

By Faith Alone, Through Grace Alone

Text: Romans 4:1-16

Introduction:

1. Roman's Outline: Justification (1-5); Sanctification (6-8); Dispensation/Mission (9-11); Consecration (12-16)
2. This lesson: The Apostle Paul now expands on the theme of justification by faith introduced in chapter 3
3. Abraham is the focus of this chapter.
4. Galatians 3 a key parallel chapter.

In these verses we see that righteousness is imputed without/apart from...

I. Performance (works) (Vs. 1-8)

A. Abraham's Illustration (Vs. 1-3)

1. 'found' = what Abraham discovered, his experience
2. 'glory' = has the idea of boasting. If Abraham was justified by his works, his glorying with be self-focused and not honoring to God.
3. Quotation from Genesis 15:6
4. 'counted' = key word used 8 times in this chapter ('reckon'; 'impute' & 'count'). Means to credit or deposit to one's account. "It has the sense of being recorded in a ledger, accounted, computed, or calculated. It particularly has the sense of all of the above being done mentally, such as coming to a conclusion, making a decision, or figuring something out." (Sorenson) The word is translated 'think' 9 times in the N.T.
5. Note: Not a Catholic concept of an infused righteousness where justification is seen as a "process" through works based sacraments such as baptism, penance and confession to a priest but an imputed righteousness, a moment in time forensic declaration by God that this sinner is righteous.

B. Paul's Application (Vs. 4-5)

1. The works model (Vs. 4)
 - a. 'reward' = dues paid for work (wages)
 - b. 'debt' = An illustration of the workman who gets his wages due him (RWP). If I earn my own salvation, that makes God my debtor. He owes me something on account of my good deeds!
 - c. Illustration: Employment wages. Not given out of grace but as payment for labor done.
2. The faith model (Vs. 5)
 - a. Faith's definition: "the fundamental idea is that of total confidence in, total reliance upon, total dependence upon another, or complete trust in a statement, thing or a person"

The Gospel of God – Romans Series

(Sorenson). Faith is “firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing.” (Vines)

b. Faith’s object – “him that justifieth the ungodly”

c. Faith’s result – “counted for righteousness”

C. David’s Declaration (Vs. 6-8; Psalm 32)

1. Sin is forgiven
2. Sin is covered
3. Sin is not imputed

II. Procedure (ritual) (Vs. 9-12)

A. When Abraham was Circumcised (Vs. 9-10)

1. The Jews placed a high emphasis on circumcision. While this may appear to apply primarily to the Jews, it was extremely important for the Gentiles to understand this due to the efforts of the Judaizers of that time to convince the Gentiles that they had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Example: Acts 15:1
2. Paul explodes this theory by clearly showing that Abraham was justified by faith **before** he was circumcised.
3. Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 15:6 and not circumcised until Genesis 17:24 at the age of 99 (gap of approx. 14 years)

B. Why Abraham was Circumcised (Vs. 11-12)

1. The question might be asked, “If Abraham was justified by faith without circumcision, what was the purpose of the circumcision?”
2. Answer: As a sign and seal of that righteousness.
3. ‘seal’ = old word for the seal placed on books (Rev. 5:1); for a signet-ring (Rev. 7:2); the stamp made by the seal (2 Tim. 2:19), that by which anything is confirmed as here. The circumcision did not convey the righteousness, but only gave outward confirmation.
4. Note: Circumcision and baptism are not the same thing. But if a parallel exists here it is clear that the sign must come after saving faith.
5. Prerequisite for baptism clear from example of Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8:36-37 *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*
6. The Baptism of the Philippian Jailor & his household (Acts 16:31-33)
7. Calvin’s error regarding infant baptism: “...at whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified once for the whole of lie...we must recall...our baptism...so as to feel certain and secure of the remission of sins...it wipes and washes away all our defilements.”

The Gospel of God – Romans Series

III. Precept (law) (Vs. 13-16)

- A. God's promise didn't come by the law (Vs. 13-15)
 - 1. The law wasn't given until 400 years later
 - 2. If righteousness comes by the law, then it supersedes faith and the promise made to Abraham
 - 3. The law is not a justifying instrument: "A law is not the means of justifying anyone. It rather is the legal instrument for condemning one...A statute defines a crime and specifies its penalty. It becomes the definition of a crime (i.e. a sin). A statute by its very nature is not the instrument of adjudication. It merely defines the precise information of the crime (i.e. sin). Thereby, one might have greater knowledge of the offense (i.e. sin). (Sorenson)"
 - 4. The law's function is to condemn (Vs. 15) Gal 3:19 *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions..."*
 - 5. James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*
- B. God's method is by grace alone through faith alone (Vs. 16)
 - 1. 'therefore' = in conclusion or summary
 - 2. Righteousness is imputed under grace through the medium of faith, not a works based system.
 - 3. It is available to all under any dispensation

Conclusion: Will you take God at His Word (faith), and receive His free offer of salvation?