

7/11/10

Abraham, Justified By Faith alone
Rom. 4:1:8

The apostle Paul, as God's prosecuting attorney has masterful proven beyond a shadow doubt that Jews and Gentiles are all guilty before God.

- 1) The Gentiles being guilty of the most horrible sins, due to the suppressing of the truth of God in unrighteousness.
- 2) The moral Gentile and Jew are equally condemned before God because they condemned themselves in judging others, while taking pleasure in the sin.
- 3) All attempts to merit justification before God by works, religious rites or the law are futile.
- 4) The only way that a person can be justified before God is by faith in Jesus Christ, via grace which establishes the law.

The last thing Paul has to do now is to demonstrate beyond any doubt that Abraham was justified by faith, not works, at the risk of been accused of being irreverent by the Jews, for Abraham was considered to be their father both physically and spiritually.

So Paul declared that Abraham was justified by faith alone by a three-fold evidence: Rom. 4:1-8

- I. The works of Abraham accused him before God. vs. 1-2
- II. The faith of Abraham was based on the words of God. vs. 3-5
- III. The faith of Abraham was confirmed by the forgiveness of David by God. vs. 6-8

- I. **The works of Abraham accused him before God. vs. 1-2**
 - A. Paul the apostle pushes the argument of justification by faith, using Abraham as the test case of faith for justification by asking a rhetorical question, which answer is no. vs. 1
 - * "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?"
 1. Paul points out that the Patriarch Abraham is referred as the forefather of all believers.
 - a. The pronoun "we", refers to the Christian, Paul is including himself.
 - b. The phrase "our father", refers to the Jew and Gentile. who have believed they are justified by faith, alone.
 2. Paul expressed the possible source of Abraham's justification, as "according to the flesh", which would make him the exception to the rule of faith.
 - a. The phrase, according to the flesh "kata sarx", identifies in this context

the natural or physical efforts and work of human ability and merit in achieving justification before God.

- b. The expression is completely opposite to the phrase “according to the Spirit”, describing the super-natural work of God, apart from human effort.

B. Paul the apostle was refuting the traditional teaching of the Jews that Abraham was justified by his righteous works before God, but history denied this fact. vs. 2

* “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”

1. The man Abraham lived in the area of the Ur of the Chaldeans. Gen. 11:31
 - a. The ruins of Ur of the Chaldees, known as” al-Muqayyer” were first investigated by the English archaeologist Lotus and Taylor in 1854, others in 1918-19, 22, ending in 1934
 - b. The evidence was one of a pagan Gentile society on the Euphrates River, in the area modern day Iraq.
 - c. A temple with it’s ziggurat, the three-step tower of the city, rose 92 feet, at the base measuring 130 to 195 feet.

- 1) The construction is similar to the Maya pyramid ruins in Yucatan, with three massive steps.
 - 2) The temple was not for worship, but a shrine, a place for the gods.
 - 3) The worship was of the moon-god, Nanna “Akkadian Sin”
- b. Treasures of gold and silver, semi-precious stones and sculptured animals in copper, indications of so high a culture in material things coupled with the horror or human sacrifice.
 - 1) There was industry, business, arts and crafts, which made the city a commerce center.
 - 2) An interesting observation is that while the findings give evidence of a high culture in material things, it was accompanied with the lowest of morals and religion as they scarified their first born.
 - c. Joshua confirms the pagan origin of Abraham.
 - 1) And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: `Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.

Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.

Josh. 24:2-3

- 2) Joshua warned them clearly about serving two gods, “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” Josh. 24:15
- d. Abraham is called a Syrian by Moses, due to the fact that he dwelt in Haran which is the area of Syria, till the death of his father Terah. Gen. 11:32
- 1) In offering their firstfruits to God they were to say, “And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: `My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.” Deut. 26:5

2) Haran is a Babylonian word and means road. this road city lay in the junction of several trade routes which some believe is a very probable explanation of the name.

2. The man Abram failed in many things his works were not perfect.
- a. In his first call from Ur, seems to indicate that it was Terah who was going out to Haran at this point and not Abram, but it was Abram who was called out from Stephen’s commentary. Acts 7:1-3
- * Abram disobeyed delaying in Haran till the death of his father, Terah, about 45 years, if Abram was 30 when he left.
- b. In his second call he finally obeyed, at 75 years old. Gen. 12:1-4
- 1) The tense indicates a previous call in the past, “The Lord had said to Abram”. vs. 1a
- 2) The call is a proclamation severe in nature. Gen. 12:1
- a) To separate from his country or home land.
- b) To separate from his kindred, cultural race.
- c) To separate from his father’s house blood relatives.

