his account."<sup>33</sup>

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

[It has been almost 10 years since Paul was before the Council in Acts 15...]

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Back to Romans chapter 4. In verse 9 Paul asks his straw man yet another question: "Now is this blessing (that David was speaking of in his Psalm) for the circumcised only?" Can only Jews expect such a blessing of unmerited grace? Or does this extend to the uncircumcised (gentiles)? I can't even imagine the can of worms that Paul has just opened. This would have caused fury among many of the Believing Jews in Rome who read this letter. But Paul is undaunted and continues with his line of reasoning by pointing out the unthinkable: Abraham was righteoused by God BEFORE he was circumcised. In other words, before He was officially a Hebrew, while he was still a gentile, He was given righteousness because he trusted God. His righteousness did not come because of his circumcision.

In fact, the Biblical timeline (and Hebrew tradition) is that he wasn't circumcised until 29 years had passed after the event of Genesis 15.6. So, Paul has just annihilated the standard Jewish argument that fleshly circumcision was the requirement for Jews to have a decided advantage over gentiles, and to obtain righteousness, because as Paul said near the end of Romans chapter 2: "True circumcision is of the heart; it is spiritual and not literal so that his praise comes not from other people but from God". But it also proves something he has been arguing since Romans chapter 1: since Abraham received righteousness from God long before the Law ever existed, then it cannot be that it is the Law that is the vehicle to receive righteousness. Even more it is that circumcision was NOT given as a sign of Jewishness; it was given as a sign and seal that one has a trusting faithfulness in God.

---

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>33</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Let me add something that people who have been following Torah Class for many years already know. It is that not only did the way for receiving righteousness get revealed through Abraham, but it is that deliverance (salvation, if you would) came upon Israel (they were delivered and redeemed from Egypt), BEFORE they received the Law on Mt. Sinai. And this redemption happened with utterly no deeds or merit on their part. It happened purely by God's grace. He and He alone fought Egypt through supernatural plagues forcing Egypt to release God's people. So here we have further proof that doing the Law is only something for people who've already been redeemed; it is not a means of redemption. And yet to Paul the Law is not at all dead and gone, nailed to the cross. It continues in full force. And that is because its purpose is especially important to Believers; it is needed to show us what pleases God and what sin is.

**1John 3:4 KJV** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

For the Apostles Paul and John, long after Christ was crucified and arose, the Law remained the standard. The Law remains the manual for living the redeemed life that God gave to us all as a free gift of grace. Or as Paul says; there is only one Law, because there is only one God. And is He not the God of both Jews and gentiles?<sup>34</sup>

**McGee:** The argument now returns to Abraham to illustrate that justification is universal. Since David has spoken of the joy of the man under law who has been forgiven, the answer of the Jew would be that David belonged to the circumcision and only the circumcision could expect this joy. For this reason Paul returns to Abraham to show that Abraham was justified before the Law was given and also before he was circumcised.<sup>35</sup>

**9-10:** Paul again raised the question of the Jews' special position (cf. 2:17-21a; 3:1-2). The way the question is worded in the Greek suggests the answer, that this blessedness is for the uncircumcised (Gentiles) as well as for the circumcised (Jews). But in response Paul turned again to the example of Abraham. He repeated the authoritative scriptural declaration that Abraham was declared righteous on the basis of his faith. Then Paul asked whether Abraham's justification occurred before or after he was circumcised. Answering his own question, Paul stated, It was not after, but before! (The Gr. has lit., "not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.") Abraham's age when he was declared righteous (Gen. 15:6) is not stated. But later when Hagar bore him Ishmael, he was 86 (Gen. 16:16). After that, God instructed Abraham to perform the rite of circumcision on all his male descendants as a sign of God's covenant with him; this was done when Abraham was 99 (Gen. 17:24). Therefore the circumcision of Abraham followed his justification by faith by more than 13 years.<sup>36</sup>

**Guzik:** Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? If we are counted righteous by God because of faith, not because of circumcision (or any other ritual), then the blessedness mentioned in Romans 4:7 can be given to the uncircumcised Gentiles by faith.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>35</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>36</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

**<sup>10</sup>How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.**

**McGee:** God made the promise to him, and he believed God long before there was any kind of agreement made at all -- other than that God said He would do it. Abraham believed the naked Word of God.<sup>38</sup>

**Guzik:** How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Abraham was counted as righteous in Genesis 15:6. He did not receive the covenant of circumcision until Genesis 17, which was at least 14 years later. Therefore, his righteousness wasn't based on circumcision, but on faith.<sup>39</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>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:**

Abraham justified before circumcised as a Gentile! Abraham's age when he was declared righteous (Gen 15:6) is not stated. But later when Hagar bore him Ishmael, he was 86 (Gen 16:16). After that, God instructed Abraham to perform the rite of circumcision on all his male descendants as a sign of God's covenant with him; this was done when Abraham was 99 (Gen 17:24). Therefore, the circumcision of Abraham followed his justification by faith by more than 13 years.<sup>40</sup>

#### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Thus, in Romans 4:11 Paul says that God righteoused Abraham BEFORE he was circumcised so that Abraham could be counted as the father of the uncircumcised as well as the circumcised. Fighting words to be sure to the Jews of Rome; but Paul's use of Holy Scripture and logic is impeccable.

