

Justification Illustrated

Romans 4

July 12, 2015

DAY 1: Abraham was justified by faith, not works. (4:1-8)

1. Were the people of the Old Testament saved like the people of the New Testament?

Romans 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?

² *If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about--but not before God.*

2. To be "justified" by God is the same as being saved by God. Was Abraham saved?

3. *How* was Abraham saved? Was it because of his "good" works?

Romans 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

4. How was Abraham saved? What was his "action" step?

5. What was God's action step in saving Abraham?

6. Abraham was "credited" with righteousness. The Greek word is used in banking. A "deposit" was made in Abraham's "account" but it wasn't deposited by Abraham. God made a "deposit" of righteousness to Abraham as a gift.

Romans 4:4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.

⁵ *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

7. Paul reiterates how a man is not saved, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. What does he say?

8. Paul reiterates how a man is saved. How is he saved?

DAY 2: Justified by faith, the example of David (4:6-8)

Romans 4:6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ *"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

⁸ *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

1. We saw that Abraham was saved hundreds of years before God's law was given to Moses.

2. Now Paul uses the example of David's salvation, which came hundreds of years after the law was given to Moses. Was there any difference in how someone was saved before the law, like Abraham, or after the law, like David?

3. What was God's part in saving David? (4:6)

4. What benefits came with salvation? (4:7-8)

Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

² *Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

5. What parallels are there between what David professes in Psalm 32 and what Paul reports about David in Romans 4:6-8?

6. What strikes you most about God's remedy for man's salvation?

7. Do you see the absurdity of trusting in our works to save us?

DAY 3: Abraham was justified by grace, not law. (4:9-12)

Romans 4:9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

¹⁰ *Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!*

¹¹ *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.*

¹² *And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*

1. The Jewish people were tempted to believe that they were saved because of their religious deeds. These deeds included having God's law, the rite of circumcision, having the tabernacle, then the temple, etc.

2. Did any or all of these religious practices or privileges save them?

3. Was Abraham saved because he was circumcised? (Warning: this is a trick question! Why is it a trick question?)

4. Is anyone saved because he is religious or exercises religious practices?

5. Religious practices, no matter how heartfelt or "meaningful" do not have the power to change the human heart. They do not have the power to make us **righteous** in God's sight.

6. How does it strike you that all God asks from us for our salvation is accepting His gift of salvation, simply by faith?

DAY 4: Abraham was declared righteous *before* the Law! (4:13-17)

Romans 4:13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

¹⁴ *For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless,*

¹⁵ *because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.*

¹⁶ *Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*

¹⁷ *As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.*

1. The key word in this section is promise. Go back and underline every time it occurs in today's verses.

2. How was Abraham justified by God? Did it come because Abraham

___ was religious?

___ was to become the father of the Jewish people?

___ was to become the father of all Christians?

___ was to become the father of many nations?

___ believed the promise God gave him?

3. Abraham was justified by believing God's promise, not obeying God's Law. The Law had not been given!

4. Both secular man and religious man wants to make salvation about human effort. The complete OPPOSITE way of salvation is God's way, simply asking us to take Him at His word, trusting in His provision for our salvation.

5. If your salvation rested on your works, what effect would that have on you?

6. Your salvation hinges on what God does for you, in your behalf. What effect does that have on you?

DAY 5: Abraham was justified by resurrection power, not human effort. (4:18-25)

Romans 4:18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

¹⁹ *Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead.*

²⁰ *Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,*

²¹ *being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*

²² *This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."*

²³ *The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone,*

²⁴ *but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.*

²⁵ *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

1. Go back and underline every reference to belief or unbelief.

2. In what ways does Paul describe the *character* of Abraham's faith? (4:18-22)

3. In what ways is Abraham's faith typical of the Christian's faith? (4:23-25)

4. Why is faith such an important value to God? What are the ways we benefit from being people of faith?

5. Charles Moule, theologian commented on the importance of faith:

“Faith is an act of the soul which looks wholly away from ‘self’ (as regards both merit and demerit) and *honors the Almighty and All-gracious in a way not ... in the least meritorious.*

Thus, faith brings the creature to the Creator in the one right attitude—complete submission and confidence.”

6. What strikes you about the role of faith in our lives?