Romans Chapter 4

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Simple Outline:

4:1-3 Abraham was declared just and righteous by faith alone, without works, to the glory of God.

4:4-8 Justification and righteousness are by faith, lest God be a debtor and His grace corrupted.

4:9-12 God declared Abraham a justified man on the basis of faith before he was circumcised.

4:13-15 God declared Abraham a justified man before and without the deeds of the law (Gal 3:17).

4:16 Justification is by the evidence of faith to protect the glory and integrity of grace to all the elect.

4:17-22 Abraham's justifying faith was of a sort that those desiring to emulate him should consider.

4:23-25 If we believe God's record concerning Jesus, our faith will prove our justification like his did.

Introduction:

1. Consider where Paul has taken his readers before invoking the greatest of the Jews – father Abraham.
   a. He condemned the Gentiles first (1:18-32) and then the Jews by various arguments (2:1 – 3:20).
   b. He explained that justification was by free grace evidenced by faith without the law (3:21-31).
   c. Since the Jews were so obstinate in their superstition, Paul will use their father against them.
2. The Holy Spirit blessed Paul to be a master of the Jewish legalists by using Abraham against them.
   a. The tactical wisdom in Paul's choice and arguments is glorious for those that will consider it.
   b. The Jews obsessed about their relationship to Abraham as can be observed in numerous places.
   c. Both John and Jesus mocked their foolish faith in a mere birth certificate (Mat 3:9; John 8:30-45).
   d. Yet God declared Abraham justified and righteous before their adored circumcision and Law!
   e. The whole chapter deals with Abraham as the example of justification without any of the Law.
   f. The dated events recorded about Abraham by the Holy Spirit were done in part for Paul to use.
   g. The further explanation about Abraham by James was designed to confirm Paul (Jas 2:21-24).
   h. Paul used Abraham to trump Moses' law by faith; James used him to crush Arminian decisions.
   i. Wise men will also read the third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Galatians about father Abraham.
3. Paul's next step to destroy Jewish legalism relates all Jews and Gentiles to father Adam (5:12-19).
4. Abraham's Timeline Helps.
5. When Was Abraham Saved?

6. Who Is the Seed of Abraham?
7. Exposition of Galatians 3.
8. Salvation by Works (after faith).
9. Unconditional.
10. Five Phases.
11. Calvin or Arminius.
12. Justification by Christ (1647).
13. Eternal Justification (John Brine).
14. The Doctrine of Justification (John Gill)

1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

What shall we say then.

A. Our apostle, by the Holy Spirit, shows the value of prolepsis and rhetorical questions.
   1. Prolepsis, procatalepsis or prebuttal, raises objections and answers them for instruction.
   2. Rhetorical questions are obvious to the reader and lead him to the desired conclusions.
   3. Paul has five questions in this chapter, all in the first half, leading Jews to knowledge.
   4. He used none in chapter 1, nine in chapter 2, 17 in chapter 3, eight in chapter 6, etc.

B. Paul's argument here follows on what went before by putting it to the test with a great man.
   1. He condemned the Gentiles (1:18-32) and then Jews by various arguments (2:1 – 3:20).
   2. He concluded decisively and definitively that the law only condemned men (3:19-20).
   3. He explained that justification was by free grace through faith without the law (3:21-31).
   4. He concluded decisively and definitively that faith, not works, justified men (3:28).

C. Though Paul's soteriology was established well, how would it hold up in actual application?

D. Would the doctrine and gospel he had defined work as well in the actual case of a just man?

E. Rather than choose just any man, Paul chose to use the greatest Jew of all as his illustration.

F. The tactical wisdom in Paul's choice and arguments is glorious for those that will consider it.

That Abraham our father.

A. The approach is perfect wisdom, from the Holy Spirit, to consider the greatest Jew of all.

B. The Jews took great confidence in Abraham and their relationship to him (Ezek 33:24; Matt 3:9; John 1:13; 8:33-39; Acts 13:26; Rom 9:6-8; 11:1; II Cor 11:22; etc.).

C. Our Lord called heaven Abraham's bosom with Abraham prominently there (Luk 16:19-31).

D. At this point, *our father* refers to the Jews in distinction from the Gentiles, though Paul will soon identify him as the father of all believers, whether Jew or Gentile (4:11-16).

As pertaining to the flesh.