Beginning with verse 11 Paul is again using the term "circumcised" to identify Jews, and "uncircumcised" to identify gentiles. This is because of the preeminent place that the ritual of male circumcision held in Judaism at that time. It was akin to a person citing the pledge of allegiance to their particular flag and nation. Thus, Paul is saying that while having a circumcision is on the one hand obedience to both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants, on the other hand what it really has come to signify in his present day is more of a symbol of national allegiance to Israel and to the national religion of Judaism. However originally Abraham's circumcision was intended as an outward sign and authentication of his inner trust in God as his heavenly king. Therefore, if a person has trust in God but does not have a circumcision (Paul is speaking of gentiles), the lack of this outward authentication does not revoke the righteousness given to him by God because of his trust. And the proof of this is that Father Abraham was reckoned with righteousness 29 years before he was circumcised. Therefore, Abraham is legitimately the father of the uncircumcised who trust God, as well as the circumcised who trust God. Ladies and gentlemen this reality is why this ministry is called Seed of Abraham. It is not

---

<sup>38</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>40</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

to say that we are a congregation consisting only of Jews that are Abraham's physical seed, or only of gentiles that are Abraham's spiritual seed. It is an acknowledgement that Abraham is as much the father of gentiles who have trust in the God of Israel, through His Son Yeshua, as he is the Jews' father. The difference is that Jews have a God-given right to also see Abraham as their source of citizenship to earthly Israel, while gentile Believers do not have any such national rights; our rights are entirely spiritual in nature.<sup>41</sup>

**McGee 11-13:** God made that promise to Abraham long before circumcision was introduced. Abraham just believed God; that's all.<sup>42</sup>

**11-12:** Therefore, Paul argued, the sign of circumcision was a seal of Abraham's being declared righteous because of his faith which he received while he was still uncircumcised (lit., "in uncircumcision"). Circumcision, as a "sign" or "seal," was an outward token of the justification Abraham had already received. God's purpose was that Abraham be the father of all who believe and are thereby justified. This included both the uncircumcised (Gentiles) and the circumcised (Jews). Jews must do more than be circumcised to be right with God. They must also walk in the footsteps of... faith, like Abraham (cf. 2:28-29). Obviously, then, the rite of circumcision, which many Jews rely on for salvation, contributes in no way to one's status before God. It gives them no special standing before Him because they must be declared righteous on the basis of faith in God.<sup>43</sup>

**Guzik:** The faith which he had while still uncircumcised: In fact, Abraham, the father of all those who believe, was declared righteous while he was still uncircumcised! Therefore, how could anyone then say (as some did in Paul's day) that Gentiles must be circumcised before God would declare them righteous?

For the Jewish people of Paul's day, the significance of circumcision was more than social. It was the entry point for a life lived under the Law of Moses: And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law (Galatians 5:3).

**<sup>12</sup>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*.**

Thus, Abraham is our father, too. He, too, was a Gentile when he was saved. And he is the Father of the Faithful: that follow in the steps of faith. Paul has turned the Jew's boast upside down: it is not the Gentile who must come to the Jew's circumcision for salvation; it is the Jew who must come to a "Gentile" faith, such faith as Abraham had long before he was circumcised...

Rituals are not the means; only a testimony. This includes baptism. It, too, is only a testimony. The sacraments and ceremonies of the church, while useful when viewed in proper light, become ruinous when perverted into grounds for confidence.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>42</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>43</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>44</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

That he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised... who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised: The Jews of Paul's day thought circumcision meant they were the true descendants of Abraham. Paul insists that to have Abraham as your father, you must walk in the steps of the faith that Abraham walked in.

"Our father Abraham" is an important phrase, one that the ancient Jews jealously guarded. They did not allow a circumcised Gentile convert to Judaism refer to Abraham as "our father" in the synagogue. A Gentile convert had to call Abraham "your father" and only natural born Jews could call Abraham "our father." Paul throws out that distinction, and says that through faith, all can say, "our father Abraham."

It must have been a shock for the Jewish readers of this letter to see that Paul called Abraham the father of uncircumcised people! Faith, not circumcision, is the vital link to Abraham. It is far more important to have Abraham's faith (and the righteousness imputed to him because of it) than it is to have Abraham's circumcision.

William Barclay explains that the Jewish teachers of Paul's day had a saying: "What is written of Abraham is also written of his children," meaning that promises given to Abraham extend to his descendants. Paul heartily agreed with this principle and extended the principle of being justified by faith to all Abraham's spiritual descendants, those who believe, who also walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.<sup>45</sup>

**<sup>13</sup>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.**

God's promise in Genesis 12:1-3 preceded the giving of the Law by several centuries (cf. Gal 3:17).

Believers of all ages are "Abraham's seed," for they enjoy the same spiritual blessing (justification) which he enjoyed (Gal 3:29). [What does being "heir of the world" mean?]<sup>46</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul continues with impeccable logical reasoning for his conclusion in verse 13 by saying that Scripture states that Abraham would inherit the world. But this inheritance would not come through legalism (that is, through Abraham's obedience to the Law), but rather through the righteousness that is reckoned to him because of the trust he has in God. That is logical because the Law did not exist in Abraham's time, and would not exist for another 6 centuries. But even more, if it is obedience to the Law that produces a saving righteousness, then it can't also be said that a saving righteousness is produced by trusting. If it was only by obedience to the Law that the promise to Abraham to inherit the world comes about, then this is no promise at all but rather it would have required Abraham and his descendants to work for it.

So, Paul is challenging a fundamental principle of 2nd Temple Judaism. In fact, he is essentially redefining Abraham's covenant in relation to how Judaism defined it in Paul's era. He is saying that the inheritance promised in the covenant does NOT come through doing the Law, but rather through the righteousness that comes by trust. Let's be clear: Paul is NOT saying that maintenance of the divine covenant, and the relationship between God and man that it produces,

---

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>46</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

is no longer needed. He is saying that the maintenance fundamentally requires a foundation of saving righteousness that can only happen by means of trust. Therefore, while Believers should do the Law, it is only effectual if doing the Law is done on the basis of first having trust in God. Put another way: faith first; faithfulness second.<sup>47</sup>

The Jews also considered the Mosaic Law, a special revelation of God's standards for human conduct, as the basis for their special standing before God. Therefore, Paul turned next to it, declaring, It was not through Law ("not" is emphasized by its position at the beginning of the Gr. sentence) that Abraham and his offspring (lit., "seed") received the promise that he would be heir of the world.

