

***“Romans, Dispensationally Considered —  
By Faith Alone the Blessedness of God Is Ours!”***

**Last Scripture:**

***Romans 4:1-5***

**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.

**Review: “The Lord God Made a Promise to Abraham that Changed History Forever”**

- ***Paul Transitions from Law and Works to Promises and Faith***

***Romans 4:1-2***

**1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? *[or, has discovered or even, learned]*

**2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

- ***Abraham was justified, he writes here, and it is a remarkable statement indeed considering all that the Bible says about works, NOT by works but by FAITH! The Law had not yet been given but the Gentiles (of which Abraham was) had their revelation in the stars and through the tradition handed down to them and their works WERE CENTRAL to their faith, just as they were also to the Jews later under Moses. But for Abraham it was now different, a new thing indeed. The Lord God had spoken and it was the truth above all others.***

***His works were no longer an issue (really!) though he surely had them in abundance. But that was not what God praised above all.***

***So it really was that simple. Indeed, the truth is always simple when one finally grasps on to it.***

- ***So where did he stand? What had Abraham found? A promise had been given and so now all was to be based on the promise of God! But would he believe it? For now it was on God's word and only on that that he must by faith stand. Before Almighty God, his God, only his faith would be counted for righteousness. This was something entirely new indeed!***

- ***The Truth Is So Simple — Faith Alone Can Bridge the Gap***

***Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***

- ***What did Abraham believe? What saith the scripture? Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6:***

***Genesis 15:1-6***

***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. [These were surely blessed words indeed and lead directly into the Lord's righteousness soon to be imputed to him.]***

***2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?***

***3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.***

***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.***

***5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.***

***6 And he believed [in] the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. [There is no preposition however in the Greek or the corresponding wording in the Hebrews here.]***

- ***What was distinctive about Abraham's faith that Paul is focusing on here?***
  - ***God had given direct, verbal revelation to Abraham and he considered that to be sufficient to change the course of this man's life for ever — and it did. How? Because Abraham***

***believed God and took him therefore at his word. And in this we are to find the model for our faith today.***

- ***What was the consequence of Abraham's faith?***

***Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.***

- ***The details are very important, for what was believed is most critical. It is that way with the Lord of glory. His words make all the difference. That great question follows directly: What is our foundation? Is it the word of the living God or is it ultimately our works?***

- ***The Gulf Between Legal Works and Faith Alone Is Beyond Human Efforts***

- ***Now Paul applies the example of Abraham's faith to ourselves:***

***Romans 4:4-5***

***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.***

- ***So it is clear. The gap between works of law and faith is insurmountable because the essence of the matter hangs on what the Lord God COUNTS as righteousness for us. Nothing else is even relevant. This is not a hope so faith but a faith based securely on the revealed word of Almighty God. That word is good news indeed, that is the word of the gospel, the word concerning the grace of Christ and imputed righteousness to our accounts through his finished work.***
- ***What has Paul done here? He has gone back to Abraham. But in what way. Have we properly considered what he has written here and has it ever made such a difference to us as the apostle prayed so often that it would?***
- ***When we know what law is and what faith is, the difference should be crystal clear. Is it? Why are so many in confusion and darkness about this? How can we help them to bridge the gap?***

- *Are we glorying [boasting] in his finished word and in that alone, or somehow rather in our own sin-tarnished works?*
- *Paul is writing here about the dispensational change that occurred more than once in history. Firstly, he makes reference to Abraham because God had made a change there. He now applies this to our current situation UNDER GRACE. Another change had now occurred, he writes, and the analogy to the change that had occurred for Abraham is the truth at stake here. Will we hear take the Lord God at his word or will we turn away at this critical juncture?*

**Our Scripture Today: “Romans, Dispensationally Considered — By Faith Alone the Blessedness of God Is Ours!”**

***Romans 4:6-16***

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

***Romans 4:9-10***

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

***Romans 4:11-12***

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And 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.

