



The Book of Romans

How to be Right with God

(Romans 4:1-12)

The Only Means of Justification:

“Justification by faith on trial”

***Read Romans 4:1-12

Outline:

- 1- A case study of justification by faith vv. 1-5
- 2- A testimony of justification by faith vv. 6-8
- 3- The candidates of justification by faith vv. 9-12

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 1: v. 1

- “what then shall we say”

- This is a lead into a conclusion... so we must follow Paul’s thinking here.

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 1: v. 1

- “Abraham our father”

- This is the person Paul wants us to consider in light of his discussion on faith and works of the law.

Why use Abraham?

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 1: v. 1

- “has found according to the flesh?”
 - What sense is “flesh” used here?
 - BDAG – human/ancestral connection, human/mortal nature, earthly descent
 - What does this mean?

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 1: v. 1

- What does this mean?

Re-translate: “What then shall we say that Abraham our father according to the flesh has found?”

- i. The NASB translates it this way
- ii. The UBS and NA manuscripts are written this way.
- iii. In this instance I agree with that rendering based on context of this passage.

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 2: v. 2

- “For if Abraham was justified by works”

- That is, Abraham was declared righteous by works
- “he has something to boast about”
- The opportunity to “boast or glory”. This can be taken in a good way or bad way.
- I think contextually “glory”, or the positive rendering fits well.
- “but not before God.” (lit. not toward God... that is, with God he gets no credit)

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 3: v. 3

- “For what does the Scripture say?”

- After staging the ultimate example (Abraham) Paul now stages the ultimate standard (Scripture).

- “Abraham believed God,”

- Lit. Abraham had believed in God.

- “and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

- Righteousness credit was given to Abraham on the basis of having believed in God.

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 4: v. 4

- “Now to him who works”

- This is the simple matter of someone doing something; particularly as a laborer.

- “the wages are not counted as grace but as debt”

- What is received from doing labor is not grace. It is debt. It is owed to you for doing the work.

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

- There are 5 sentences in these five verses :

Sentence 5: v. 5

- “but to him who does not work”

- This is staged as the opposite of the one who works. Obviously. Right?

- “but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly”

- The opposite in this scenario is the one who does not work but is believing on the One who justifies the ungodly.

- “his faith is accounted for righteousness”

- Works are counted as debt

- Faith in Him is counted as righteousness

1- A case study of justification by faith: vv. 1-5

Summary:

- v. 1: Paul introduces a case study on Abraham
- v. 2: Paul implies Abraham was NOT justified by works
- v. 3: Paul provides evidence that Abraham was justified by faith
- v. 4: Paul draws two conclusions: first, the one who works has a debt owed to them.
- v. 5: Second, the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies... Is justified!

Outline:

- 1- A case study of justification by faith vv. 1-5
- 2- A testimony of justification by faith vv. 6-8
- 3- The candidates of justification by faith vv. 9-12

2- A testimony of justification by faith: vv. 6-8

- There are 2 sentences in these 3 verses.

Sentence 1: v. 6

- “just as David also”
 - After using Abraham as a case study Paul now uses David.
 - Why use David?
 - Was David before the law? Or under the law?
- “just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:” (NASB has “credits” rather than “imputes.”)
 - Paul is proposing that David (born under the law), testified to the same truth he just observed from the case study of Abraham.

2- A testimony of justification by faith: vv. 6-8

- There are 2 sentences in these 3 verses.

Sentence 2: vv. 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.”
 - Blessed are those who are forgiven (lit. were forgiven).
 - Blessed are those whose sins are covered (lit. were covered).
 - Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin (lit. will not charge with sins”).

2- A testimony of justification by faith: vv. 6-8

- There are 2 sentences in these 3 verses.

Sentence 2: vv. 7-8

- Cf. Psalm 32:1-5
 - The emphasis of this Psalm is forgiveness.
 - The point David is making is that when he confessed God forgave.
 - Forgive doesn't mean to forget, but to choose not to remember. Not to credit the wrong to the person.
 - SO, Paul is stressing the forgiveness aspect of this Psalm. The one who has been forgiven... God has chosen not to credit those wrongs to them.
 - What is the basis of our forgiveness? Faith in the One who justifies the ungodly.

2- A testimony of justification by faith: vv. 6-8

Summary:

- David a man born under the law testified to the credit of righteousness apart from works

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3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

- There are 4 sentences in these 4 verses.

Sentence 1: v. 9a

- “does this blessedness”
 - What blessedness? Cf. v. 6
- “Is this blessing then for the circumcision, or also for uncircumcision?”
 - Paul now stages the question... is the blessing for Jew only? Or also for non-Jews?

3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

- There are 4 sentences in these 4 verses.

Sentence 2: v. 9b

- “For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.”
 - This is the conclusion from the case study above on Abraham. This is the biblical testimony.

3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

- There are 4 sentences in these 4 verses.

Sentence 3: v. 10a

- “How then was it credited, in being circumcised, or in uncircumcision?”
 - Paul’s pop quiz: What state was Abraham when he was credited with righteousness?

3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

- There are 4 sentences in these 4 verses.

Sentence 4: v. 10b-12

- “Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.”
 - The answer to Paul’s pop quiz is that Abraham was credited with righteousness before he was circumcised.
- “and he had received circumcision as a sign, a seal of righteousness of faith while in uncircumcision”
 - Cf. Genesis 17:1-11 (God’s responsibility vv. 1-8; Abraham’s responsibility vv. 9-11)

3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

- There are 4 sentences in these 4 verses.

Sentence 4: v. 10b-12

- “so that he was to be the father of all believing ones of uncircumcision, so that righteousness was to be credited also to them.”
 - First, Abraham is the father of all who believe.
 - Conclusion is at the end of verse 11. “that righteousness might be credited to them also”
- “and not only the father of those who are of circumcision, rather also those following in the path of faith in the uncircumcision of our father Abraham.”
 - Abraham is the Father of Israel
 - But this verse elaborates what was brought up in Romans 2:28-29 and will be brought up later in Romans 9:6-8

3- The candidates of justification by faith: vv. 9-12

Summary:

Sentence 1: question – is the blessing for circumcised or uncircumcised?

Sentence 2 and 3: faith and not circumcision was what credited Abraham with righteousness.

Sentence 4: Abraham is the spiritual head of all who believe. He is also the physical head of all who are born of Isaac, and Jacob.

Application:

- If you have believed in Jesus and received the forgiveness of sins. How much of your sins are forgiven?
- What about the sins today? Tomorrow? The rest of your life?
- Paul put justification by faith on trial... How did he do?