

Romans 4

1 The matter is of righteousness coming by the Law or by faith. It is about trusting in God to provide the sacrifice that is sufficient. If we see a truth in the Word, we can verify it by the examples God gave us. To the Jew, the Torah was unquestionable revelation through Moses. All arguments that had any weight were argued through the stories and words of the Torah. Remember this is all about the Gentile convert who the Jewish Christian is trying to tell to keep the Jewish regulations - observe the Law.

2 Genesis 15:6 IF... then he could boast to men, but to God he could only say I did what is expected. I did not rebel against a gracious loving God. Jeremiah 9:23-24, Ephesians 2:9

3 What does Scripture say? That should always be our path to truth. Too many think Old Testament is no longer applicable. They forget that not only the apostles are foundational but the prophets also. The Old Testament contains nothing but the truth.

Faith is believing what you cannot see. This believing is a life of submitting belief. The demons believe and cry out in terror. The difference is rebellion on their part. We believe submit, or believe and refuse to submit or refuse to believe altogether. If we believe we submit to or rebel against that belief. Abraham believed God... what? He didn't pray and ask Jesus to come into his heart? Jesus is the way. His name is the authority. Believing faith is the hand that claims both the way and authority though it may intellectually know nothing but the character of God. Romans 10:11 His trust was placed in God not self. If it was true for Abraham, it can be true for anyone for God does not show favoritism.

4 If by the works of the Law I am justified, it is due me from God because I earned it by keeping the rules. Our culture would say, "I'm a pretty good person." The idea is the same. They have been good enough to meet God's righteous standard. Paul is exposing a common misconception of the day by clearly describing it. Sometimes a false logic can reveal itself by just clearly describing the fundamental thought behind it. Romans 11:35

Side note: Are we co-laborers with God? Then there are wages laid up for us in heaven. Because God is just, He is obligated to pay us for our labor. It is not that we earned it, but that we yielded to His life in us. God is generous and loving too, and those wages, reward will far exceed the labor we invested. He was not obligated to save us. That is out of his mercy and love. He is obligated by his equitable just nature to reward us when we labor with Him. We don't labor with Him out of duty or desire for reward, but out of love as His servants.

5 Abraham is the perfect illustration because he lived before the Law. He could not work at keeping it for he did not have it. He did trust God who justifies the wicked by faith and was counted as righteous. If we say God does not justify the wicked then we are all bound for hell. This is a watertight argument. Anyone who trusts in God to justify them, regardless of their intellectual understanding of the process, has their faith credited to them as righteousness. Acts 13:38-39; Galatians 2:16

6-8 He is quoting Psalm 32:1-2. It is a confirmation from another Scripture. If you want to prove a point show it clearly expressed in more than one place in Scripture. It was the way to teach theology then and it is the same now. His point is that God blesses men as He forgives and covers sin and does not count it against the man. What man is this? It is the person who believes and trusts God to justify him. The man in the psalm clearly did not keep the Law. Psalm 146:5; Isaiah 45:24-25

9 Some would go back before the Law and say the commands to Abraham or Noah that preceded the law, for example the tithe or circumcision, that these must be kept. But what does the example show? It was faith ALONE.

10 Paul is the master at logical theology. He gets us to agree to a point and then he springs the trap proving his greater point. In Genesis 15:6, referred to above, Abraham was not circumcised. He had not even the sign of the covenant, but was made righteous by faith alone. So circumcision has nothing to do with being justified by faith. This was one of the main contentions of the Judeaizers, that Gentiles needed to enter the covenant with God through circumcision. Do you attach any work as a prerequisite to salvation?

11 Circumcision was a mark of confirmation that the covenant had been entered into. The sailor doesn't get a tattoo that says "I love Betty" because he might fall in love with her. It is a sign to show that a transaction of the heart has taken place. The Gentile looks at Abraham who was right with God before he was circumcised and realizes it is not in the physical ritual but the heart transaction. Romans 2:28-29

12 The Jewish mindset was that they were circumcised as Abraham was and are therefore his children. Here, the real truth is stated that it is not the sign of covenant but the heart of the covenant - faith, that determines sonship. If I am baptized but do not believe am I a Christian? The outward symbolic act is to witness to the world of an inward act of faith. If it does not, I am merely going through a ritual that is meaningless. Worse yet, I would be lying about who I am. This matches up with Jesus' words, "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me," John 8:39,40 (NIV) footsteps = do the things Abraham did. A

transaction in the heart results in actions in the life. Does your life declare you are a believer? Matthew 7:24

Preparing for the rest of chapter 4:

Did God require Abraham to be obedient before he could receive the promise?

In what ways are you a recipient of the promise?

What role did faith have in the birth of Isaac?

Why does Paul bring this up?

What is Paul's main point in this passage?

What has God promised you and do you believe He can do it?

Why was Jesus crucified?

What does his resurrection prove?