***Romans 4:13-16***

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.  
16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all ...

- *It seems Paul was trained as a “lawyer” perhaps, since he is building a Biblical “argument” here that is iron-clad. And reading it that way is surely intended. He lays out the framework of the scriptural truth and then draws his conclusions. Truly, understanding the Hebrew Scriptures is impossible without his commentary. If only more would come to see that clearly.*

*The Romans is foundational indeed to our understanding of the entire Bible therefore, Rightly Divided according to the Dispensational Plan of God revealed so very, very clearly there.*

#### **Our Outline Today:**

- *David Gave Testimony of Imputed Righteousness Without Works!!*
- *Abraham Was Reckoned Righteous By God While Still Uncircumcised!*
- *For Abraham, Circumcision Was a Sign of His Faith While Uncircumcised*
- *By Faith Gentiles By Grace And Faith Alone Are Also the Seed*

#### **I. David Gave Testimony of Imputed Righteousness Without Works!!**

**[READ ] Romans 4:6-8**

**6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,**

**7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.**

**8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**

- *Paul continues his teaching on the same subject here using now the strong connective “even”. He furthers his statement of the truth of God’s redemptive plan under grace wherein how by faith alone even the despised Gentiles are included, not by works, even a ritual of circumcision, but by faith their faith alone.*
- *“The blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works”, “Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”: This is a near quotation from Ps. 32:*

**[READ ] Psalms 32:1-2**

**1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

**2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.**

- ***“Forgiven”:* A Greek word never used by Paul! This refers to Kingdom forgiveness, a sending away of sin (its literal meaning) as foreshadowed in the sacrificial system with for example the scapegoat, etc., of Leviticus 16.**
- ***“Covered”:* Again, this is Kingdom doctrine indeed. See the cross references in Exodus and Numbers. These all are types looking forward to the final fulfillment in the Millennial New Covenant with all its promises brought to completion.**
- ***“Imputeth”:* But the imputation mentioned here was real and David knew of it even though he lived under the constraints of Moses Law.**
- ***There is a dispensational issue here too, for David, though living under the Law also knew of the previous plan under the Abrahamic Promises. And there the blessing was promised unconditionally by faith alone. And the Law could make no such promise since by the law is the knowledge of sin.***
- ***Why does Paul refer back to David in Psalm 32 here though? Because he wants to reveal that even in the Hebrew Scriptures there was clear teaching on a righteousness apart from any and all works, a righteousness that was based on faith alone, a righteousness that could not be found in sinful man but that was imputable by a righteous God to a sinner who had no works to offer and only his faith. Abraham had been thus declared righteous by God and here David gives testimony as well to that fact.***

## **II. Abraham Was Reckoned Righteous By God While Still Uncircumcised!**

**[READ ] Romans 4:9-10**

**9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.**

**10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.**

- *Now the apostle goes further on in his “argument”, and asks the question “when?” When was Abraham reckoned by God to be righteous? For in answering that from scripture itself he will prove that Gentiles also may have righteousness of God imputed to them. Even the uncircumcision may indeed be declared righteous as the Lord God showed to that great man of the faith, whom Paul continuously refers to, the man Abraham.*
- *The answer to the question is of course that Abraham was declared righteous by God BEFORE he was circumcised, before he obeyed the Lord God’s command regarding circumcision. Genesis 15 is before Genesis 17.*
- *So therefore he concludes that the uncircumcised, even Gentiles, may be granted the blessedness of salvation just like Abraham, who he declares to be “the father of us all” in that respect, namely, concerning our faith.*
- *But have you, or I, properly taken God at his word when it comes to our own righteousness, or are we satisfied to continue on living as if we somehow ourselves may be righteous apart from him or faith, entirely relying on our own works? This is a most serious question indeed, isn’t it?*

