

THE GOSPEL OF GRACE
A Study in the Book of Romans

Abraham Justified by Faith

Romans 4

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Romans 4:3

Read Romans 4:1–5.

1. Having shaken up old notions of law righteousness in chapters 1—3 and having put forth the shocking revelation of a righteousness from God apart from law, Paul proceeds to clarify how Abraham himself was saved. What may have been a prevalent misconception among the Jews about how Abraham was saved?
2. What two words describe what Abraham did that was credited to him as righteousness? (v. 3)

Think about yourself: what have you done that was credited to you as righteousness?

3. Paraphrase Paul's discussion in verses 2–5 regarding the difference between being justified by works and being justified by faith.
4. Find the two words in verses 3 and 5 that Paul uses interchangeably.
5. Who *does* God justify? (v. 5)

Read Romans 4:6–12.

6. How does the quote of David in verses 7 and 8 support Paul's argument that salvation has always been by faith and not works?
7. Verse 7 talks about people whose sins are "covered." What are they covered with? (Rom. 3:25)
8. What is the chronological question Paul is sorting out in verses 9 to 11?

Why is it crucial to prove that Abraham's faith was credited as righteousness *before* he was circumcised?

9. Was Jewish circumcision meant to be a righteousness-*maker* or a righteousness-*sealer*? (v. 11) What's the difference?
10. Following Paul's reasoning, then, how is it that Abraham can be father of the uncircumcised (Gentiles) as well as the circumcised (Jews)? (v. 11b)

11. Think about Paul's phrase "walk in the footsteps of the faith" (v. 12). How is that word picture a helpful description of true faith and a guard against empty, self-deceived notions of faith? (v. 12)

Read Romans 4:13–15.

12. Abraham and sons did not receive the promise because of their good deeds. How, then, did they receive it? (v. 13)

13. What phrase from Romans 3:22 does Paul repeat almost verbatim in 4:13?

Why is he so repetitive?

14. Rather than being a stairway to heaven, what is brought about by our attempts to gain salvation by obedience to the law? (vv. 14-15)

Read Romans 4:16–17.

15. What is behind even the faith that you exercise, making it a gift? (v. 16; Eph.2:8)

16. According to Paul's logic in verses 16 and 17, how does the principle of salvation by grace through faith (not Mosaic law) broaden Abraham's descendants to include Gentiles as well as his biological offspring?

17. What kinds of impossible things is God able to do, according to the last half of verse 17?

How have you yourself seen God do that?

Read Romans 4:18–25.

18. What does it mean in verse 18 that Abraham believed God "against all hope"? Humanly speaking, why was the promise of offspring a "hopeless" situation for him? (v. 19b)

19. For whom was the Old Testament written—and (in particular) this tale of Abraham's faith? (vv. 23-24)

20. At the close of this chapter, Paul cannot resist spelling out the gospel again. What is the gospel?