God's promise in Genesis 12:1-3 preceded the giving of the Law by several centuries (cf. Gal. 3:17). Being "heir of the world" probably refers to "all peoples on earth" (Gen. 12:3), "all nations" (Gen. 18:18), and "all nations on earth" (Gen. 22:18), for through Abraham and his descendants all the world is blessed. He is thus their "father" and they are his heirs. These promises of blessing are given to those to whom God has imputed righteousness, and this, Paul added once again, is by faith. Believers of all ages are "Abraham's seed," for they enjoy the same spiritual blessing (justification) which he enjoyed (Gal. 3:29). (However, God has not abrogated His promises to Abraham about his physical, believing descendants, the regenerate nation Israel, inheriting the land [Gen. 15:18-21; 22:17]. These promises still stand; they will be fulfilled in the Millennium.)<sup>48</sup>

**Guzik:** For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law: Since all God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob happened before the giving of the Mosaic Law, we can't say they were based on the law. Instead, they are based on God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness through faith.

"Faith is the ground of God's blessing. Abraham was a blessed man, indeed, but he became heir of the world on another principle entirely – simple faith." (Newell)

b. For the promise... through the righteousness of faith: The law cannot bring us into the blessings of God's promises. This is not because the law is bad, but because we are unable to keep it.<sup>49</sup>

The promise given to Abraham embraces not only the land of Canaan but also the whole world. The final reward (the inheritance, which is another term for final salvation) that will be given to Abraham and all believers is the world to come (cf. Heb. 11:10–16; Revelation 21-22).<sup>50</sup>

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

As Paul explained, if Jews could become heirs by obeying the Law, then faith has no value (*keken,wtai*, "it has been made empty"; cf. the noun *kenos*, "empty, without content," in 1 Cor. 15:10, 58). Also the promise is worthless (*kath,rghtai*, "has been made invalid").

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>48</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>50</sup> ESV Study Bible

Why? God hates your trust in “good works” because you neglect all that God is, has done, and desires for you:

- 1) What it cost God to give Christ;
- 2) What it cost Christ to put away sin—your sin—at the cross;
- 3) What honor God has given Him “because of the suffering of death”;
- 4) What plans for the future God has arranged through Christ’s having made peace by the blood of His cross, to reconcile “things upon the earth and things in heaven, unto Himself.”

We need to come to Him on His terms, not ours!<sup>51</sup>

**McGee 14-16:** You see, God saved Abraham by faith alone.

Now notice something else here. Abraham was justified actually by faith in the resurrection.<sup>52</sup>

**14-15:** As Paul explained, if Jews could become heirs by obeying the Law, then faith has no value (*kekenōtai*, "it has been made empty"; cf. the noun *kenos*, "empty, without content," in 1 Cor. 15:10, 58). Also, the promise is worthless (*katērgētai*, "has been made invalid"). The reason this would be true is that Law brings wrath (lit., "the Law keeps on producing wrath") as a consequence of disobedience. No one can keep the Law fully; therefore God, in wrath against sin, judges those who disobey.

Paul then stated a related general principle: And where there is no law, there is no transgression. A person may still be sinning in his action, but if there is no command prohibiting it his action does not have the character of a transgression, an overstepping of a prohibition (cf. Rom. 5:13).<sup>53</sup>

If the inheritance is gained by observing the law, then righteousness is no longer by faith but by works. Faith and works are fundamentally opposed, for faith means trusting in or relying on a promise of God's work and not depending in any way on human performance.<sup>54</sup>

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

(Lit., “the Law keeps on producing wrath”) as a consequence of disobedience. No one can keep the Law fully; therefore God, in wrath against sin, judges those who disobey.

The law can only curse. It cannot bless. It intensified sin by giving it the specific character of transgression, an overstepping of a prohibition (cf. Rom. 5:13), making it the willful violation of known law.

Why is this so important to us? If we come to God on the basis of the law, the only result can be wrath. Then we must be perfect on the basis of our own merit. It’s the same principle—the same basis—that is the same trap for us. We, too, fall into the trap of attempting to rely on our own merit, rather than His.

The law cannot be the means of earning what was freely given.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>52</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>53</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>54</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>55</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Verse 15 seems to throw us a Major League curveball. In fact many Bible scholars feel a little bewildered why this statement is even here. Is it meant to be a conclusion or summation of what Paul has just said? Is it just a straggler that somehow fell into this passage centuries ago perhaps by a copyist error? Opinions vary. First let me say that the CJB translation where it says "for what the Law brings is punishment" is not a good one; it gives us the wrong idea and doesn't allow us to make an intended connection. It is much more literal and correct (and agrees with just about all other English versions) to have it read, "For what the Law brings is wrath". Using the word wrath is important because what Paul is doing reminding his readers of the other major reason that both Jews and gentiles must have trust in order to be given righteousness. It is that all humans are liable to God's wrath, whether they are humans who follow the Law or humans that don't have the Law (gentiles). But since Paul is, in this section, directly addressing Jews then he is speaking from their point of view and that view, by its nature, is a view involving the Law. Paul says that despite what Judaism thinks (that the Law produces righteousness), in fact what the Law produces is not righteousness but wrath because by the Law we learn what sin is (that's the purpose of it, in Paul's view) and when we break the Law we sin. And because of our highly developed evil inclinations, it is the fate of all mankind to embrace sinning. And how much more responsible are people who have God's laws and commands (the Torah, the Law) but violate them, than people who do NOT know His laws and commands but do have the natural law and violate it (that was an earlier premise that Paul established). Thus, what the Law cannot do is precisely what trust alone can do; provide a saving righteousness.

