

## Romans 4.1-25

## Faith of our Father

How can a person understand the Bible? Main themes? Any short cuts to help?

One of most imp't people to learn about is ABRAHAM – esp. God's call to him  
CALL – extended 3 IMPORTANT PROMISES – 3 Leading Themes of Bible  
Family Line

1. Elderly childless couple promised a son – father of nation of Israel > of Jesus
2. Promise of homeland /Canaan: Rest of Bible – struggle to obtain & keep> Today
3. Promise of Global Blessing – “all peoples will be blessed thru you” AMAZING!

Rom 4 > Paul assumes Readers are Familiar with these 3 Promises given to Abe  
ABRAHAM CONSIDERED - Father of Israel's Faith / Isaiah preached to Judah  
“Look to the rock from which you were cut...look to Abraham, your father” 51.1,2

Ch. 3 ENDED with Series of Questions > Relation btwn Paul's Gospel and LAW

Ch. 4 - Illust from Israel's Greatest Patriarch / supplemented by Greatest King  
Matthew 1.1 “genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham”

1. Justification is by Faith, not Works, vs. 1-8
2. Justification is by Grace, not Law, vs. 9-17
3. Justification is by Resurrection Power, not Human Effort, vs. 18-25

### 1. Justification is by Faith, not Works 1-8

#### a. Nature of Faith

v. 1 QUESTION – Bkgd > How does argument of chs 1-3 relate to Jewish faith?  
“What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?”  
Paul answers Own Question – with Wrong Answer and a Right Answer

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

WRONG ANSWER WAS POPULAR ANSWER

ABE - Esteemed Highly by Jewish Rabbis > Believed he was saved by his works

JEWISH APOCRYPHA “Abraham was perfect in all his dealings with the Lord  
and gained favor by his righteousness throughout his life.”

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING TODAY – Bible = BOOK OF HEROES  
 God Sees GOOD PEOPLE and Blesses them FOR THEIR GOODNESS  
 ABE was SO GOOD that he DESERVES GOD’S BLESSING

Common EVANGELICAL MISUNDERSTANDING – Abe has no Righteousness  
 BUT God wanted to Save Him – and LOOKED for Something to Reward  
 GOD SAW ABE’S FAITH and Accepted this Faith IN PLACE OF Righteousness  
 Faith is NOT ALTERNATIVE to Righteousness / but Means of RECEIVING IT

JAMES BOICE “God is not a juggler of truth. God does not pretend a thing is something it is not, pretending that the sow’s ear of human works is actually the silk purse of salvation. If God counted Abraham righteous, it must have been on the basis of a true righteousness – his own or someone else’s.”

Greek preposition – “dia” translated by: Either 1) Because of OR 2) THROUGH  
 “dia” w/ the GENETIVE Means > THROUGH, Faith is a Channel, not REASON

Buy something with 100 tenge note > Need faith in Note’s Purchasing Power  
 BUT SHOPKEEPER makes Purchase on Power of Note – Not your Faith in It  
 PURCHASE VALUE is in the MONEY – NOT the GIVER of the MONEY

v. 2 “he had something to boast about-- but not before God.” SARCASM

WORLD – Make statue of him, hang his portrait, found his denomination  
 WORLD BOASTS of GREAT PEOPLE, Charitable Donors, Influential Leaders

GOD MADE ENOUGH BEAUTIFUL PEACOCKS TO DECORATE EARTH  
 He does not expect us to strut around Heaven with our Feathers in Fan

YOU MAY BOAST or be boasted about ON EARTH – BUT NOT BEFORE GOD

RIGHT v. 3 "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."  
 SALVATION by Works has NEVER BEEN God’s plan for Anyone after ADAM

b. Message of Faith v. 3 “What does the Scripture say?”

“Scripture” SINGULAR / Bible > UNIFIED Body of Inspired Writings – CANON

PERSONIFICATION “What does the Scripture say?”

No DISTINCTION BETWEEN THIS BOOK and the VOICE OF GOD HIMSELF

PRESENT TENSE “What does it say?” NOT SAID > Living Word of Living God

ASKING QUESTION > Scripture gives Authoritative Guidance / Final Appeal

INTERESTING TO STUDY PAUL’S USE OF SCRIPTURE

FIRST CHRISTIAN SERMON > preached by Peter on Pentecost in Jerusalem  
METHOD of Using Scripture – Different than Paul

PETER – Quote OT text then Explain and Apply It > in Acts 2 {3 OT texts}

PAUL – Makes connection with Readers by Reason and Relevant Examples  
THEN Paul PROVES what he has Taught BY Hebrew Scriptures > Ex. Romans

c. Blessing of Faith v. 3 “it was credited to him as righteousness.”