A. These words form a non-restrictive phrase that does not alter the general goal of the question, for Paul introduced Abraham to determine if he was justified by works or by faith (3:28).

B. These words are either modifying the word *father* or the words *hath found*.

C. These words apply either to the Jews as Abraham's fleshly descendants, so it is merely elaboration on their relationship to him as Jews; or these words apply to Abraham's physical life and efforts in the flesh in pursuit of righteousness, so it is distinguishing his carnal and religious efforts from the spiritual effort of faith. For Paul's use of flesh in this sense, see Philippians 3:3-5 (where circumcision is included) and II Cor 11:18.

D. Is this phrase modifying Abraham as the Jews' earthly father, or what Abraham had found in fleshly efforts toward his justification?

E. We choose the latter based on the small and immediate context, which quickly refers in the next verse to the fleshly concept of justification by works. The coordinating conjunction *for* ties the two verses together, so we see the Spirit's intent of asking about Abraham's works of the flesh in regard to justification.

F. We choose the latter because Abraham was not the fleshly father of the Gentiles in the audience, and the Jews have not been isolated as Paul's intended audience since 3:9.

G. We must remember, a distinction between flesh and spirit has already been drawn regarding the Jews, which provides a larger context for our choice of interpretation (2:28-29), and this distinction is used by Paul in a similar argument (Phil 3:3-5).

H. But we can go even further and see here an allusion to circumcision, which is very literally a work in the flesh (Phil 3:3-5), in a similar way to how Paul began chapter three with comparable questions (3:1), and this view is consistent with how he shortly assumed circumcision's introduction by *then* (4:9).

Hath found.

A. Note that the preceding non-restrictive phrase does not alter the general goal of the question, for Paul introduced Abraham to determine if he was justified by works or by faith (3:28).

B. What benefits accrued to Abraham through fleshly works of justification like circumcision?

C. What did Abraham obtain from God relating to justification and righteousness by his physical obedience or physical privileges?

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

For if Abraham were justified by works.

A. Paul had asked what Abraham had obtained toward justification by works in the flesh (4:1).

B. Abraham had many works … leaving Ur, leaving Haran, building altars, worshipping God, defeating four kings, paying tithes to Melchisedek, circumcision, great father, praying for Lot's family, burying Sarah in hope, offering Isaac, seeking Rebekah for Isaac, etc.

C. The subjunctive mood here introduces a possibility of what Abraham found in the flesh, suggesting a popular or accepted response to the question of the previous verse.
D. Rightly divide scripture by balancing Paul's subjunctive impossibility with James 2:21-24!
    1. Abraham was absolutely not justified by works (3:28; 4:2-3); Abraham was so justified!
    2. It is a fact of revelation and experience that scripture requires much dividing (II Ti 2:15).
    3. Paul in Romans deals with legal justification; James in chapter three deals with practical.
    4. Paul in Romans opposes Jewish legalists; James in his epistle opposes carnal professors.
    5. Paul here deals with the initial evidence of justification, James with proof of the initial.
    6. Paul here deals with justification before God; James deals with evidence before men.
    7. It has been said with some measure of truth, you will not get to heaven by your works, but you will not get there without them, either.
    8. Study the phases of salvation.
    9. Study salvation by works.

He hath whereof to glory.

A. Paul had declared God's plan of justification excluded any human boasting (3:27), and the text here, its conclusion, and its interpretation should be grasped before explaining this one.
    1. If Abraham were justified by any or all of the good works in his life (listed above), then he would be righteous before God in such a way as to boast and glory in his accomplishments.
    2. Any system of justification conditionally dependent on human works of any sort, including faith as a condition, instrument, or means of God's righteousness, generates human glory.
    3. But God's mercy in salvation is by His will and without human will or works (Rom 9:15-16)!
    4. But God's mercy in salvation is without the will of the flesh or the will of man (John 1:13)!
    5. God denies glorying in His presence (I Cor 1:29-31), so Abraham was not justified by works.

But not before God.