- d) To seek a land God would show him.
- c. Abraham compromised his obedience.
 - 1) He took his nephew Lot with him and he became a problem to him. Gen. 12:4-9
 - 2) He failed to trust God during the famine and went into Egypt, lying about Sari being his sister, to protect himself and was rebuked by the Pharaoh. Gen. 12:1-20
 - 3) He fell into the same sin at Gerar and gets rebuked by the Abimelech. Gen. 20:1-18
 - 4) He attempted to fulfill God's promise of giving him a son, at 86 years of age and he listened to his wife, fathering Ishmael with Hagar. Gen. 16:1-16
- 3. Paul the apostle acknowledged that Abraham's life was not perfect, therefore the only boasting he could do was to himself or other men.
 - a. His obedience to the call, not leaving his home and family is not mentioned.
 - b. His dependence on God to deliver his wife from the Pharaoh's is not mentioned.
 - c. His trust in God to bless him, regardless of what part Lot chose is not mentioned.

- c. His courageous rescue of Lot , nor his obedience to slay Isaac is not mentioned.

Illustration

The works of Abraham accused him before God, as sure as the little boy who was asked by his mother if he had eaten any of the chocolate cake in the kitchen. And as he looked at her saying no, there was chocolate icing on his lips!

Application

1. There are people who believe they will be justified before God, based on their works.
 - a. Works that help people in their daily lives.
 - b. Works that benefit people in society.
 - c. Works that risk one's own life, if not lose it for another.
2. There are also people who believe that by their morality and ethical living, they will be justified before God.
 - a. Always attempting to tell the truth and make correction when they are wrong.
 - b. Always holding themselves accountable to others, for their high standard.
 - c. Always turning away from alcohol, drugs and sexual promiscuity.
3. There are other peoples who believe they will be justified before God for their benevolence.
 - a. They are ever ready to meet the needs of those less fortunate.

- b. They are always donating to charitable causes.
 - c. They are very frugal in their living to be able to give to others.
4. There are still other people who believe they will be justified before God by their sincere religious devotion in their concept of God.
- a. That sins can be forgiven by doing penitence by afflicting themselves or suffering.
 - b. That denying oneself food, drink and the comforts of life, will make one holier.
 - c. That one can pay indulgences for one's sin.
 - * "If God puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight, How much less man, who is abominable and filthy, Who drinks iniquity like water!" Job. 15:15-16

The works of Abraham accused him before God!

II. The faith of Abraham was based on the words of God. vs. 3-5

- A. The apostle Paul calls to the witness stand the Scriptures, who are the authority of Divine truth. vs. 3 a
 - * "For what does the Scripture say?"
 - 1. Paul personifies the Scriptures speaking, for they are God speaking His truth to man.

- * Over 3800x in the Old Testament we read:
 - a. "Thus said the Lord".
 - b. "The word of the Lord came to me".
 - c. "The Lord said write".
 - d. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon me".
 - e. "I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say". Ex. 4:12
- 2. Paul understood that the Scriptures claim Divine Inspiration, as their source and authority.
 - a. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2Tim. 3:16
 - 1) The word "theo" means is God.
 - 2) The word "pneusto" means breathed.
 - * Literally expired out of God!
 - 3) Called "plenary verbal inspiration".
 - b. The Scriptures are ex-pired, out of God as holy men were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:19-21
 - 1) They did not speak of their own impulse, sourced in human origin.
 - 2) They were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- 3. Paul also knew the Lord Jesus believed and affirmed the Scriptures to be the word of God.
 - * He never doubted or implied manuscript error.

- a. He Spoke of Noah.
 - b. He spoke of creation, of Adam and Eve.
 - c. He mentioned Cain and Abel.
 - d. He referred to Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - e. He quoted Moses, Isaiah, Daniel.
 - f. He referred to the Scriptures as prophecy.
- B.** Paul the apostle declared Abraham as the ultimate model of faith for justification, saying, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” vs. 3b-c
1. The context is God’s promise to Abraham about having a child of his own body. Gen. 15:1-6
 - a. The patriarch had just returned from the battle of rescuing Lot and Malchizedek had blessed him as he thought of what he had done his began to fear and God told him not to be afraid for He was his shield and exceedingly great reward. Gen. 15:1
 - b. Abraham mentioned he was childless, the only heir in his house was Eliezer of Damascus. Gen. 15:2-3
 - c. God promised him that he would have a child of his own body as his heir and then took him outside and told him to look to the heavens and see if he

- could count the stars, for so would be his descendants. Gen. 15:4-5
 - d. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Gen. 15:6
2. The quote is Abraham’s response to the promise of God.
 - a. Abraham believed God, the word is the verb form of the noun form, “faith”.
 - 1) The noun appears 10 times in chapter four and 39 times in the entire book.
 - 2) The verb form appears 6 times in chapter four and 23 times in the entire book.
 - b. God accounted his faith for righteousness.
 - 1) The word accounted “logizomai”, means to count, reckon, credit or deposit to one’s account.
 - 2) The word appears 11 times in chapter four and 19 times in the entire book.
 - * Both of these words are key words in the epistle, as well as righteousness, unrighteousness, works, law and many others.
- C.** Paul the apostle points out and explains the distinction between works and faith. vs. 4-5

