

Romans 4:1 *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?*

Paul is now about to use an Old Testament saint whom the Jews were familiar with to state his case. Abraham is the beginning of the Jewish nation by faith.

We will always fail if we put faith in our flesh.

Romans 4:2 *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

If Abraham was justified by his own works, then he would have had something to boast about. Romans 3:27 says boasting is excluded because it is not anything we do for God that makes us justified but what God has done for us. Paul said, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14). We should only boast in Jesus' finish works because He did the work we just receive.

Romans 4:3 *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

God brought Abraham outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Abraham simply believed what God said and was credited righteousness because he believed something, not because he did something (Genesis 15:5-6).

The way Abraham was credited righteousness was by believing what he heard not by working to please God (Gen 15:6). Abraham received the blessing not based off his goodness but based off hearing Gods goodness and believing Him (Gal 3:5).

Sarah was barren but she considered God faithful who had made the promise (Heb 11:11). Did God open Sarah's womb once she considered Him faithful? No, that would mean God responds to us. The gospel is about us responding to Him. Sarah put herself in position for her womb to open once she believed God.

Romans 4:4 *Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.*

The person who tries to earn salvation or God's blessing is no longer receiving grace that is a gift but is now working and trying to earn it. Most Christians are trying to strive to become but New Covenant teaching is about resting and seeing what God has already done.

Anytime we work to please God and believe right standing with God comes through the law it is as if Jesus died for nothing (Gal 2:21).

Romans 4:5 *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

Paul's focal point of the book of Romans centers around Jesus as the bases for a person's salvation; religious or non-religious. He uses Abraham as an Old Testament example to show how he was not righteous because of his good works. Abraham had a fault; he lied about Sarah being his wife twice; once when she was sixty and then when she was ninety years old.

Paul is now moving into another Old Testament saint that was righteous with God independent of his works or holiness.

The person who does not try to earn right standing with God but believes on Jesus; are the ones justified with God. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost (Lk 19:10). If a person is a sinner, they qualify as a candidate for salvation (1 Tim 1:15).

Romans 4:6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

Paul now mentions David who was righteous apart from his holiness. Similar to Abraham, King David had some short comings in his life as well. David committed adultery with a woman named Bathsheba who became pregnant. Upon learning of Bathsheba's condition, David tried to cover his sin and eventually arranged for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle (2 Sam 11-12). It was God's grace not their holiness that made Abraham and David righteous.

Paul's mentioning of Old Testament saints to the Christian's in Rome is not anything new (Gal 3:8).

Paul chooses these two people because one was before the law (Abraham) and another was during the law (David). Neither were justified by their own goodness.

Romans 4:7 "blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

This is a quotation from Psalm 32:1,2 where King David is speaking. Under the Old Covenant sin was covered, but under the New Covenant sin is destroyed by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19).

The worlds system of forgiveness comes through apology but God's system of forgiveness is only through the shedding of sinless blood. Our sins are not just forgiven, they are forgotten (Heb 8:12, 10:17). The Greek word for forgiven in this verse is *aphiēmi* and means **not to discuss now. If God doesn't remember our sins, why should we?**

Romans 4:8 blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall no impute sin."

The term will not in Greek is *ou mē* and means never. God will never impute sin to a believers account. The term impute is an accounting term and in Greek is *logizomai* and means to take inventory.

Many Christians believe that God is taking inventory of their sins similar to an employee at a grocery that stocks the shelves. Many of us see our shelves completely full of sin and addiction

that we believe God is taking inventory or notice of. For a believer, our shelves are completely empty, hallelujah!

We are walking in what David was trying to get his hands on. He could see the day we are now living in. Under the dispensation of grace, sin is not being imputed unto men (2 Cor 5:19).

Romans 4:9 *Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.*

The act of circumcision was what the legalistic Jews were demanding compliance with or as a prerequisite for salvation. Circumcision now is no longer the debate but any act we do for God in order to receive salvation or any of his blessings is similar to the compliance of circumcision in Paul's day. Circumcision was not the issue; the issue was demanding it as a means to be right with God.

The blessedness comes upon Jews and Gentiles, the only thing that counts is faith in Christ (Gal 5:16).

Romans 4:10 *How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.*

Righteousness was credited to Abraham before Ishmael was born. When Ishmael was between the age of 13- 14, he and Abraham received the act of circumcision. Paul is proving a point that Abraham was not righteous with God because of the act of circumcision because he was credited righteousness 13 years before he was circumcised. (Gen 17:24-25).