A. Paul had just declared that God's plan of justification excluded any human boasting (3:27).
B. God has so devised salvation by His wisdom to take all the glory (I Cor 1:26-31; Eph 2:8-9).
C. God shares His glory with no one! God cannot devise a plan to give man glory of his own.
D. It is impossible for any system of justification to be true that results in man having any glory.
E. Paul will not let this matter end easily, for he raised it again shortly regarding Abraham (4:2); and he will thoroughly reduce man to dependent clay before he finishes (9:9-24).
F. Jewish legalism was intrinsically man oriented by birth, training, and obedience to the Law.
G. Abraham's works could not be God's means of justification for they allow Abraham to boast and glory in himself, which is not possible before God or in God's plan of justification.
H. Bible justification, of God's free grace by a redemptive purchase by Jesus Christ's blood and claimed by faith without any law works, when rightly understood, does not allow boasting by man at all, for he is the

recipient of a free gift while dead three ways (6:23; 9:6-18; 11:5-6).

I. We rejoice in making this the seventh and most glorious proof of unconditional salvation, as you may see from this link.

J. Based on this principle emphasized by Paul here and elsewhere, we use it as an interpretive device to help form the sense of some passages appearing to give man a contributing role.

K. Remember, Paul is not correcting Arminians and other heretics who have formed their own conditional system of justification based on missionary endeavors and man's decision.

L. Paul will declare before he ends, once he can ignore Jewish legalists, that justification and eternal life are by God's unconditional grace (5:6-19; 8:28-39; 9:15-16; 11:25-28; etc.).

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

For what saith the scripture.

A. In all questions and controversies, the only final authority is what the scriptures declare.
   1. A child of God with inspired scriptures need not fear any (Job 32:6-22; Ps 119:98-100).
   2. Rather than just arguing from reason (4:2), Paul brought the Jewish scriptures to bear.
   3. The Spirit moved Paul to write this as surely as He moved Moses to write Genesis 15:6.

B. This simple verse of scripture, Genesis 15:6, was written for us to know how and when Abraham was justified and us as well (4:23-25), though the object of our faith is different.

C. Abraham's Timeline Helps.

D. When Was Abraham Saved?

Abraham believed God.

A. The event was recorded by Moses in Genesis 15:1-6, and the facts of the case are important.
   1. God blessed Abram to defeat four kings and declared He was his reward (Genesis 15:1).
   2. Abram took the liberty of the occasion to request a son other than Eliezer (Gen 15:2-3).
   3. Abram showed a lack of faith in God's earlier promises of a seed (Gen 12:7; 13:15-16).
   4. In response, God declared that Eliezer would not be his seed, but his own son (Gen 15:4).
   5. God told him to count the stars, for they represented the multitude of his seed (Gen 15:5).
   6. Abraham believed God's promise that Eliezer was not his seed, that he would have his own biological son, and that his seed would be an incredible multitude.
   7. God had promised this multitudinous seed before with a different metaphor (Gen 13:16).

B. The event was recorded for the benefit of Paul's readers, Jews and Gentiles (4:23-25), though there was nothing exceptional about it, for Abraham had great faith long before this event, and it was not until his offering of Isaac did he really show faith (Heb 11:8-19; Jas 2:21-23).

C. Abraham believed God … but not without some serious doubts and lapses in the beginning.
   1. The very next chapter shows Abram obeying Sarah's folly to have his son by Hagar!

2. The next chapter has Abraham laughing at God and begging for Ishmael (Gen 17:17-18)!
3. God described his faith without lapses (Rom 4:3,17-22; Heb 11:8-19). See Isaiah 55:8-9!

And it was counted unto him for righteousness.

A. This simple, profound, and important clause is of great import to the doctrine of salvation.
   1. What does it mean? How does this act of faith in Abram's life relate to his justification?
   2. Abraham's faith at this event was counted to him for righteousness, the grand object of Paul's gospel of grace (1:17; 3:21; 4:3). How exactly is faith counted for righteousness?
   3. Was his faith put on a scale of good to be counted (added) toward final justification?
   4. Was this act of faith decisional regeneration of the Arminians, at which time Abraham's old man and will of the flesh finally decided for Jesus, and he was born again, his name was written down in glory, and he was seen for the first time as righteous before God?
   5. Was this act of faith the instrument or means of regeneration and justification of most Calvinists, who see a decision of faith as the necessary condition, though sovereignly brought about, to be the moment that Abraham became legally righteous before God?
   6. Whatever hermeneutical and soteriological choice you make, you must define and prove Abram's condition by nature and legal position before God in Genesis 11, 12, 13, and 14!