### **III. For Abraham, Circumcision Was a Sign of His Faith While Uncircumcised:**

**[READ ] Romans 4:11-12**

**11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had* yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:**

**12 And 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.**

- *Here Paul teaches about the true significance of the Biblical rite of circumcision. For in essence it was not merely a ritualistic rite demanded of all by Moses. No, it was a “sign” of a faith that was already present.*
- *What does scripture say? Simply that Abraham has become the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that*

*righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And 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. This last statement is remarkable because it uses the privileged and sacred (for Jews) word “circumcised” in direct reference to Gentiles! My, my, how bold Paul is again here, to write this of blessed Abraham, who has by his faith and that alone, become “... 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.*

- *So it is clear from the test of scripture itself that we Gentiles on the basis of our faith alone through the word of grace given to us also have such standing as Abraham did.*
- *Paul also uses the expression “... who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” What does this mean, except that they believe as he did, taking God at his word. For before the requirement of circumcision Abraham was not under and rules at all ...*

#### **IV. By Faith Gentiles By Grace And Faith Alone Are Also the Seed:**

**[READ ] Romans 4:13-16**

**13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

**14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:**

**15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.**

**16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all ...**

- **“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”: And thus a new dispensation, one of Unconditional Promises began and that with vast implications for those to follow in the future, as the apostle is teaching here, even ”to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all”.**



- ***Now we have reached these wonderful words: "... if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect":***

- ***Here is yet another absolute statement like so many others found here in the Romans. For there is something that can easily disable the power of faith and disannul full benefits of the unconditional promise the Lord God has made. And that is the works of law. And yet so many choose to dwell there as if that earthly and carnal standard is the high calling indeed for us all.***
- ***But it is not, for he writes next with such certainty and power: "... and the promise made of none effect." These are words with such great dispensational content that all should take note well. For he is indeed writing of his current day and the dispensation of the grace of God, isn't he? Grace may be short-circuited, I have a habit of saying, you will recall.***
- ***And then the reason for his boldness is given: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." My, my, there is no "threading of the needle" here, no mincing of words. For how can any few words be this simple and powerful?***

***Those words are: "the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression ...". But Paul is writing to believers who no doubt were often being taught by Judiazers who were teaching the Law of Moses! "... where no law is, there is no transgression" period. The implications of this for our day are far and wide. Not that there are no moral standards today under grace, but that we are taught by his grace how to live as Titus made so very clear, and not by the tenets of the Law of Moses. For we are not under the law but under grace. Never forget that.***

- ***If this then that, if that, then this. QED. Where therefore do we stand today, brethren? Where there is no transgression!! Never forget that, for the apostle of the Gentiles has written it here so clearly that no one can possibly deny it. And Amen!***
- ***"Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.": There is much here in these few words to***

*contemplate, isn't there? So there can be no spiritual benefit in legal works, no, none at all. Why? Because the law "works wrath, not blessing". But as the children of Abraham by faith, we are blessed according to that promise to him applied to us, not literally, by spiritually, on the basis of our faith alone, apart from any and all works.*

- *And now, concluding this wonderful teaching here in the fourth of Romans, we read this: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all ...". Praise God. What is the "it" here referring to? It is all about the promise just mentioned, the promise that had been given to Abraham. Heb. 6:13 also references it:*

**Hebrews 6:13-20**

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it* was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

- *Such a great and sure promise indeed we therefore also have who have believed. It is as verse 19 states so affirmatively, "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast ..." and why? Because Jesus himself has entered "into that within the veil, and has been made a high priest forever! Amen.*
- *So the dispensational implications are clearly taught again here in Romans.*

- *Don't ever forget the words that say so much, "... for by grace are ye saved through faith, ..."*

**Conclusions and application:**

- *Have we so believed as father Abraham had?*
- *Have we walked also in his faith? Are we still walking there?*
- *Are we unwilling to compromise and to therefore proclaim this faith to all those that the Lord brings our way? Are we, whatever the consequences?*