Romans 4:11 *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,*

Abraham received the act of circumcision at the age of ninety-nine years old. This act of circumcision was a sign of the covenant not to be accepted by God.

Romans 4:12 *and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.*

Righteousness is revealed by faith not by any outward acts. God imputed righteousness to Abraham by favor not because He was obligated or owed it to him.

Romans 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

This verse is emphasizing that the promise is not about any physical or outward act but an inward decision. Justification is by faith without the law and works. The covenant was made with Abraham while he was still a Gentile.

Romans 4:14 *For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,*

We can make Christ of none effect by working to become instead of putting faith in Jesus and seeing what is already done (Gal 2:21, 5:2). Jesus' death can go in vain if we do not take advantage of the payment that has been made on our behalf.

Romans 4:15 *because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.*

The law will never bend down and say you are doing good, keep trying. It will come down and spank you. The law does not care about trying, either you can fulfill it perfectly or you can't. God's primary way of dealing with man was through grace. For the Jews to be saved they must come under the Abrahamic covenant. The law was only temporary until the Seed should come (Gal 3:19).

Romans 4:16 *Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*

Abraham was justified before receiving the act of circumcision that he might be the father of the Gentile and Jews. Abraham is the father of the Jews because they too are to follow in the steps of Abraham by receiving justification by faith.

Romans 4:17 *(as it is written, "I have made you a Father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;*

God's kind of faith is mentioned in this verse. It is a faith that does not consider the natural but calls those things that be not as though they were. Abraham against all hope and his body believed God. Abraham was able to birth the promise because he aborted the natural.

Are we agreeing with what God has to say about the situation? Nothing in the natural confirmed that Abraham would bear a son. Faith operates independent of our five senses. The natural does not get a vote when it comes against God's word.

Romans. 4:18 *who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."*

This is a quotation taken from Genesis 15:5.

Abraham was not justified by the obedience of the law because it was not given until 430 years later. Abraham was blessed before the law and without circumcision.

Is there anything you are offering to God in order for Him to bless you? Abraham just simply believed. The problem for many Christians today is that we have not become skillful in trusting God's word. We are still babes and want our parent to continue driving the car for us but there comes a time when we have to get out of the passenger seat and move to the drivers so that we can be of use to the father. The moment a young adult gets their driver's license they are able to assist their parent and run errands because they are no longer co-dependent. Likewise, we need to begin to trust the Father so that we can assist Him in advancing the kingdom and not just being satisfied being born again.

Romans 4:19 *And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

The Greek word for consider is *katanoēō* and means to consider attentively or fix one's eyes or mind upon. Abraham had to disconnect from the natural circumstances from what he saw and felt in order to birth the promise.

It is powerful to know we serve a God that is alive and is into the business of bringing things back from the dead. God is unimpressed with how things look in the natural. Abraham and Sarah were in an impossible situation similar to us in that we were dead in our trespasses and sin but praise God that did not stop the plan of redemption. There is no situation worse than before we got born again.

Romans 4:20 *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

How did Abraham not waiver? The word waiver in Greek is *diakrinō* and means to separate or withdraw. Abraham did not separate from God's word because his focus was not on the natural but on the Father's promise to him. It is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18).

Abraham became strong in faith by giving glory to God. It appears that Abraham's focus was the factor in being strengthened in faith.

Romans 4:21 *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*

The Greek word for fully persuaded is *plerophoreō* and means to completely assure. Abraham believed God was able to perform what He promised. We too need to get to a place where we are fully persuaded. Sarah received strength and was able to conceive by considering God faithful (Heb 11:11).

Romans 4:22 *And therefore "it was accounted to him for his righteousness."*

This is a quotation taken from Genesis 15:6. The Greek word for accounted is logizomai and means to impute to one's account.

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

The Old Testament was written for our learning (Rom 15:4) and Abraham's journey was not just written to tell us a good story but to reveal he was righteous before God and it was independent of his works.

Romans 4:24 *but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

In the same way Abraham was justified by faith, is the same way we are as well. God's means for righteousness will never be by man's holiness but always through God's grace.

The way Old Testament people were saved was not by works but also by faith. Old Testament saints were looking forward to the coming Messiah and putting faith in that. We now look back at the cross and put faith in what Jesus has already accomplished. The Gospel was actually preached to Abraham (Gal 3:8).

Romans 4:25 *who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

The Greek word for delivered is paradidōmi and means to surrender. Jesus could have called down 72,000 angels at His command but He chose to surrender to His Father's will (Mt 26:53).

Jesus was handed over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification. He took our place on the cross and we now take His place on earth. The plan of redemption through Jesus was always for man to become justified.