1. To the one who works for something, wages are given to him as a debt due. vs. 4
 - * “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.”
 - a. If a person is hired by another to work 40 hours per week, for ten dollars an hour, they are to receive \$400, for their work.
 - 1) Having performed the job, they deserve the money, it is not a gift.
 - 2) The money is wages earned, paid out by the one who received the benefit of the work done.
 - 3) Now if Abraham would have been able to present his works before God to be justified, then God would have been a debtor to Abraham and could of boasted.
2. To the one who doesn't work, but simply believes the promise of God for justification, his faith is credited to him as righteousness. vs. 5
 - * “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.”
 - a. The contrast is evident by the word “but”, to the one who does not work, but simply believes, it is grace, unmerited favor, this was Abraham.

- b. Abraham is identified with the ungodly of the first three chapters, in need of justification. Rom. 1-3
 - 1) All the Jew are ungodly.
 - 2) All the Gentiles are ungodly.
 - 3) The entire world is guilty before God, deserving the wrath of God.
 - * Abraham was an uncircumcised pagan Gentile idolater, as those in chapter one. Rom. 1:18-23, Josh. 24:2
- c. Abraham simply believed God and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.
 - 1) The word accounted “logizomai”, remember means to count, reckon, credit or deposit to one's account.
 - 2) The righteousness is the righteous provision by the promised Messiah, who would justify sinners.
- d. The context is when he had no children, a contradiction to his name.
 - 1) His name, while in Ur was Abram.
 - a) The name is found some 52 times between chapter eleven and seventeen of Genesis, and appears only two other times in the Old Testament Scriptures Gen. 11:26-17:5, 1Chron. 1:27, Neh. 9:7

- b) The name means “Father is exalted”, conveying love of father.
- 2) His name was changed by God after he attempted to fulfill God’s promise by the energies of the flesh. Gen. 17:5
 - a) The name is found 168 times in the Old Testament and 77 times in the New Testament.
 - b) The name Abraham means “Father of multitude”.
- 3) His name did not match his life condition.
 - a) It was a contradiction to all, for he had no children.
 - b) It was a shame to him, for it meant his wife had ill favor with God.
 - c) But it was prophetic of what God was going to do.

Illustration

“Take the thirteen claims about creation in Genesis chapter one. The chance factor that Moses guessed the proper order is one chance in 311 million, 351 thousand and forty, (311,351,040)” (Stoner:47)

Application

1. Every person that ever reads the Bible or hears the claims of the Bible must make a decisive evaluation of the Bible.

- a. Either it is God’s Words or the words of mere men!
- b. If I take them as silly stories then I will mock and dismissed them as being relevant to me!
- c. If I choose to receive the Bible as God’s Word, then I receive the truth about myself, that I am a sinner in need of repentance and Savior!
 - * “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Heb. 11:1, 6
- 3. The Scripture declare that Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6, Gen. 15:6
 - a. “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.” Rom. 4:18
 - b. “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead, since he was about 100 years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” Rom. 4:19, Heb 11:11
 - c. “The reason being that 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. 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 and children of Abraham.” Rom. 4:13, 4:16, Gal. 3:7

- d. “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Rom. 4:20-21
- e. “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.” Heb. 11:8

4. The Scriptures are clear that the promise was not only to the Jew, but also the Gentiles through the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which [he had] being yet uncircumcised. Rom. 4:12

- a. “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Rom. 9:7-8

- b. “For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.” Gal. 4:22
 - c. “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Gal. 3:9
5. Abraham responded to the gospel.
- a. “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Gal. 3:8-9
 - b. “But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38a
 - c. “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal. 3:14
 - d. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw and was glad.” Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” Jn. 8:56-58
- * Without any doubt, it had to of been in the offering up Isaac, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Accounting that

God was able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure”. Heb. 11:17, 19

- d. For verily He (Jesus) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Heb. 2:16
- e. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your Seed, who is Christ.” Gal. 3:16
- f. “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by Himself.” Heb. 6:13
- g. “And if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3:29
- h. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.” Ja. 2:23, 2Chron. 20:7, Is. 41:8
* Jesus said, “I no longer call you servants but friends”. Jn. 15:15

The faith of Abraham was based on the words of God!

III. The faith of Abraham was confirmed by the forgiveness of David by God. vs. 6-8

A. The apostle Paul at this point makes a parallel from Abraham to David, in order to illustrate imputed righteousness, apart from works. vs. 6

* “just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.”