Sadly, this verse 15 is another one that is regularly used out of context to say that for Christians the Law is dead and gone. Or, even more off the mark, that Paul is saying that the best thing for Christians to do is to stay away from the Law because "where there is no Law there is no violation". That is, if we just deliberately shun the Law then we can avoid sinning! In other words: where in American jurisprudence we have the saying that 'ignorance of the law is no excuse', in the New Testament we have Paul saying that 'ignorance of the Law of Moses is not only a good and acceptable way to excuse our sins, he advises that we should strive to know nothing about the Law. To me that is near to blasphemy.<sup>56</sup>

**Guzik:** Because the law brings about wrath: Our inability to keep the law (our transgression) means that it becomes essentially a vehicle of God's wrath towards us, especially if we regard it as the principle by which we are justified and relate to God.

Where there is no law there is no transgression: How can Paul say this? Because "Transgression is the right word for overstepping a line, and this for breaking a clearly defined commandment" (Morris). Where there is no line, there is no actual transgression.

There is sin that is not the "crossing the line" of the Law of Moses. The root of sin isn't in breaking the law, but in breaking trust with God; with denying His loving, caring purpose in every command He gives. Before Adam sinned he broke trust with God – therefore God's plan of redemption is centered on a relationship of trusting love – faith – instead of law-keeping. When we center our relationship with God on law-keeping instead of trusting love, we go against His whole plan.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

Where there is no law there is no transgression. It appears Paul was addressing Jews who believed that physical circumcision was the only righteousness required. The promise was made available before circumcision; therefore, sidestepping circumcision for the Gentile did not bring the condemnation of violating the law of circumcision.<sup>58</sup>

**16Therefore 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,**

The minute that you are not bold in your faith, you are under the law.

“You don’t deserve it?” And you never will!

The human exercise of faith is simply the prerequisite response of trust in God and His promise. Since faith and grace go together, and since the promise is by grace, the promise can be received only by faith, not by the Law.<sup>59</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

In verse 16 Paul indeed does sum up what he has said thus far in this chapter; and it ends with Paul making a statement that would have enraged most Jews. It is that Paul's explanation of Abraham receiving his righteousness by trust alone is why God made the promise to him that he would be a father to all nations. Therefore, Abraham is the father for "all of us", meaning all Believers (Jews and gentiles). To the Jews hearing this, Paul just gave away their most revered Jewish Patriarch, Abraham, to their enemies: the gentiles. However what Paul really did was to redefine what the seed of Abraham consists of; and Paul says it consists of all Believers in Yeshua, Jew and gentile. In verse 17 Paul even quotes Genesis 17:5 to prove his case: Genesis 17:5 CJB 5 Your name will no longer be Avram [exalted father], but your name will be Avraham [father of many], because I have made you the father of many nations.

Interestingly over time, Jews made peace with this idea of gentiles who choose the God of Abraham as their God as also becoming seed of Abraham. However, this peace had a caveat. Maimonides, aka the Rambam, one of the greatest Jewish sages of all time, lived in the 13th century A.D. and said this as it concerns gentiles:

"You ask me if you are permitted to say in the prayers, 'God of our fathers,' and 'You who worked miracles for our fathers'. Yes; you many say your blessing and prayer in the same way as every born Jew. This is because Avraham *avinu* (Abraham our father) revealed the true faith and the unity of God, rejected idol worship, and brought many children under the wings of the Shekinah. Ever since then whoever adopts Judaism and confesses the unity of the Divine Name, as prescribed in the Torah, is counted among the disciples of Avraham *avinu*, peace unto him.....Thus Avraham *avinu* is the father of his pious posterity who keep his ways, and the father of his disciples and of all proselytes who adopt Judaism".

So from Maimonides perspective the caveat for a gentile being allowed to see himself or herself as a seed of Abraham was official conversion to Judaism. Unfortunately, we see some of Rambam's thinking alive and well within the Hebrew Roots and Messianic movements and I want to say as firmly as I can that this is entirely wrong minded. Paul makes it clear that gentiles become a seed of Abraham because of our trust in God, through our trust in God's Son Yeshua,

---

<sup>58</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

<sup>59</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

and this involves no conversion whatsoever. But the same is true for Jews who believe in Yeshua; no conversion or renouncing of their Jewishness is required...just trust.

I want to take a moment to emphasize something I said earlier: Paul explicitly makes Abraham the father of gentile Christians as well as Jews. Think upon that. What role has Christianity given Abraham in our faith? Practically none. He is mostly the subject of Sunday School stories for children. But if Abraham is the father of all who trust in God as Paul says he is (and Paul has spent considerable pen and ink on the subject of Abraham), and if Paul is right that since Abraham is the common father of Jews and gentiles in a spiritual sense, then how can the Church assign Abraham to Judaism but not to Christianity? How can the Church make Abraham as applicable only to the Old Testament and largely irrelevant to the New Testament? How can the Church say that the Covenant of Abraham has been abolished and replaced by the so-called New Covenant in Christ? For right here Paul explains that gentile Believers who trust in God, through Yeshua, are fulfilling the most ancient of covenants: the Abrahamic Covenant.

If you want to demonstrate to others the fallacy of saying that the Old Testament is obsolete for Believers; or that the covenants of old, Abraham's and Moses', are dead and gone and nailed to the cross, just refer them to Romans chapters 3 and 4 when by Paul's words gentiles are directly attached to, and called, seed of Abraham. And point out how gentiles do NOT replace Jews, but rather are added to the mix. Paul will explain this addition of gentiles to the mix more thoroughly in Romans chapter 11, when he uses the term "grafted-in".<sup>60</sup>

Paul then drew his conclusion. Therefore (lit., "On account of this") the promise comes by (ek, "out of") faith so that it may be by (kata, "according to the standard of") grace. Responding in faith to God's promise is not meritorious, since the promise springs from His grace, His disposition of favor toward those who deserve His wrath. The human exercise of faith is simply the prerequisite response of trust in God and His promise. Since faith and grace go together, and since the promise is by grace, the promise can be received only by faith, not by the Law. Another reason the promise is by faith is so that it may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not only the Jews (those... of the Law) but to all who exercise faith in God. If the promise were fulfilled for those who keep the Law, then no Gentiles (or Jews either) could be saved! But this cannot be, because Abraham... is the father of us all, that is, all who believe (cf. "our" in v. 1; also cf. Gal. 3:29).<sup>61</sup>

**Guzik:** It is of faith that it might be according to grace: Faith is related to grace in the same way works is related to law. Grace and law are principles, and faith and works are the means by which we pursue those principles for our relationship with God.