CREDITED – Bookkeeping Term – Used by ACCOUNTANTS > Exact Accuracy

ARE YOU TIRED of walking around with only 100 tenge in your pocket??  
NO PROBLEM get your accounting bk– ADD 0’s to 100, 1000, 10,000, 100,000  
THEN YOU WILL HAVE LOTS MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET – Right!!

WRONG! Cannot CREDIT what you ain’t got to CREDIT/ No Money, No Funny!

GOD SAVED ABRAHAM – He did 2 things - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

POSITIVE side of Justification > God give us more 0’s from Jesus

v. 4 “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST is CREDITED to our ACCOUNT / 8 X’s in chapt

“Jesus told the Jews “Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”  
John 8.56

Theological Term “IMPUTATION” of Christ’s Righteousness / Legally Applied

NEGATIVE – quote from Israel’s Greatest King and Poet > DAVID

NEED v. 14 “law brings wrath” / BROKEN LAW DEMAND PENALTY

v. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

GOD TOOK OUR SINS OUT OF HIS ACCOUNTING BOOK / How?  
BY TRANSFERING OUR DEBT TO THE LEDGER BOOK OF HIS SON  
JESUS PAID THE PRICE / MET LAW'S DEMAND / DEBT IS COVERED

PAUL applies the Negative and Positive Good News to the Corinthians  
“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5.19,21

STOTT “Christ became sin with our sins, in order that we might become righteous with God’s righteousness”

v. 8 “the Lord will NEVER count against him.” VERY COMFORTING WORDS

WISH I COULD SAY THIS AS A PARENT – but I am far from this  
Remind my sons “Remember” what they did before / Pull out old Skeletons

GOD’S NEVER MEANS NEVER – it is paid for, it is covered, it is GONE  
PROPHET MICAH asked “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” 7.18,19

## 2. Justification is by Grace, not Law, vs. 9-17

a. God’s Initiative in Grace – Rabbi’s believed Abe Credited his own Account

WHERE DID THEY GET THAT IDEA? – from the Bible!! - Genesis 26 –  
God Bless’ Abe’s son Isaac – “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky...because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements”

POSSIBLE TO MAKE BIBLE SAY ANYTHING > see History and Context  
In story of Abe GIFT OF SALVATION Came BEFORE his OBEDIENCE

OBEYED as Grateful Response to Salvation to as Ground or Reason for It  
 v. 10 “Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.”

Abraham’s JUSTIFICATION recorded in Genesis 15 – about 14 years later  
 Abraham’s CIRCUMCISION recorded in Genesis 17 – Sign of Covenant Faith

SAME THING SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM TODAY

b. God’s Insurance in Grace – Grace comes with God’s Guarantee

v. 11 CIRCUMCISION was Sign and Seal of Salvation > not Substance of It  
 SIGN to IDENTIFY them / SEAL to AUTHENTICATE Them

SIGN – visible object that points to something different from and greater than itself

ROAD SIGN – 10 km to Almaty – Sign not Almaty – POINTS TO ALMATY  
 THEREFORE IT IS NOT WITHOUT VALUE

HOTEL SIGN – Regent Ankara – Identifies – PLUS Signifies Ownership

When MARTIN LUTHER became discouraged during Protestant Reformation  
 Great Strain of Leading a Movement and Enduring Criticism and Adversity  
 He would write in chalk on the Table – Latin words for “I have been baptized”  
 FOUND STRENGTH REMEMBERING IDENTIFICATION with the  
 Death and Resurrection of Christ – basis of Hope and Salvation

SEAL – well understood in this country – everything must carry a stamp  
 Stamp bears the SEAL – Authority of the organization Standing Behind It  
 GOD STAND BEHINDS THIS SACRAMENT – Seal of His Righteousness

NOT THROUGH LAW – v. 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. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.”

