

## ROMANS 4

v. 1-8 - Illustrations on Imputation ("P-U-T") → Abraham and David

v. 1 - Abram - The **first** Jewish patriarch - the father of the Hebrews. - Gen. 14:13

- The Jews had just been shocked when Paul stated in Rom. 3:30-31 that the Jews' circumcision "**as pertaining to the flesh**" had absolutely no bearing on them being justified before God; they had to be justified by faith just like the uncircumcision (Gentiles).
- Abram was NOT placed in right relationship with God (saved) in exactly the same manner as we are in the Church Age. Abraham simply BELIEVED (had faith in) God about a specific thing God told him "so shall thy seed be" (not D/B/R of Jesus Christ), and God counted it to him for righteousness.
- Abraham received God's imputed righteousness when he believed (faith) God.
- Abraham's faith & obedience were far from perfect. (down to Egypt-Gen. 12:10)
- Faith **IS NOT** a measure of self-righteousness, it is but the channel or means by which God imputes His own righteousness unto them that believe.
- Abraham's faith is shown in vv. 12, 13, 16, 19-22
- Paul's illustration => Abraham was counted righteous before God in Gen. 15:4-6 & Rom. 4:3 (which was about 40-50 years **before** offering Isaac in Gen. 22).
- cf. James 2:21-24 - (Paul and James are NOT referring to the same event => James is dealing with Gen. 22). Abraham was **justified** by works when he offered up Isaac on the altar. This is an outward work which gave evidence of (or showed/proved) his belief in God. (OT faith: believing God w/ active obedience)
- **JUSTIFIED** has more than one meaning. It can mean "saved" as in Acts 13:39, but can also mean "to prove, to show to be right, or to warrant. Examples where "justify" does not mean "saved": Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:29; Luke 10:29; Rom. 3:4; Job 32:2 (among many others)
- James is not where we are to get salvation doctrine for the church age, James was written to the twelve Jewish tribes, and is prophetic tribulation doctrine. BE CAREFUL about making James into church-age doctrine!
- To make James Church Age doctrine ushers in Lordship salvation (works).

v. 2 - While "legal" or "legalism" is not a Bible term, its true meaning is "salvation by good works." (not "separation", "standards" or "personal convictions")

- Examples of "legalism" in the Bible: Acts 15:1, 5, 24 Resolution is found in Acts 15: 9,11 (grace through faith)
- Man's works would equal man's glory...THERE IS NONE! - Rom. 3:27
- Salvation is 100% grace and 0% works. - Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

v. 3 - What saith the scripture? - Gen. 15:4-6

- In this context where God counted Abraham's belief as righteousness, Abraham did not know (and was not asked to believe) anything about Jesus Christ.

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- Abraham was asked to believe God would give him an heir and to look at and number the stars as representing his seed. During the Church Age we are asked to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to receive forgiveness of our sins and we get counted as 100% righteous by God. - Rom. 4:5 (next verse)
- v. 4 - It's not what you do to earn salvation, but what Jesus has already done for us that counts. - 1 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 5:17
- If salvation were attained through good works, then God would owe us salvation **as a reward** and Jesus Christ's death would be unnecessary & in vain. - Gal. 2:21
  - For the wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23a
  - Salvation can only be by grace, without any works of man. - Rom. 11:5-6
  - To believe in works negates any possibility of having any assurance of salvation, since we could never know when we have done enough good works. - 1 Pet. 1:3-5
  - Salvation by good works becomes a burden of debt that we could never pay off.
- v. 5 - "Worketh not" and believeth" are inseparable in salvation - Acts 16:30-31
- "Worketh not" => The "**FROM**" of repentance - Heb. 6:1 (dead works)
  - "Believeth" => The "**TO**" of repentance - Acts 20:21 (God); Matt. 21:28-29
  - Trusting good works for salvation PREVENTS you from being saved. Trusting in your own self-righteousness for salvation will damn your soul to hell - Rom. 10:3-4
  - It is that state of hopelessness and helplessness that causes us to cast ourselves upon the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. Example: Luke 18:9-14
  - To correctly see God is to see how short we come of God's requirements - Isa.6:5
  - To make salvation into a commitment, promise, giving of your heart, vow, pledge, promise, repentance of (turning from) all your sins, etc. is to add works to the free gift of grace. It's only **BELIEVE AND RECEIVE!** - John 1:12
  - God justifies the "ungodly-5:6" and those "dead in trespasses and sins"-Eph.2:1; Luke 19:10
    - Not those who are (or say they are) attempting to be godly or live a godly life.
    - Not those who are (or say they are) sufficiently sorry and remorseful for their ungodliness.
    - Not those who have (or say they have) made Jesus Lord of their lives.
    - Not those who have (or say they have) repented of (turned from) all their sins.
  - By simply believing and calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ by faith alone, sinners are made perfectly clean - Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13
  - We must look **outside ourselves** and trust Jesus or there is no hope! - Heb. 12:2
- v. 6 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Example of imputed righteousness - David
- God imputes His own righteousness to all believers **WITHOUT WORKS!!!**
  - Jesus did not commit any the sins (John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:21-22), but was **numbered with the transgressors**; so it makes perfect sense that believers

