

Romans 4:1-5

Righteousness Revealed in Justification – 3:21-5:21

The Illustration of Abraham - Having stated the doctrine of justification by faith alone, Paul now turns to Old Testament examples to prove that God has always justified people by faith. Abraham becomes the prime example as he is the father of the Jewish nation.

Verse 1

Our father according to the flesh has found – The actual Greek word order lends to this translation: ‘*Our father has found according to the flesh*’ (or according to his own efforts or human activity).

Verse 2

For if Abraham was justified by works - The “if” is a first class conditional and the statement is assumed true for the sake of argument.

He has something to boast about – Not all boasting is sinful. The question is, ‘what is the context of the boasting?’

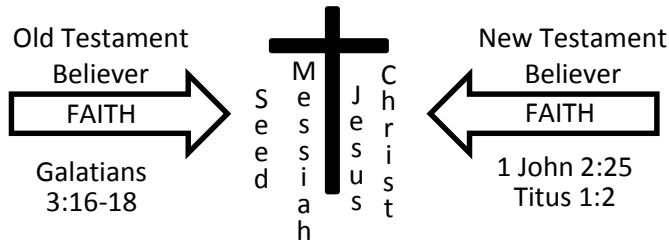
But not before God – Literally, ‘not towards’ or ‘in the direction of’ God.

When it comes to legal-justification in declaring a sinner righteous, there can never be boasting toward God. Ephesians 2:8-9!

Verse 3

Abraham believed God – What was the content or object of Abraham’s faith?

Abraham believed in God’s promise of the coming ‘seed’ (Genesis 12 & 15:4-5). Note Galatians 3:8-9.



And it was reckoned to Him as righteousness -
Reckoned = logizomai, an accounting term used for keeping records involving debits and credits.
Logizomai is used 11 times in Romans chapter 4 (19 times in Romans).

Verse 4

His wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due - Works play no part in obligating God because justification by faith is a matter of unmeritorious favor (grace).

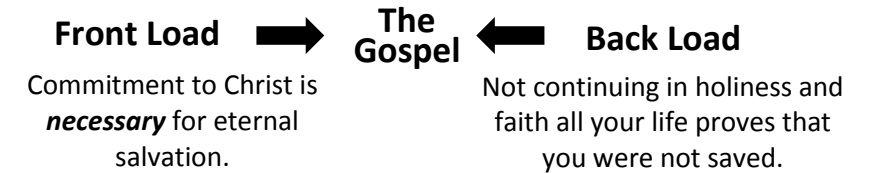
Wage = misthos, used 29 times in the N.T. and usually translated ‘reward’ (19 times).

Verse 5

Work yields wages that the person deserves!
Faith receives a gift that the person does not deserve!

Faith cannot be a work!

Faith and works are mutually exclusive!



Faith + Works = Salvation

Faith = Salvation + Works

Faith = Salvation

Faith + Works = Sanctification

What about James 2:14-26? Context is key!

Romans:

- A systematic defense of justification by faith alone.
- Abraham as an example of righteousness received by faith alone.
- Abraham justified before (towards) God
- Abraham is 75 years old in Genesis 12.

James:

- An exhortation to practical Christian conduct.
- Abraham as an example of mature obedient faith.
- Abraham justified before (towards) men.
- Abraham is 105 to 115 years old in Genesis 22.