B. This simple, profound, and important clause is repeated several times in the New Testament.
   1. Note … faith was "counted" to Abraham for righteousness (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).
   2. Note … faith was "reckoned" to Abraham for righteousness (Romans 4:9-10).
   3. Note … faith was "imputed" to Abraham for righteousness (Rom 4:11,22-23; Jas 2:23).
   4. Note … faith was "accounted" to Abraham for righteousness (Galatians 3:6).
   5. These are all synonyms without any significant differentiation in intent or meaning, all taken from Genesis 15:6 and used by the apostles as an important part of justification.

C. It is our responsibility to identify the exact sense of the combined statements about faith.
   1. Consider, "And Abraham believed Jehovah's promise; and Jehovah counted, reckoned, imputed, and accounted Abraham's faith in His promise to Abraham for righteousness."
   2. Every man seeks to be righteous before God, to be counted righteous by God; and God here counted Abraham as a righteous man by virtue of his faith in His incredible promise.
   3. And this written record of Abram's faith would one day condemn Jews and encourage us.
   4. There is no quantity of things to be numbered, so counted must be taken in another sense.
   5. **Count**. To esteem, account, reckon, consider, regard, hold (a thing) to be (so and so).
   6. **Reckon**. To consider, judge, or estimate by, or as the result of, calculation.
   7. **Impute**. To reckon or take into account; to reckon, regard, consider.
   8. **Account**. To reckon, estimate, value, hold (a thing to be so and so).
   9. These words all mean to consider, esteem, hold, or regard (a thing) to be (so and so).
   10. They are accounting terms for measuring the value of a person's conduct (Mat 18:23-24).

11. Did God repay Abram's faith with righteousness? Or commend his faith as righteous?
12. Abram had great faith and works long before (He 11:8; Gen 12:4,7-8; 13:4,18; 14:20,22).
13. Why in the world did the priest of the most high God bless him before he was justified?
14. He was already elect to justification before the world began (Eph 1:4; II Tim 1:9; etc.).
15. He was already fully justified in the sight of God by the everlasting covenant of grace.
16. God chose this act of faith to commend and approve Abram as a righteous man, which finds its value in that nothing was done of a meritorious nature, especially Law works.
17. Abram's example is the antithesis of salvation by Moses' Law; Abram merely believed.
18. His legal status did not change, but God's approval, his assurance, and our learning did!
19. However, even his faith was not worth much until his great work (Ge 22:12; Jas 2:21-24).
20. We understand Genesis 15:6 as given to confound Moses' worshippers and comfort us!
21. Therefore, these words all mean God considers faith to be the evidence of righteousness.
22. Consider by combining the definitions above, "And Abraham believed Jehovah's promise; and Jehovah considered, esteemed, held, and regarded Abraham's faith in His promise as evidence and proof of Abraham's righteousness.
23. Abraham's faith was the evidence that God officially recognized (counted, accounted, imputed, or reckoned) Abraham's righteousness.
24. God formally and scripturally declared faith as the basic identifying mark of justification.

D. We have basically three options to prove, and we will hold fast only one of the possibilities.
   1. Arminians hold Abram was condemned before God and dead in sin, but his faith moved God to regenerate him and legally declare him righteous by Christ's offered merits.
   2. Calvinists must hold elect Abram was regenerated and therefore believed, simultaneously according to most, and fulfilled the necessary requirement of faith to be just before God.
   3. We believe Jesus Christ absolutely, completely, and finally justified all the elect by His substitutionary death on the cross, with faith and good works merely being evidence of it.
   4. His faith could not be a condition, since no man has even the basis for faith (3:10-18).
   5. God established faith as the basic and initial identifying mark of justification before God.

E. We reject all false notions of this statement that have been invented by men to glory in men.
   1. Abraham believed God, so God gave him the offered righteousness by virtue of his faith.
   2. Abraham believed God, so he was born again right then and there by the Spirit's power.
   3. Abraham believed God, so the gospel became the power of eternal life to his wicked soul.
   4. Abraham believed God, so God counted his great faith as good enough for righteousness.
   5. Abraham believed God, so God changed him from unrighteous to righteous, right then.

4.Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of

debt.

Now to him that worketh.

A. Paul pressed forward in his argument, having proven Abraham righteous without works.
   1. He proved it by works detracting from God's glory (4:2), which cannot be (3:27).
   2. He proved it by the declaration of scripture (Gen 15:6), which ascribed it to faith only.

B. The *work* Paul opposed was Jewish legalistic work of the Law of Moses, which he will take up in order in the following verses – first circumcision (4:9-12), and then the law (4:13-15).

