

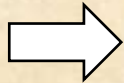
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
ROMANS

Lesson 5

The REVELATION of the Righteousness of God:
ILLUSTRATION of Righteousness
(Romans 4:1-25)

THE STRUCTURE OF ROMANS

INTRODUCTION	(1:1-17)
(1) The REVELATION of the Righteousness of God	(1:18 to 8:39)
(A) Condemnation: The Need for God's Righteousness	(1:18 to 3:20)
(B) Justification: The <i>Giving</i> of God's Righteousness	(3:21 to 5:21)
1) Description of Righteousness	(3:21-31)
2) Illustration of Righteousness	(4:1-25)



Paul supports his argument against justification by works with help from the patriarch Abraham.

THE STRUCTURE OF ROMANS

INTRODUCTION	(1:1-17)
(1) The REVELATION of the Righteousness of God	(1:18 to 8:39)
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1) Description of Righteousness	(3:21-31)
2) Illustration of Righteousness	(4:1-25)
a) The Righteousness of Abraham	(1-17a)
b) The Faith of Abraham	(17b-25)

The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

In the first part of Chapter 4,
Paul asks and answers four questions.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:1-2

- 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.

The First Question:



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:1-2

- 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.

Paul uses the words *we* and *our* to align himself with the Jews.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:1-2

- 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.

No man was more important to the Jewish identity than Abraham. The story of the 12 tribes of Israel begins with the call of Abram.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:1-2

- 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.

Here is Paul's first argument:
God would not ordain a way for man
to glory in himself!



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:3a

3 For what saith the scripture?

The Second Question:



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:3a

³ For what saith the scripture?

This question leads to great answers!

Matthew 22:29

Jesus answered and said unto them,
Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures,
nor the power of God.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:3

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

The Scriptures testify that Abraham
was rewarded for his faith.



That story is found in Genesis 15:



- 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house [his chief servant, Eliezer] 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.

The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

The man who *works* for wages is owed wages. But when something is freely given, it is a gift of grace.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

Abraham's righteousness was not something God owed him. It was a gift of grace. This is true for everyone who comes to the LORD in faith.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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 fortifies his argument with testimony from King David:



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

To “impute” is to charge something to you, or put it on your account.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

This is from Psalm 32:

- ¹ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
- ² Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity...



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.*

This is what justification accomplishes:

- Our iniquities are forgiven
- Our sins are covered
- Our sins are not charged to our account.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.**

This is what justification accomplishes:

Our SINS are not imputed to us, but
RIGHTEOUSNESS is!



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:9

- 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.

The Third Question:

Now Paul asks if this blessing of righteousness by faith is only for the Jews.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:9

- 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.

The Third Question:

Now Paul asks if this blessing of righteousness by faith is only for the Jews.

(The circumcision are the Jews, and the uncircumcision are the Gentiles.)



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:9

- 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.

The Third Question:

Paul does not answer this question directly. Instead, he asks a *new* question that invites everyone to see the answer for themselves:



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:10a

¹⁰ How was it then reckoned?
when he was in circumcision,
or in uncircumcision?

The Fourth Question:

Was Abraham made righteous
before or *after* he was circumcised?



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:10a

¹⁰ How was it then reckoned?
when he was in circumcision,
or in uncircumcision?

If Abraham was made righteous *after* he was circumcised, then only the circumcised can be righteous! That would mean that righteousness comes by works, and it is only for the covenant Jews.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:10

¹⁰ How was it then reckoned?
when he was in circumcision,
or in uncircumcision?

Not in circumcision,
but in uncircumcision.

The answer is very enlightening.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.*

Abraham was made righteous *before* he was circumcised, making his FAITH (and not his circumcision) the central issue.

This cleared the way for righteousness to be imputed to *Gentiles* who walk in the faith of Abraham but are not his biological seed.

The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

The sign of circumcision was a seal of the righteousness he received. An envelope is sealed *after* the message is put inside, not before.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

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.

Paul's earlier question, "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?" has now been answered.

Abraham is the father of all them that believe, both Jew and Gentile.

The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:13

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.

With the question of circumcision settled, Paul now shows that God's promise to Abraham and his descendants did not come through the law of Moses.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:13

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.

We can read of Abraham's promised inheritance in Hebrews 11:

- ⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:
- ¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:14-15

- 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.

This promise was not conditional upon Abraham or his descendants keeping the law.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:14-15

- 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.

If the promise to Abraham depended upon the keeping of the law, the promise would never be fulfilled.

No one born in sin ever fulfilled all the requirements of the law.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:14-15

- 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.