To speak technically, we are not saved by faith. We are saved by God's grace, and grace is appropriated by faith.

It is of faith: Salvation is of faith and nothing else. We can only receive salvation by the principle of grace through faith. Grace can't be gained through works, whether they be past works, present works, or promised works. This is because by definition grace is given without regard to anything in the one who receives it.

"Grace and faith are congruous, and will draw together in the same chariot, but grace and merit are contrary the one to the other and pull opposite ways, and therefore God has not chosen to yoke them together." (Spurgeon)

---

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>61</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

So that the promise might be sure to all the seed: The promise can only be sure if it is according to grace. If law is the basis of our salvation, then our salvation depends on our performance in keeping the law – and no one can keep the law good enough to be saved by it. A law-promise of salvation can never be sure.

If the promise “were of the law, it would be unsure and uncertain, because of man’s weakness, who is not able to perform it.” (Poole)

But also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all: If our relationship with God is according to grace (not circumcision or law-keeping), then that relationship is for those who are of the faith of Abraham, even if they are not of his lineage.

A Gentile could say, “I am not a Jew, I am not of the law; but I am of the faith of Abraham,” and he would be just as saved as a Jewish believer in Jesus would be.

The father of us all: The fulfillment of the promise in Genesis 17:4-5 is found not only in Abraham’s descendants through Isaac, but especially in his role as being the father of us all who believe – and those believers come from every nation under heaven.<sup>62</sup>

Those who are of the law. Paul argued that Torah-observant Jews are to be children of faith (not works), just as Gentiles are children of Abraham by faith. Circumcised Jews ought to follow the Torah (circumcision, “works”) out of the same believing faith of Abraham (who believed before circumcision).<sup>63</sup>

**<sup>17</sup>(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.**

Greek literally, “God making alive dead ones, and calling things not being, being.” Cf. Gen 1:3, “Let light be.” And light was.

Paul then supported his conclusion in verse 16 with scriptural authority, quoting God’s covenantal promise from Genesis 17:5.

Another reason the promise is by faith is so that it may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring, not only the Jews (those of the Law) but to all who exercise faith in God. If the promise were fulfilled for those who keep the Law, then no Gentiles (or Jews either) could be saved! But this cannot be, because “Abraham is the father of us all, that is, all who believe” (cf. “our” in v. 1; also cf. Gal. 3:29). Yet, Israel is also one of those nations.

### **Israel and the Church are Distinct**

Don’t make an eschatological mistake: Abraham is the father of all the faithful—but that is not a basis to equate the Church with Israel. The fact that believers in this Church Age are identified with Abraham and God’s covenant with him does not mean that the physical and temporal promises to Abraham and his physical descendants are either spiritualized or abrogated. It simply means that God’s covenant, and Abraham’s response of faith to it, have spiritual dimensions as well as physical and temporal aspects.

The Jew is still a Jew and the Gentile is a still Gentile. Within the Church there is no distinction; the church is a 3rd category which can include both: (Rom 1:16; 10:12; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).

---

<sup>62</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>63</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

Yet, Israel and Church are distinct. Different origins, different destinies.

God has not abrogated His promises to Abraham about his physical, believing descendants, the regenerate nation Israel, inheriting the land [Gen. 15:18-21; 22:17]. These promises still stand; they will be fulfilled in the Millennium.

This will be dealt with in chapters 9, 10, 11.<sup>64</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

In the last part of verse 17 Paul highlights two of God's primary attributes: He gives life to the dead and He is the Creator of all things. And the point is that while Abraham had little familiarity with God at first, he quickly recognized these 2 important, although basic, aspects of God's nature. I'll use this opportunity to emphasize that we can only know God in 2 ways: by His name and His attributes. Thus, if any religion (such as Islam) claims that the Judeo-Christian God is the same as their God, that is easily refutable because the Muslim God has a different name and different attributes than the God of Abraham. It is wrong for a Believer, even if out of some misplaced sense of compassion, to ever allow a Muslim to claim that we all worship the same God; we definitely do not. And if we allow him to think that way, what incentive is there for him to seek the true God? We become complicit in condemning that person to Hell.

Here Paul reminds his readers that Abraham was very old when he was finally given a son. A son was necessary from a practical viewpoint if he was going to be a father to many nations. If Abraham had no sons then his line would have ended with his death and God's promise could not have been fulfilled. Abraham fully understood that he was too old (almost 100 years old) to father children. But his wife, Sarah, was also too old to bear children. So what hope was there that God's promise could possibly be fulfilled? Paul describes Abraham as "as good as dead". Dead men don't produce offspring. Yet Abraham, so very aware of his impossible situation, did not give up hope; he trusted that God would somehow give Abraham and Sarah children despite their dead reproductive systems. This trust is why he was credited with righteousness.<sup>65</sup>

Paul then supported his conclusion in verse 16 with scriptural authority, quoting God's covenantal promise from Genesis 17:5. The fact that believers in this Church Age are identified with Abraham and God's covenant with him does not mean that the physical and temporal promises to Abraham and his physical descendants are either spiritualized or abrogated. It simply means that God's covenant and Abraham's response of faith to it have spiritual dimensions as well as physical and temporal aspects (cf. comments on Rom. 4:13). The quotation is in effect a parenthesis. Therefore, the latter part of verse 17 connects with the close of verse 16: "He is the father of us all..." in the sight of God. (The words He is our father are not in the Gr., but are added in the niv for clarification.) God... gives life to the dead and calls things that are not (lit., "the nonexistent things") as though they were (lit., "as existing").