C. Paul never met an Arminian, and neither had the Romans, and this should be kept in mind, as we read his choice of language for a very different heresy altogether from Arminianism.

D. However, we can and will include all Arminians, sacramentalists, decisionalists, and others who require conditions for justification to be included in this verse by their soteriology.
   1. Any system of salvation that requires human conditions in order to obtain it is included.
   2. It does not matter how a condition is viewed or described, if it is the determining factor.

E. Faith is a work, when we view it as the Arminians require and teach it to gain eternal life.
   1. It is a work, because it is the human effort of preachers to get the gospel to men for it, and this work includes prayer warriors, organists, giving for missions, deputation work, etc.
   2. It is a work, because it is the necessary condition by which a man distinguishes himself from other sinners to obtain God's grace for eternal life by wisely using his own free will.
   3. It is a greater work than Jesus Christ's work on the cross, for that did not save anyone at all by itself, without the sinner's contribution of his own efforts to savingly believe.
   4. It is a work for a man dead in trespasses and sins to consider the gospel as precious, when all other such men consider it foolishness (John 8:43,47; I Cor 2:14; II Cor 4:3; etc.).

Is the reward not reckoned of grace.

A. If work is involved in obtaining God's mercy, then God must pay, rather than freely give it.

B. If work is involved in obtaining God's mercy, then God is a debtor rather than a free Giver.

C. Work makes it an issue of debt-reward instead of grace-gift, and eternal life is a grace-gift.

D. Paul had established justification by free grace (3:24), so work is excluded by definition.

E. Grace is demerited favor – the opposite of what a man has earned and has coming to him, as our brother will explain shortly in Romans 6:23.

F. Grace and works are mutually exclusive, as Paul will preach just a few chapters later (11:6).

G. Grace and works are exclusive by definition. They cannot be mixed under any conditions.

H. Grace plus anything corrupts grace, because true Bible grace is a gift of free and pure mercy.

I. Reckoning, or accounting, of such an arrangement of conditions denies any grace involved.

J. Yet, justification is by free grace (3:24), so that any and all works are excluded by definition.

But of debt.

A. Conditions, as Moses' Law, make justification the result of debt, not grace. God forbid!

B. Eternal life is the gift of God in more ways than one: it is not offered upon conditions.

C. Here is an exposition of Romans 6:23.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

But to him that worketh not.

A. There is another plan of salvation, the Bible plan, revealed from heaven, which rejects works.

B. The Bible plan sees human cooperation and efforts the result of grace, not conditions for it!

C. Salvation is of the LORD! We do not compromise that glorious declaration in any way at all!

D. Faith is definitely a work – a work that God expects and requires (John 6:28-29), but it is not a legal, Jewish work of the Law, when it rests on the gracious and finished gift of God.

E. Faith is definitely commandment keeping (I John 3:23), but it is the acceptable evidence of justification when it is viewed as evidence of those justified by God's grace in Christ Jesus.

F. The works Paul condemned are works of the Law viewed as conditions for justification.

G. Study unconditional salvation.

But believeth.

A. The Arminian shouts, "See, faith is not a work. Can you read Paul's words? Leave us alone!"

B. The Calvinist shouts, "See, faith is the instrument! Can you read Paul? Leave us alone!"

C. We reject both Arminianism and Calvinism as manmade theories about salvation that are partial in God's word. For more, see … https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/calvinism-arminianism.pd

D. The contrast here by Paul is faith, Abraham's faith in context, as opposed to works of Moses' Law like circumcision and the several hundred other commandments before Joshua (4:9-15).

E. Paul had never met an Arminian or Calvinist, so he was not defending either view of faith.

F. He had met plenty of Jewish legalists, and he condemned their heresy on the grounds of faith.

G. Justifying faith here is faith that believes God justifies the ungodly by grace alone. Period!

H. Do not understate this faith. It is a tremendous evidence of powerful grace in a dead sinner.

On him that justifieth the ungodly.

A. The only faith that works in this context is faith in God as Justifier of the ungodly, of wicked enemies, not in God as Justifier of the believer, of the faithful, of the obedient, etc.

B. An Arminian's faith generally rests on God justifying believers on the basis and/or merit of their faith produced by their free will – thus faith becomes a meritorious, conditional work.

