

He Justifies the Ungodly!

Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that **Abraham our father**, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but **believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly**, his faith is counted for righteousness.

1. This is not a new plan of salvation Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**
 - a. Paul has shown the condition of man
 - b. Paul then quoted Scripture to them to show them that the Old Testament proved that they were sinners

Romans 3:10 **As it is written**, There is none

righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: 14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 **Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

- c. Now Paul moves on to show them that the plan of salvation he is preaching is the same from the Old Testament until now **Romans 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;**
- d. People were saved the same way in the Old Testament by grace through faith
- e. Salvation is always a God thing.

- f. Paul goes back to the story of Abraham to help them understand salvation by grace through faith
2. Paul uses the story of Abraham to prove that salvation is by faith
- 3 For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**
- a. Abraham was a good man but that is not how he got saved
 - b. Abraham obeyed God and got circumcised but that is not how he got saved
 - c. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness
 - d. If Abraham had been saved by his works he would have been able to brag about it
- 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath **whereof to glory; but not before God.**
- i. That is often the attitude of rules keepers
- Luke 18:11
- The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, **God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.**
- 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
- 13 And **the publican, standing afar**

off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner.** 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: **for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

- ii. The same picture we see in the rich young ruler
Luke 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, **what shall I do to inherit eternal life?** 19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none *is* good, save one, *that is*, God. 20 **Thou knowest the commandments**, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21 And he said, **All these have I kept from my youth up.**

3. It is either faith or works

- a. You can't have it both ways. If you think that you are saved by what you do then your works are considered a debt

- b. Works would give you the right to glory, boast, or brag and that would take away from God and what He has done through Jesus Christ **2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.**
 - c. If you decide that you want to work you will start paying towards a debt **4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, **but of debt.****
 - i. If you refuse the gift then you work at purchasing it
 - ii. You started out in the hole or in debt because you had already done wrong before you found out about salvation and God
 - iii. If it is a debt it means you are already behind
 - d. You can try to add up enough good works but you will never achieve perfection
4. God's salvation is by grace through faith **5 But to him that worketh not, but **believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly,** his faith is counted for righteousness.**
- a. So salvation goes to the one who quits working, quits trying, gives up and accepts that he cannot save himself
 - b. Notice how he gets saved
 - i. It is counted to him

- ii. He still never accomplishes it
- iii. He still never gets good enough
- c. Notice that the salvation is God justifying the ungodly
 - i. The struggle to be good enough is our trying to say we are not so bad
 - ii. We might not be completely godly but we are pretty good
 - iii. We can get better if we keep working on it
 - iv. He justifies the ungodly
 - v. He justifies the ungodly that quit working on it
- d. Bible salvation comes from believing not doing
 - i. So we quit working and start believing
 - ii. It is not our faith that saves us but who we put our faith in
 - iii. It is not the strength of your faith but the strength of who you put your faith in, the object of your faith
- e. God wants to be believed

5. What did Abraham believe?

- a. He believed God **Genesis 15:6** **And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**

- i. God promised Abraham a seed as numerous as the stars of the heavens
- ii. Abraham was 85 and had no children but he believed God anyway **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*
- iii. One verse with many great truths, faith, imputation, righteousness
- iv. This verse is quoted in the Scriptures several times
 1. **Romans 4:3** *For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***
 - a. The strength was not Abraham's faith or believing but the object of his faith, God
 - b. He believed God about something, and it was counted as righteousness
 - c. God made many promises but the main one would have been the deliverer, the Redeemer, that would be born to him
 2. **Galatians 3:6** *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

- a. Again notice the word it. What was counted to him for righteousness, his faith
 - b. Not his faith but the object of his faith
 - c. What was he believing, that God had a plan, a person, an heir that would bring salvation
 - d. He knew about the sacrifices, the lamb, the blood
 - e. He knew what Adam had done and told about his sin and the sacrifice
 - f. He knew about Abel's accepted sacrifice
 - g. He knew about the sacrifices Noah made
3. **James 2:23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.
- a. Abraham again knew that it was God doing something
 - b. It was not Abraham's work or His faith but God doing something and imputing it to him, counting it, putting it on Abraham's account
 - c. What was Abraham believing? Many promises but the main one is that Abraham as a sinful, failing

man, has the promise of a coming seed, heir, who will die on the cross and carry his sin burden

b. Abraham was believing that God would give him an heir

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: **I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.**

i. It was God Himself that was Abraham's great reward

ii. God promises Abraham that he will have an heir

Genesis 15:4 And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels **shall be thine heir.**

iii. Don't forget Genesis as Eve looked for an heir, a son, a deliverer. She looked first in Abel, then in Seth

iv. The promised seed was Christ **Galatians 3:16** Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to **thy seed, which is Christ.**

c. We know these things because of what Paul writes

Galatians 3:8 And **the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,**

preached before the gospel unto

Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

d. Abraham knew because the gospel was preached to him.

We now get to take part in what was promised to

Abraham **Galatians 3:13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: **14**

That **the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles** through Jesus Christ; **that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

e. Notice that Abraham did believe the gospel **Galatians 3:8**

And **the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,**

preached before the gospel unto

Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

i. The gospel was given in **Genesis 12:3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

- ii. Abraham was looking for a city that man didn't build
Hebrews 11:8 **By faith Abraham**, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. **9** **By faith he** sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: **10** **For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**
- iii. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus Christ
John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad.
- f. Believing God was the story of all the saved Bible men
 - i. Adam knew that he had sinned and only God could save through the promised seed and he believed enough to call Eve the mother of all living
 - ii. Jacob knew he was saved by the coming of the Saviour
Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh come; And unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

- iii. Moses knew he was saved because he believed the promise **Deuteronomy 18:18** **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren**, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.
- iv. David looked forward to the one that would sit on his throne forever
- v. Isaiah looked for the one who would carry all of our sins **Isaiah 53:6** **All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned every one to his own way; And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**
- vi. Daniel looked for the anointed one **Daniel 9:25** **Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.**
Micah 5:2 **But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.**

vii. John the Baptist looked for the Lamb that would take away the sin of the world [John 1:29](#) The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**