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cannot earn of the perfect imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ that causes us to be numbered with the righteous. - Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:28

vv. 7-8 - Quotations of Psalm 32:1-2

- Psalm 85:1-2 - Note the Psalm is OT and the covering of sin was only temporary until the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross was offered **once for all**. - Heb. 10:10-12
- In v. 7, God not only forgives the believer, but also refuses to count your sin against you.
- David was guilty of adultery and murder (and thereby was sentenced to death under the Law), but God “put away” his sin and did not require David to die - 2 Sam. 12:13
- For believers in Jesus Christ, our position and legal standing with God is **sinless perfection** because we have received the righteousness of Jesus Christ. - Rom. 10:3-4; 1 John 4:15-17; John 1:12
- When we sin as a Christian, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ. - 1 John 2:1-2; Rom. 8:26, 34; 1 Tim. 2:5-6
- Believers have 2 natures, the old man and the new man, which is in Jesus Christ. Practically, **spiritual** baptism should lead us to walk in newness of life. - Rom. 6:4

v. 9-25 - Further evidence in the life of Abraham, the father of all believers, Jew or Gentile

- Gal. 3:6-9; 14-18; 29
- Abraham descended from Shem, and his name means “father of many nations” - Gen. 17:1-8 (Abrahamic Covenant)

v. 9-10 - Faith reckoned to Abraham for righteousness (v. 3 - Abraham believed God)

- “This blessedness” (**imputed righteousness**) is available by faith to anyone who will believe God, both to the Jew (circumcision) and to the Gentile (uncircumcision). - Acts 15:7-9
- Since Abraham died several hundred years before the Law was given, Abraham was reckoned righteous by God before the Law - Gen. 15:4-6

v. 11 - Sign of circumcision - vv. 16-17 (“**works issue**” - Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 2:1-4; 5:1-6)

- Defined as Abraham’s “seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe...”
- Circumcision was nothing more than a “sign” or a “seal”, confirming that which had already taken place, e.g. the covenant God made w/ Abraham - Gen. 17:6-11
- Since Abraham was declared righteous by God in Gen. 15 (**BEFORE** he was commanded by God to be circumcised in Gen. 17:11), then circumcision **CANNOT** be a condition for justification. APPLICATION TO US: Works has no place in church-age salvation.

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- “Righteousness by faith” (that is, by believing God in the OT) CAME BEFORE both circumcision and the Law, making it independent of both.
  - Therefore, to tie the imputed righteousness of God (or our salvation during the Church Age) to either 1) circumcision or 2) keeping the Law is to teach WORKS for salvation.
- v. 12 - Abraham is father of all believers in the sense of **imputed righteousness**
- Abraham is the physical father of all Jews who followed him in physical circumcision - Romans 9:6-8.
  - Abraham is the father of all those who follow him by faith in the promised seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Now, Jew or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, for there is no difference - Romans 3:22; 10:12; Gal. 6:15)
- v. 13 - The promise to Abraham of an heir was through the righteousness of faith, not works of the Law.
- Since the Law was not given to Moses for over 400 years after the promise to Abraham was made, the promise cannot fall under the jurisdiction of the Law, i.e. our salvation is not contingent on us keeping the Law.
  - The promise in Gen. 17:8 is for “all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession”
  - “Heir of the world” points us to Jesus Christ, who will rule over the whole earth during the Millennium, and throughout eternity as well.
  - So the Jews will inherit the NEW EARTH (Rom. 4:13), the Church (the Bride of Christ) will inherit (and be) the NEW JERUSALEM (Rev. 21:9-10), and the Gentiles will inherit the NEW HEAVENS (Deut. 4:19)
- v. 14 - Attempting to keep the Law for salvation in the Church Age voids the promise, which is **ONLY BY FAITH**
- The promise God made Abraham was **unconditional** and was given PRIOR to the Law being given.
  - The Law required complete obedience, whereas the blessing of imputed righteousness today comes simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Every person has universally broken the Law, and **the Law is conditional**, so if the promise is based on the Law, then breaking the Law invalidates the promise.
  - If the Jews (descendants) of Abraham automatically receive salvation by just being Jews, then faith is void and God’s promise has no effect.
- v. 15 - Law can only equal wrath because all of us have broken God’s Law
- The Law requires 100% obedience, which nobody can achieve; therefore any attempt to keep the Law for salvation only guarantees God’s wrath. - Deut. 28:15-68 (see v. 63)