C. If an Arminian denies this, it is due to their own confusion about their contradictory doctrine.

D. God justifies men by free grace through Jesus Christ's redemptive work (3:23-26; 8:28-33; etc.). They were chosen in Christ, died for by Christ, and had Christ's work applied by the Spirit when they were dead sinners following the devil (Eph 2:1-7; Titus 3:3-7; etc.).

E. No wonder Samuel Richardson and William Kiffen in 1647 wrote against faith in believing as the means for justification, for they were sick of Arminian confidence in faith rather than in Jesus Christ alone, see … https://letgodbetrue.com/bible/salvation/justification-by-christ-alone.pdf.

F. There is a means of justification – the means of the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:12-15).

His faith is counted for righteousness.

A. The identical language used of Abraham (Gen 15:6) and Phinehas (Ps 106:31) is used here for those who show their righteousness by faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ (4:23-25).

B. Faith is the first evidence of righteousness granted by God for numerous reasons.
   1. Faith is the consequence of bestowed righteousness through Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:1).
   2. Faith in God from men without understanding by nature is evidence indeed (3:11).
   3. Faith in God from men that never sought God by nature is evidence indeed (3:11).
   4. Faith in God from men that had no fear of God before their eyes is evidence (3:18).
   5. Salvation by Works (after faith).

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Even as David also.

A. What is the *also* here for? It is another O.T. passage teaching what Paul had just taught.

B. Remember, the thought made in verse 5 now being confirmed is justification of the ungodly.

C. God justifies men by His grace through the merits of Jesus Christ, as was stated (3:23-26).

D. Paul had already given the Bible example of Abraham's justification without works (4:2-3).

E. Paul had already argued that justification by grace could not possibly include works (4:4-5).

F. Then he invoked David, psalmist and prophet, who had written of justification (Ps 32:1-2).

G. Paul defined legal justification of the ungodly (3:23-26; 4:5), and he confirmed it by David.

H. He used the scriptures so revered by the Jews to confirm that justification is without works.

Describeth the blessedness of the man.

A. David's 32nd Psalm describes and lists the blessings of sinners being forgiven and justified.

B. The forgiveness of sins, especially the legal aspect of such, is a great blessing (Eph 1:3-7).

C. The covering of sins, so that even God cannot remember them, is a great blessing (Heb 8:12).

D. The refusal to count, account, reckon, consider, esteem, or regard a man as a sinner – through the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ, of course – is a great blessing (3:23-26; II Cor 5:21).

E. When rightly understood, God's gracious gift should bind us to give thanks (II Thess 2:13).
F. When rightly understood, God's gracious gift should motivate us to service (II Cor 5:14-15).

Unto whom God imputeth righteousness.

A. **Impute**. To reckon or take into account; to reckon, regard, consider.
B. Here is the first of six uses of the verb *impute* in this chapter of Romans (4:6,8,11,22,23,24).
C. Remember, from 4:3 above, that *impute* is a synonym with count, account, and reckon.
D. God counts, accounts, reckons, regards, or considers some men righteous without works.

Without works.

A. How does Psalm 32 deny works? Since there is no such negative statement in Psalm 32:1-2.
B. How does Psalm 32 deny works? By virtue of its positive statement of a God-given blessing and its silence about any works or other conditions being the moving cause for God's gift.

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.

A. Here are the actual words from Psalm 32:1 brought forward by Paul by the Holy Ghost.
B. The holy God of heaven forgives sins by virtue of Christ's shed blood (Eph 1:7; Heb 9:15).
C. Salvation by God's grace and choice is a great blessing that binds us to praise (II Thess 2:13).
D. The inspired implication and application, by virtue of this passage's silence regarding any conditions or works, was sufficient to the Holy Ghost and Paul to refute Jewish thinking.

And whose sins are covered.

A. Here are the actual words from Psalm 32:1 brought forward by Paul by the Holy Ghost.
B. Our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ through the forbearance of God (3:23-26).
C. Our sins are covered by the blood of the Lamb, Whom we shall praise forever (Rev 1:5).

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Blessed is the man.

A. Here are the actual words from Psalm 32:2 brought forward by Paul by the Holy Ghost.
B. Salvation by God's grace and choice is a great blessing that binds us to praise (II Thess 2:13).

To whom the Lord will not impute sin.

A. Here are the actual words from Psalm 32:2 brought forward by Paul by the Holy Ghost.
B. **Impute**. To reckon or take into account; to reckon, regard, consider.