SECOND time Paul CONTRASTS Two Approaches to God  
 Vs. 4 & 5 – Paul Contrasts Wages and Gifts // 13-16 contrasts Work and Trust

**TWO STARK CONTRASTS – Either we Gain our own Righteousness  
or we are GIVEN SOMEONE ELSE’S RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**LAW and GRACE are both Gifts from God / Both are Important  
BUT THEY CANNOT BE IN OPERATION AT THE SAME TIME  
EITHER APPLE OR MAC – Choose ONE Operating System  
In Law – God says “You must” / In Grace – God says “I will”**

**TO LIVE BY LAW IS TO LIVE IN DOUBT – Never Can be Sure  
Has your effort been good enough? Are you sure? Do you need to do more?**

v. 16 “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring”

JAMES BOICE “Law is man directed (it points to human abilities) while faith is God-directed (it points to God’s accomplishments). So, if you are approaching salvation by trusting man, you cannot be trusting God – and vice versa.”

**c. God's Inclusion in Grace – Law and Ceremony divides / ONLY Christ Unites**

v. 9 “Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?”

v. 11 “So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 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.”

v. 16 “he is the father of us all” / **UNITY of ALL the PEOPLE of GOD in JESUS**

**JEWS – Realize Gospel of Jesus fulfills Promises of the Hebrew Scripture  
GENTILES – Recipients of ancient spiritual heritage thru Messiah of Israel**

New Indian Believer told the Missionary – “If God is your Father, and He is now my Father – then we have become Brothers”

v. 13 “the promise that he would be heir of the world”  
**GENESIS 12 – Promise first given – Small piece of Real Estate called Canaan**

**NOW IN CHRIST – Global, Messianic Fulfillment  
“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Matthew 5.5**

GOD'S PURPOSE is for ALL NATIONS – Israel AND Palestine  
From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe...“that all may hear and believe”

### 3. Justification is by Resurrection Power, not human effort, vs. 18-25

#### a. Comfort in God's Promise – Promises were not Fulfilled Immediately

Abe called Man of Faith – Long, often Lonely, Walk of Faith

ABRAM – “Great or Exalted Father” – how many kids? NONE?! Great Fool!  
ABRAHAM – now one son – “Father of a Multitude”- Certifiably Crazy Now

EVERYTHING IN EXPERIENCE FLIES IN FACE OF GOD'S PROMISES

v. 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." 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.”

NOT AN ESCAPE from Reality> Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact

Behind Promise is Character of Promise Maker > Abe walked, Confidence Grew

Faith looks at Problems in the light of God's Promises > God is Worthy of Trust

#### b. Confidence in God's Power - God who Promised is ABLE – willing and able

v. 20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

Out of this Couple's DOUBLE DEATH God brought New Life  
Birth of Isaac was at the same time an act of Creation and Resurrection

JOHN STOTT “There are degrees of faith, from weak in to strong. How then does (faith) grow? Above all through the use of our minds. Faith is not burying our heads in the sand, screwing ourselves up to believe what we know is not true, or even whistling in the dark to keep our spirits up. On the contrary faith is reasoning trust. There can be no believing without thinking. On the one hand we need to

think about the problems that face us. But on the other hand Abraham reflected on the promises of God and character of the God who made them...And as his mind played on the promises, the problems shrank accordingly.”

c. Certainty of God’s Plan – Paul jumps 2000 yrs forward from Abe to Jesus

v. 23 The words "it was credited to him" were written *not for him alone, but also for us*, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

WE HAVE STRONGER CERTAINTY – birth of Isaac AND the Empty Tomb!

AS PETER SAYS “we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it”  
2 Peter 1.19

BRIEF AND POWERFUL SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

v. 25 “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

LUTHER “In this verse the whole of Christianity is comprehended”

“we sinned therefore he suffered, we were justified because he rose”

“He was delivered up to atone for our sins,  
and was raised that we might be justified”

MARTYN LLOYD-JONES “The resurrection is the proclamation of the fact that God is fully and completely satisfied with the work that his Son did on the cross”

We now jump 2000 years forward again to ICF in 2002

ABE’S Testimony from 4000 yrs ago SPEAKS POWERFULLY to 21<sup>st</sup> C Society

WOODY ALLEN spoke for us all when he said – “It’s not that I am afraid to die, I just do not want to be there when it happens”

WE ALL STAND BEFORE THIS FRIGHTENING PROSPECT

GREAT UNCERTAINTY OF DEATH AND NOTHINGNESS

Nothingness and Death – ARE NO PROBLEM FOR GOD



OUT OF NOTHING – God created the Universe  
FROM THE DEAD – God raised the Lord Jesus Christ

"Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. Jer 32.17

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. Eph 1.19-21