Identifying God in this way obviously refers to God's promise in Genesis 17 following the statement quoted above that Abraham and Sarah would have a son of promise when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:17, 19; 18:10; 21:5; cf. Rom. 4:19). That he would be the ancestor of many nations seemed impossible in his and Sarah's childless old age.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>66</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**Guzik:** So that he became the father of many nations: Even as it took a supernatural life-giving work to make Abraham the physical father of many nations, it also took a supernatural life-giving work to make him the spiritual father of many nations.

Who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as if they did: These works of God demonstrate His ability to count things that are not (such as our righteousness) as if they were (as in counting us righteous).

If God could call the dead womb of Sarah to life, he can call those who are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) to new life in Jesus.

“I’m greatly comforted when God speaks about me as righteous, justified, glorified, holy, pure, and saintly. God can talk about such things before they exist, because He knows they will exist.” (Smith)<sup>67</sup>

many nations. Abraham's universal fatherhood is confirmed by Gen. 17:5. Calls into existence the things that do not exist underscores the doctrine of creation ex nihilo or “out of nothing.” Before God created the universe (Gen. 1:1), only God existed, nothing else. Paul uses this general truth to affirm the great power of the God whom Abraham trusted: Abraham believed in a God who could raise the dead and summon into existence what did not exist (e.g., new life in Sarah's womb).<sup>68</sup>

Gives life to the dead. The second of the Eighteen Benedictions, a prayer recited in the synagogue, blesses God for reviving the dead.<sup>69</sup>

**18Who 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.**

(Quote from Gen 15:5). Believed despite a hopeless situation. Abraham was 100; Sarah was 90. The promise of blessing through the Seed—which is Christ—is of faith that it might be by grace. And it is to all the “seed”—that is, to all who have faith. All such are “of the faith of Abraham.” He is thus the father of us all, who believe in Jesus. And so, the Word is fulfilled which declares, “I have made thee a father of many nations.”<sup>70</sup>

**Guzik:** Contrary to hope, in hope believed: This life-giving power was accomplished in Abraham as he believed. The power was evident naturally and spiritually.

Abraham’s example also helps us to understand the nature of faith. The conception of Abraham’s son Isaac was a miracle, but it was not an immaculate conception. Abraham’s faith did not mean that he did nothing and just waited for God to create a child in Sarah’s womb. Abraham and Sarah had marital relations and trusted God for a miraculous result. This shows us that faith does not mean doing nothing but doing everything with trust and reliance on God.

“All true believers, like Abraham, obey. Obedience is faith in action. You are to walk in the steps of the faith of father Abraham. His faith did not sit still, it took steps; and you must take

---

<sup>67</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>68</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>69</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

<sup>70</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

these steps also by obeying God because you believe him. That faith which has no works with it is a dead faith and will justify no one.” (Spurgeon)

“Sense corrects imagination, reason corrects sense, but faith corrects both. It will not be, saith sense; it cannot be, saith reason; it both can and will be, saith faith, for I have a promise for it.” (Trapp)<sup>71</sup>

**<sup>19</sup>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:**

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

I think it is entirely fair, in fact it is only logical, to call Abraham's belief that he would produce offspring regardless of he and Sarah being past child bearing age, a deed or a work. Even though the intention was misplaced, that he took Sarah's handmaiden and slept with her believing that his infertility would become fertility, is of course putting faith to action. Sadly, that action was wrong, because his faith wasn't pure or because his understanding of God was a bit off the mark. When we hear from Paul that Abraham never lacked trust that doesn't mean he didn't have moments of doubt. Rather it means that he did not enter into a deep-seated and permanent mode of distrust; essentially renouncing the trust that initially brought him his righteousness. This is something that all Believers need to pay attention to. Our trust, our faith, is not perfect nor is it steady. We will have our moments of doubt from which we can recover. It is falling into that permanent mode whereby we deeply, sincerely, no longer trust when we are in grave danger. As for Abraham; later after it turned out that God supernaturally restored Abraham's fertility as evidenced in Hagar becoming pregnant by Abraham (God bringing life from the dead), God also restored Sarah's dead womb and with that belief firmly in mind, Abraham slept with Sarah and she became pregnant by Abraham. The result was the true son of the promise: Isaac.<sup>72</sup>

**McGee:** There is no merit in faith itself. You see, there was nothing around Abraham in which he could trust -- nothing that he could feel, nothing that he could see, nothing. All he did was believe God. That's important.<sup>73</sup>

Verses 19-21: restate in specific details the first part of verse 18 about Abraham's hope. Abraham without weakening in his faith... faced the fact (lit., "considered carefully") that his body was as good as dead (some Gr. mss. add the word "already"), a reference to the patriarch's advanced age (Gen. 17:17; 21:5). Abraham also considered carefully that Sarah's womb was also dead. She was unable to conceive a child, as had been demonstrated through their life together (cf. Gen. 16:1-2; 18:11) and as was certainly true for her at age 90 (Gen. 17:17).<sup>74</sup>

**Guzik:** Not being weak in faith: Abraham’s faith was strong but it was also strengthened. He was strengthened in faith.

The idea seems to be that Abraham was strengthened in his faith; but Paul could also mean that Abraham was strengthened by his faith – certainly both were true.

---

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>73</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>74</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

ii. How we need to be strengthened in faith! “Dear brother, little faith will save thee if it be true faith, but there are many reasons why you should seek an increase of it.” (Spurgeon)

Spurgeon knew that ministers and preachers especially needed to be strengthened in faith. He sometimes shared his own struggles in this area from the pulpit but wanted to make it clear that his struggles in faith should never be indulged: “Whenever, dear hearers, you catch any of us who are teachers doubting and fearing, do not pity us, but scold us. We have no right to be in Doubting Castle. Pray do not visit us there. Follow us as far as we follow Christ, but if we get into the horrible Slough of Despond, come and pull us out by the hair of our heads if necessary, but do not fall into it yourselves.” (Spurgeon)

“I do not think we shall have many conversions unless we expect God to bless the word and feel certain that he will do so. We must not wonder and be astonished if we hear of a dozen or two conversions, but let the astonishment be that thousands are not converted when they hear such divine truth, and when we ask the Holy Spirit to attend it with divine energy. God will bless us in proportion to our faith. It is the rule of his kingdom – ‘According to your faith so be it unto you.’ O God, give thy ministers more faith! Let us believe thee firmly!” (Spurgeon)

He did not consider his own body, already dead: Abraham, in faith, did not look to circumstances (his own body and the deadness of Sarah’s womb) but he looked at the promise of God.