C. Here is the second of six uses of the verb *impute* in this chapter (4:6,8,11,22,23,24).
D. Remember, from 4:3 above, that *impute* is a synonym with count, account, and reckon.
E. God counts, accounts, reckons, regards, or considers some men to be righteous and declares them so through the finished work of Jesus Christ by the evidence of their faith in Him.
F. How does a just God not impute sin where it belongs? By virtue of Jesus Christ (3:23-26)!
G. The inspired implication and application, by virtue of this passage's silence regarding any conditions or works, was sufficient to the Holy Ghost and Paul to refute Jewish thinking.
H. Notice carefully, the words of Psalm 32:2 not used here, which will be implied soon (8:1-4).

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.

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only.

A. Justification is called *this blessedness*; David rightly described it as such (4:6-8; Ps 32:1-2).
B. Every child of God is bound to thank God always for His choice in salvation (II Thess 2:13).
C. *Circumcision* is used in this context, as in other places also, to identify Jews from Gentiles.
D. Paul continued to move forward in his argumentation to refute Jewish legalism and its assumed national superiority over Gentiles in all matters, including justification before God.

Or upon the uncircumcision also.

A. *Uncircumcision* is used in this context, as in other places also, to identify Gentiles from Jews.
B. Though Paul had already stated the conclusion to the question, he led the Jews to the answer.

For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

A. Paul had shown from the Jewish scriptures that God declared Abram righteous by faith (4:3).
B. This is the only basis we should ever say anything authoritatively – inspired wisdom from God revealed for us to know truth in any matter (Job 32:6-10; Ps 119:128; II Tim 3:16-17).
C. Here Paul used the synonym *reckoned* for counted in Genesis 15:6 and in Romans 4:3.
D. Whether counted, reckoned, accounted, or imputed, the sense is the same – God considered, esteemed, regarded, and declared Abraham's faith as the evidence of his righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

How was it then reckoned.

A. Paul continued his questions to lead his readers to their own conclusion from Abraham's life.
B. How (or when) was faith reckoned to him for righteousness? What were his circumstances?

C. Here is where a timeline of Abraham's life is so important … to see Genesis 15:6 (faith counted to Abraham for righteousness) before Genesis 17:24 (Abraham's circumcision).

When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

A. Ah, the power of an inspired point! Praise God the Holy Spirit! When was Abram justified?
B. Was Abraham declared righteous as a circumcised man, or as an uncircumcised man?
C. Did God count Abraham a righteous man by his faith, when circumcised, or uncircumcised?

Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

A. The wise and scriptural answer is simple, for the chronology of Genesis reveals it clearly.
B. Abraham was declared righteous in Genesis 15:6, but he was circumcised in Genesis 17:24.
C. The evidence would indicate there were at least 15 years between the two events.
D. A timeline of Abraham's life is a very useful device to help get a visual picture of the events.
E. To those who adored their ritualistic surgery, this consideration would have been powerful!
F. How essential or important could circumcision be toward justification, if Abraham were justified many years before he was circumcised? The answer is obvious to honest readers.

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:

And he received the sign of circumcision.

A. God gave Abraham the ritual of circumcision in His timing … after declaring him righteous!
B. God gave Abram the rite of circumcision as a sign, not a meritorious condition or instrument.
C. God gave the rite to Abraham – note the passive voice – he did not originate it to please God.
D. Choose to be fair and honest with God's word to avoid confusing conditions and evidence, for the rite of circumcision was an evidence of righteousness, not a condition or means for it.
E. We appreciate every word of God, here it is *sign*, and in I Peter 3:21 it is *figure*, both of which remind us that there was no actual, literal, inherent saving power in either ordinance.
F. Circumcision was a sign of faith and righteousness; baptism is a figure of salvation by Christ.

A seal of the righteousness of the faith.

A. Circumcision was a sign, token, or emblem, of God's declaration of Abram's righteous faith.
B. It was God's outward ordinance acknowledging Abraham's righteousness evidenced by faith.
C. Baptism is a New Testament ordinance used by both sexes, authorized after qualifying by a preacher of the gospel, that is the seal of the righteousness of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour.
D. God further gives the Holy Spirit as a seal and earnest to such believers (Eph 1:13-14).

Which he had yet being uncircumcised.

A. Paul restated his key conclusion – Abraham was uncircumcised when declared righteous.

B. What did uncircumcised Abram have? Faith as evidence approved by God for righteousness.

That he might be the father of all them that believe.