- 1. The blessedness of Abraham was his justification before God on the basis faith, not works, on the positive side.
 - a. Once again Paul being the attorney in God’s Divine court-room providing two witnesses according to the Law, as before.
 - 1) He called the Law and the prophets. Rom. 3:21
 - 2) He now uses Abraham and David.
 - b. The phrase, just as, “kathaper”, marks the equal parallel of imputed righteousness.
- 2. The blessedness of David was also based on the principle of justification by faith before God, apart from works.
 - a. The key to both Abraham and David is the word imputed “logizomai”, to account, reckon or credit to ones account.
 - b. The word is mentioned five times, from verse 3-8. vs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

- B.** The apostle Paul pointed out the particular blessedness received by David. vs. 7-8
- * “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”
 - 1.** The quote is from one of the penitential Psalms. Ps. 32-1-2
 - * Paul has called to the witness stand all three divisions of the Jewish Scriptures, the Law, the Prophets and the Writings now, for justification by faith!
 - a.** David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and she became pregnant, so David attempted to cover his sin by having her husband Uriah return to Jerusalem to report to David about the war, then giving him leave to go home, thinking he would sleep with his wife, but did not.
 - b.** So David after several attempts sent Uriah back to battle with his death order in hand, for Joab to make sure Uriah was killed in action.
 - c.** David then passed himself off before the people, as a gracious man by marrying Uriah’s pregnant wife.
 - d.** David was in utter misery during the following months, just before the

- birth, as he attempted to hid his sin, until Nathan exposed him. 2Sam. 12
- e.** The guilt driven David wrote the Psalm as a testimony expressing his misery, conviction and the draining of all energy, followed by his confession, repentance and restored joy and fellowship with God.
- 2.** The blessedness of David is described by two beatitudes by the fact that David had trusted God for his justification by the Messiah to come. vs. 7-8
 - a.** The first beatitude being that his sin had been forgiven by God, “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.” vs. 7
 - 1)** The word blessed “makaios”, means happy and translated “happy”. two other times. Jn. 13:17, Rom. 14:22
 - * The word appears nine times in the Beatitudes. Matt. 5:3-11
 - 2)** The lawless deeds “anomia”, the rebellions of David were forgiven “aphiemi”, meaning to abandon or send away, found 146 times in the New Testament.
 - * The plural is used “those” to include anyone, excluding no one.

- 3) The sins “harmatia”, means to miss the mark, were covered “epikalupto”. to conceal or veil from the eyes of God, being confessed in faith of the true payment to come, Jesus. Rom. 3:25
- b. The second beatitude was that this was not attributed to him, “Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.” vs. 8
- 1) The word impute “logizomai”, in the negative means to not reckon or deposit to one’s account.
- 2) The word sin “hamartia”, again means to miss the mark. No ledger was tallied up on David, due to God imputing righteousness apart from works. vs. 6
- 3) The law judged and condemned David to be stoned to death, but God showed grace and mercy.
* Yet the consequences did not disappear, but remained, the child died and David reaped to what he sowed.
- 4) The joy and true happiness of David about his restored fellowship with God was the result of two things.

- a) His sins had been removed completely.
- b) His sin was not credited to his account.
- c) The singular is used to emphasize the personal confession and benefit by faith. vs. 8

Illustration

Every time a person hears and believes the word of God and believes the witness of their sinfulness, regardless of the vileness of their life, they will be justified by faith, alone!

Application

1. The forgiveness of our sin, as Christians is a great blessing.
- a. Forgiveness is based on trusting the provision of righteousness for my justification, the finished atonement of Jesus on the cross, confirmed by his words, “It is finished”. Jn. 19:30c
- b. Forgiveness that is provided for my pilgrimage and so-journeying is by the ongoing cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. 1Jn. 1:9
* “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
2. The sins and trespasses in my life, as a Christian, are not being recorded by God.

- a. He has cast them as far as the east from the west. Ps. 103:12
 - b. He has placed them behind His back, literally His shoulder-blades. Is. 38:17c
 - c. He has buried them in the deepest ocean. Mic. 7:19
- 3.** The consequences of my sins are not removed and I must own up to them honorably and courageously, trusting the grace and love of God.
- a. Some sins take a heavy toll on a person's life, during their entire life.
 - b. Other sins affect a person temporarily and then they are restored.
 - c. Some people will forgive our sins and be gracious to us, others will not.
 - d. Whatever the case may be, I must never forget that God has forgiven me of the sin I confessed and abandoned and is not holding it against me, so my peace and joy is in the Lord, not people!
- * "I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall

surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah" Ps. 32:5-7

The faith of Abraham was confirmed by the forgiveness of David by God!

Conclusion

Paul declared that Abraham was justified by faith alone by a three-fold evidence:

- I.** The works of Abraham accused him before God!
- II.** The faith of Abraham was based on the words of God!
- III.** The faith of Abraham was confirmed by the forgiveness of David by God!