In Romans 4:19, there is textual uncertainty as to if we should read he considered his body as good as dead or if we should read he did not consider his own body. Either is possible, though the second seems to be a better choice.<sup>75</sup>

## **<sup>20</sup>He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

**McGee:** He was not double-minded. That’s the whole thought here. He looked away from his circumstances to the promise. He believed the promise, in spite of the fact that the circumstances nullified it. He put confidence in the promise because of the One who gave it, thus giving worship to God. You see, man was created to glorify God, but by disobedience he did the opposite. And, my friend, the only way you can glorify God is to believe Him.<sup>76</sup>

**BKC: 20-21.** In spite of the humanly impossible situation, Abraham did not waver through (lit., “by”) unbelief. “Waver” (*diekrithē*) means “to be divided” (sometimes trans. “doubt,” as in James 1:6). The patriarch was strengthened in his faith (lit., “was empowered [*enedynamōthē*, from *endynamoō*] by means of faith”). God, responding to Abraham’s faith, empowered him and Sarah physically to generate the child of promise. Also, he gave glory to God, that is, he praised God by exalting or exclaiming His attributes. Abraham was fully persuaded that God had power (*dynatos*, “spiritual ability”) to do what He had promised. What confidence in God this spiritual forefather possessed! He “in hope believed” (Rom. 4:18); he was not weak in faith despite insuperable odds (v. 19); he was not divided in his thinking by unbelief (v. 20a); he was empowered by faith (v. 20b); and he was fully persuaded God has the ability to do what He had said (v. 21).<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>76</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>77</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**Guzik:** He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief: His faith did not waver; and it gave glory to God. Though it was a huge challenge, Abraham remained steadfast in faith.

“When there is no contest, it is true, no one, as I have said, denies that God can do all things; but as soon as anything comes in the way to impede the course of God’s promise, we cast down God’s power from its eminence.” (Calvin)

**<sup>21</sup>And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**

- He relied on the character of God.
- He knew that God cannot lie.
- He knew that God was also omnipotent.<sup>78</sup>

**McGee:** "Fully persuaded" means that he was filled brimful. There was no room for doubt.<sup>79</sup>

**Guzik:** Being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform: Abraham’s faith came because he had been fully convinced of God’s ability to perform what He has promised.

Is your God too small? The God of Abraham was able to perform what He had promised, and Abraham was fully convinced of this.

Some people don’t come to Jesus or don’t go further with Him because they are not fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. They think, “It is fine for them, but it won’t work for me.” This thinking is a devilish attack on faith and must be rejected.

Able to perform: This kind of faith sees the work of God done. It sees the work of God done in the immediate (Isaac was born in fulfillment of the promise) and in the eternal (accounted to him for righteousness).<sup>80</sup>

**<sup>22</sup>And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.**

**McGee:** This faith in the resurrection -- life from the dead -- is what God accepted from Abraham in lieu of his own righteousness, which he did not have. God declared Abraham righteous for his faith in the promise of God to raise up a son out of the tomb of death, that is, the womb of Sarah. God promises eternal life to those who believe that He raised up His own Son from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, the place of death.<sup>81</sup>

Paul concluded his illustration about Abraham by saying, This is why (*dio kai*, "wherefore also") it was credited to him as righteousness. Abraham's response of faith to God and God's promise to him was the human requirement for God's justifying Abraham, for God's declaring that Abraham stood righteous before Him. No wonder God credited such faith with righteousness!<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>79</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>81</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>82</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**<sup>23</sup>Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;**

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Having given us the example of Abraham, in verse 23 Paul now explains that the reason for God righteousing Abraham was not meant only for him; this was not a one-off event meant only for a special Patriarch. Rather the recording of this event and the written accounting for how righteousness is obtained is meant to inform everyone about it. I maintain that the story of Abraham as we find in the Old Testament is the earliest recorded form of the Gospel. In fact, I think that Paul's entire theology is based around his conviction that the Old Testament, throughout its many books, speaks directly to the matter of the Gospel. After all, what else did he have to refer to than the Old Testament?<sup>83</sup>

**McGee 23-24:** The womb of Sarah was a tomb. It was a place of death. But out of that came life. Abraham believed God. And this is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56).<sup>84</sup>

**Verses 23-25** apply the truth about justification and its illustration in Abraham to the apostle's readers—from the believers in Rome who first read this letter to people today. The divine declaration of Abraham's justification was written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness. Such an act of justification, however, is not for everyone. It is for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (lit., "out from dead ones"; cf. 6:4; 8:11). Repeatedly in this chapter Paul referred to Abraham and other believers having righteousness credited to them because of their faith (4:3, 5-6, 9-11, 23-24).<sup>85</sup>

**Guzik:** It was not written for his sake alone: It wasn't only for Abraham's benefit that God declared him righteous through faith; he is an example that we are invited to follow – it is also for us. Paul's confidence is glorious: It shall be imputed to us who believe; this wasn't just for Abraham, but for us also.<sup>86</sup>

**23–24** Paul applies Gen. 15:6 to his readers. but for ours also. Paul sees that, in God's plan, Scriptures as far back as Genesis were written also for the benefit of Christians in the new covenant age.<sup>87</sup>

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

Re: definition of the Gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-4: the importance of the resurrection!