The law proved that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), and that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:14-15

- 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.*

But if there is no law, there can be no breaking of the law. And God's covenant with Abraham was made 430 years *before* God gave the law to Moses!



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:14-15

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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.

Galatians 3:17-18

- ¹⁷ And this I say,
that the covenant, that was
confirmed before of God in Christ,
the law,
which was four hundred and thirty
years after,
cannot disannul, that it should
make the promise of none effect.
- ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *be* of the law,
it is no more of promise:
but God gave *it* to Abraham by
promise.



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:16-17

- 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,
- ¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even God*, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

The promise God made to Abraham was attained by faith and not through keeping the law. And because it was by grace, it could be offered both to those who were under the law (the Jews), and those who were NOT under the law (the Gentiles).



The Righteousness of Abraham (4:1-17a)

Romans 4:16-17

- 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,
¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

This comes from Genesis 17:

- ³ And Abram fell on his face:
and God talked with him, saying,
⁴ As for me, behold,
my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.
⁵ Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.



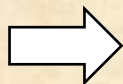


Paul used Abraham to show the only requirement of righteousness is FAITH.

Now he will use Abraham to show what real faith requires.

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The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:17

¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

We read verse 17 a second time:

The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:17

¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)
before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead,
and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

Two things that Abraham believed:

1. God restores the dead to life.

The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:17

¹⁷ (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

Two things that Abraham believed:

1. God restores the dead to life.
2. His promises always come to pass.

The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Genesis 17:15-17

- ¹⁵ And God said unto Abraham,
As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name *be*.
- ¹⁶ And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.
- ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

Abram and Sara had produced no children even when they were young. When God's promise came to them in their old age, it seemed impossible.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:18

¹⁸ **Who against hope believed in hope,**
that he might become the father of many
nations,
according to that which was spoken,
So shall thy seed be.

But Abraham knew that God
“calleth those things which be not
as though they were,” and
(eventually) he believed the
promise.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:18

¹⁸ Who against hope believed in hope,
that he might become the father of many
nations,
according to that which was spoken,
So shall thy seed be.

This is quoted from Genesis 15:5:

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.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:19

¹⁹ And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

He looked past his inability, and considered God's ability.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:19

¹⁹ And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

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“...he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead ... and that Sarah's womb was also dead.”



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

This is what faith in God requires:

James 1:6-7

- ⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
- ⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, **giving glory to God;**
- ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Remember how this chapter began:

Romans 4:2

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



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, **giving glory to God;**
- ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Remember how this chapter began:

Romans 4:2

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

Glory is not owed the one who *believes* the promise. Glory is owed to the One who makes the promise and brings it to pass!



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- ²¹ **And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**
- ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

To benefit from God's promises, you must be entirely convinced of the truthfulness of his word and his ability to bring it to pass.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:20-22

- ²⁰ He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
- ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
- ²² **And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.**

Abraham's conviction made him a ready recipient of God's gift.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:23-25

- ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
- ²⁴ **But for us also**, to whom it shall be imputed, **if we believe** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
- ²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Now, was all this merely a history lesson? What does it mean to us today?



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:23-25

- ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
- ²⁴ **But for us also**, to whom it shall be imputed, **if we believe** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
- ²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Abraham believed God's promise because he believe in God. Today, the spiritual children of Abraham believe in the same God – he who raised up Jesus from the dead.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:23-25

- ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
- ²⁴ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
- ²⁵ **Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.**

Yes, faith is part of the equation. But let us always remember that it was Christ's sacrifice – and not our faith – that made possible God's great gift.



The Faith of Abraham (4:17b-25)

Romans 4:23-25

- ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;
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End of Chapter Four



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3) Benefits of Righteousness	(5:1-11)



UP NEXT

Questions to test your understanding of this lesson:

1. What are the four questions that Paul asks in Romans 4?
2. Before God appeared to him in Genesis 15, who did Abram expect to be his heir?
3. What Psalm is quoted in this chapter of Romans?
4. In Romans 4:6-8, what IS imputed to the believer, and what is NOT?
5. Was righteousness imputed to Abraham before or after he was circumcised?
6. According to Romans 4:11, what difference does that make?
7. According to Galatians 3:17, how many years BEFORE the law came did God make his promise to Abraham?
8. According to Genesis 17:5, why did God change Abram's name to Abraham?
9. According to Romans 4:17, what are two things Abraham believed about God?
10. According to Romans 4:20-21, what was the secret of Abraham's faith?

Each question is worth 10 points. Do NOT share your answers with other students.



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