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- God's promise was given unilaterally by God, **APART** from the Law. Jer. 30:3; Ps. 105:8-11 APPLICATION: Salvation is by faith alone, without any good works on our part.
  - Since the promise was given before the Law, **without conditions**, it cannot be negated when the Law is broken, i.e. salvation cannot be received or retained by keeping the Law.
  - Where there is no requirement to keep the Law, there can be no transgression or sin for which to be held accountable. - Matt. 5:17
- v. 16 - "Therefore", we conclude salvation (or justification) is by faith. - Rom. 3:28
- The promise to Abraham is to "all the seed", both the physical seed (Jews) and the spiritual seed (Christians) who have the promise because it is "of faith".
  - Salvation by grace is God's free gift and provision. How did it come? John 1:17
  - The promised blessing today of imputed righteousness can only come by grace through faith. - Rom. 4:5-8; Gal. 3:26
- v. 17 - Quotation of Gen. 17:4 (Abraham's promise was that he would have an heir and seed.)
- Abraham is a spiritual father of a spiritual nation of believers, wherever they are.
  - As Christians, God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is our Father, and no man. - Matt. 23:9
  - "quickeneth the dead" - God gave Abraham and Sarah the ability to produce a child (Isaac) APPLICATION: 1) Lost sinners have no ability to produce spiritual life - Eph. 2:1-3
  - "things which be not as though they were" - APPLICATIONS: 1) believing by faith and **not** by sight and 2) imputation → where 1) our sin was put on Jesus Christ at the cross where He paid for it in full by pure blood and 2) His righteousness was put on us when we simply believed and called on Jesus Christ by faith alone. - 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-9
- vv. 18-22 - Analyzing Abraham's faith
- v. 18 - Against any possible hope, Abraham had hope in God and believed God.
- In Gen. 15:4-6, Abraham believed God and had a strong faith that God could bring "forth out of thine own bowels" an heir (Isaac/Jesus) and innumerable seed.
  - Cf. Gen. 17:15-22 - However, Abraham did **NOT** show strong faith when, at 100 years old, he learned that God was going to use Sarah, who had been barren her whole life and was now 90 years old. Abraham knew that without a miracle of God that his and Sarah's bodies could not produce a child. Without a miracle of God, none of us would ever be saved.
  - The NT does not record or remember Abraham's lapse in faith, just as God does not record or remember any of our sin when we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

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- How does God view our sin (positionally) upon our receiving Jesus as Saviour? - Heb. 10:15-17; Ps. 103:10-12; Isaiah 1:18; Micah 7:19

vv. 19-22 - Ultimately, Abraham's faith was as strong as his confidence in the source of the promise, God Himself.

- Failure to believe is **UNBELIEF**, which is the rejection of God's promise, not a lack of faith. cf. John 3:18
- Contrast Rom. 12:3 with 2 Thess. 3:1-2
- Abraham chose to believe God rather than his and Sarah's physical inability to bear a child.
- Abraham was "fully persuaded" (v. 21) that God could fulfill his promise, fully trusting in God 100%. - Heb. 11:17-19
- Abraham's faith was not the catalyst to cause God's promise to happen, it was the ability, willingness, and faithfulness of God to perform the promise that Abraham believed in.
- As a result of Abraham's belief, God imputed His own righteousness to Abraham.
- PRACTICAL APPLICATION: As Christians, when we grow in our believing God and His promises, we grow in our faith and God is able to use us to a greater extent in His service.

vv. 23-25 - Abraham's faith as **a type** of NT salvation

- Abraham believed God concerning the birth of an heir; we (in the Church Age) believe God concerning free gift of the shed blood, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the atonement for our sins and justification as children of God.
- We deserved the sentence of execution and eternity in hell under the Law, BUT **Jesus' paid in full** for our sins, iniquities, and offenses at the cross. - John 1:29
- Jesus's death was vicarious (our substitution), i.e. Jesus died in our place. - Isa. 53
- Jesus's resurrection justifies us as children of God. The cross was the full and complete payment for the price of our sins, and Jesus' resurrection gives us our position as righteous children before God. - 2 Cor. 5:21
- Without the resurrection, there is no gospel! Never forget to always include the resurrection of Jesus Christ along with His death and burial when you present the Gospel to the lost. - 1 Cor. 15:3-4