---

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>84</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>85</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>86</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>87</sup> ESV Study Bible

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Finally, in the last few words of chapter 4, Paul connects and compares Yeshua to Abraham. Notice how Paul turns the phrase (especially since the point is to compare Yeshua to Abraham) such that we are to trust in the one who raised Yeshua from the dead, just as Abraham trusted in the same one who has the power to raise from the dead. That is, Paul is indicating that we should "trust the Father". It is by the Father's power that Yeshua was raised; Yeshua did not raise Himself. It is by the Father's power that people are righteoused. However, also trust in Yeshua's perfect faithfulness.....His action and deeds.....because Yeshua's deeds were 100% without sin. It is on account of Yeshua's perfect faithfulness that He can be our atonement for sin, which is a prerequisite for our being righteoused by His Father. It is how we become seed of Abraham.<sup>88</sup>

**Guzik:** Who believe in Him who raised up Jesus: When we talk about faith and saving faith in Jesus, it is important to emphasize that we mean believing that His work on the cross (delivered up because of our offenses) and triumph over sin and death (raised because of our justification) is what saves us. There are many false-faiths that can never save, and only faith in what Jesus accomplished on the cross and through the empty tomb can save us.

- Faith in the historical events of the life of Jesus will not save
- Faith in the beauty of Jesus' life will not save
- Faith in the accuracy or goodness of Jesus' teaching will not save
- Faith in the deity of Jesus and in His Lordship will not save
- Only faith in what the real Jesus did for us on the cross will save<sup>89</sup>

### **<sup>25</sup>Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**

Verses 23-25 apply the truth about justification and its illustration in Abraham to the apostle's readers—from the believers in Rome who first read this letter to all of us today. The divine declaration of Abraham's justification was written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness. Such an act of justification, however, is not for everyone. It is for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.<sup>90</sup>

**McGee:** That is faith, not only in the death of Christ, but also in His resurrection. Matthew Henry put it like this: "In Christ's death He paid our debt; in His resurrection He took out our acquittance." God justifies those who believe in the death and resurrection of Christ. How wonderful this is! Have you gone that far with God? Do you believe Him?<sup>91</sup>

Mentioning the Lord Jesus led Paul to state again the Savior's central place in God's program of providing righteousness for sinful people by grace through faith. Both Christ's death and His resurrection are essential to that work of justification. He was delivered over (by God the Father; cf. 8:32) to death for our sins (lit., "on account of or because of" [dia with the accusative] "our trespasses" [*paraptōmata*, "false steps"; cf. 5:15, 17, 20; Eph. 2:1]). Though not a direct

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>89</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>90</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>91</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

quotation, these words in substance are taken from Isaiah 53:12 (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). Also He was raised to life for ("on account of" or "because of" [*dia* with the accusative]) our justification. Christ's death as God's sacrificial Lamb (cf. John 1:29) was to pay the redemptive price for the sins of all people (Rom. 3:24) so that God might be free to forgive those who respond by faith to that provision. Christ's resurrection was the proof (or demonstration and vindication) of God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice (cf. 1:4). Thus, because He lives, God can credit His provided righteousness to the account of every person who responds by faith to that offer.

In chapter 4, Paul presented several irrefutable reasons why justification is by faith: (1) Since justification is a gift, it cannot be earned by works (vv. 1-8). (2) Since Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, circumcision has no relationship to justification (vv. 9-12). (3) Since Abraham was justified centuries before the Law, justification is not based on the Law (vv. 13-17). (4) Abraham was justified because of his faith in God, not because of his works (vv. 18-25).<sup>92</sup>

**Guzik:** Raised because of our justification: The resurrection has an essential place in our redemption because it demonstrates God the Father's perfect satisfaction with the Son's work on the cross. It proves that what Jesus did on the cross was in fact a perfect sacrifice made by One who remained perfect, even though bearing the sin of the world.

Delivered up because of our offenses: The ancient Greek word translated delivered (*paradidomi*) was used of casting people into prison or delivering them to justice. "Here it speaks of the judicial act of God the Father delivering God the Son to the justice that required the payment of the penalty for human sin." (Wuest)

"Jesus' resurrection always includes his sacrificial death but it brings out the all-sufficiency of his death. If death had held him, he would have failed; since he was raised from death, his sacrifice sufficed, God set his seal upon it by raising him up." (Lenski)

"Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation by his death and passion, but the efficacy and perfection thereof with respect to us depend on his resurrection... This one verse is an abridgement of the whole gospel." (Poole)

In this chapter, Paul clearly demonstrated that in no way does the Old Testament contradict the gospel of salvation by grace through faith. Instead the gospel is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and Abraham – justified through faith – is our pattern.<sup>93</sup>

Both the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are necessary for forgiveness of sins and justification. raised for our justification. When God the Father raised Christ from the dead, it was a demonstration that he accepted Christ's suffering and death as full payment for sin, and that the Father's favor, no longer his wrath against sin, was directed toward Christ, and through Christ toward those who believe. Since Paul sees Christians as united with Christ in his death and resurrection (6:6, 8-11; Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12; 3:1), God's approval of Christ at the resurrection results in God's approval also of all who are united to Christ, and in this way results in their "justification."<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>93</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-4.cfm?a=1050001)

<sup>94</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

## Summary

In Chapter 4, Paul presented several irrefutable reasons why justification is by faith:

- 1) Since justification is a gift, it cannot be earned by works (vv. 1-8).
  - 2) Since Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, circumcision has no relationship to justification (vv. 9-12).
  - 3) Since Abraham was justified centuries before the Law, justification is not based on the Law (vv. 13-17).
  - 4) Abraham was justified because of his faith in God, not because of his works (vv. 18-25).
- Jesus' resurrection validates the adequacy of the payment for us all. *Tetelestai*, "Paid in full!" (John 19:30)

The ransom has been paid. The divine justice has been appeased. The holiness of God has been vindicated. ...And the believing sinner is declared justified from all things.

Such is the testimony of Chapter 4. We can't add to it. It is blasphemy to even try.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org