A. Why did God declare Abraham righteous by virtue of his faith before he was circumcised?

B. So all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, could look to him as the example of justification.

C. God kept circumcision out of the matter of justification by arranging for it 15 years later.

Though they be not circumcised.

A. There is no problem for an uncircumcised Gentile when it comes to justification, even in light of Abram as the Bible example, for he was uncircumcised when declared righteous!

B. Gentiles were not excited by this ritualistic surgery of the Jews, and they did not need to be!

That righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

A. Abraham was circumcised long after he was declared righteous to be of comfort to Gentiles.

B. Gentiles may confidently assure themselves of righteousness by the evidence of their faith.

C. Here Paul chose the synonym *imputed* for counted (4:3) and reckoned (4:9) used before.

D. The sense is the same – God declares men righteous by virtue of the evidence of true faith.

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.

And the father of circumcision.

A. Abraham was the father of circumcision by virtue of the fact he was the first circumcised.

B. Circumcision originated with Abraham: God gave it to him directly and first (Gen 17:10-14).

C. Thus being the father of circumcision, he is obviously the father of all circumcised Jews.

D. However, there is another element that is far more important, and that is the issue of faith.

E. He is the father of circumcised believers, or Jews, since circumcision was a sign of faith.

F. He is the father of uncircumcised believers, or Gentiles, for he believed before circumcision.

To them who are not of the circumcision only.

A. He is obviously the father of circumcision to circumcised Jews keeping his example of it.

B. He is the father of circumcision in a fuller sense to circumcised Jews who also had his faith.

C. This verse is for Abraham to be the father of believing Jews, after believing Gentiles in 4:11.

D. hose under consideration in this text are circumcised Jews who also had their father's faith.

But who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.

A. He is the father of circumcision to the uncircumcised, since circumcision was a sign of faith; but that does not appear to be the apostle's argument here by virtue of the adverb also.
B. The also here contrasts circumcised Jews with faith from circumcised Jews without faith.
C. He is the father of circumcision to circumcised believers – they have both faith and its sign.
D. The Jews walked in the steps of their father Abraham by being circumcised the eighth day, but they also walked in the steps of their father Abraham by having the faith that he also
E. There is more to faith than an emotional decision or sinner's prayer made at a tent revival.
F. The just shall live by faith is exactly the case (1:17) … true faith results in a changed life.

Which he had being yet uncircumcised.

A. Again, Paul stated the obvious that Abraham had righteous faith before being circumcised.
B. *The most important matter in Abraham's justification was his faith, not his circumcision*

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.

For the promise.

A. The coordinating conjunction *for* ties this argument with the one before, but there has been a shift from Paul's defense of justification against circumcision to a defense against the Law of Moses; the connection by *for* further explains how Abraham is the father of all believers.
B. God promised Abraham many things, plural promises, and they are seen in Christ (Gal 3:16).
C. It is an error of Bible interpretation to emphasize the natural, physical, national, literal aspects of God's promises to Abraham over spiritual aspects in Jesus Christ and heaven.
    1. He promised him a land for an everlasting possession, which was fulfilled literally to Israel (Neh 9:7-8), but more importantly to all believers spiritually (Heb 11:8-10,13-16).
    2. He promised him an innumerable progeny, also fulfilled in Christ (Rev 5:9-10; 7:9-10).
    3. He promised him the destruction of all his enemies, also fulfilled spiritually in Christ (Matt 16:18; Luke 11:21-22; I Cor 15:25-26; Col 2:14-15).
    4. He promised him to be the source of blessings on all nations of the earth, also fulfilled spiritually in Christ (Rom 1:5; 16:26; Gal 3:8; Rev 5:9-10).
D. What promise is under consideration here by Paul? We must let the following context guide.
E. For more about the promises.

That he should be the heir of the world.

A. There is no promise to Abraham recorded in Genesis by these words, so we study carefully.
B. The next phrase and verses indicate the promise considered is to Abraham *and his seed*, used here

collectively for Jews and Gentiles of faith, more like Galatians 3:29 than Galatians 3:16, therefore whatever promise is identified must be an inheritance to Abraham and all believers.

C. The land is clearly the item most often identified as an inheritance, making Abraham and his seed actual heirs, which provides a very nice fit (Heb 11:8-10; Acts 7:3-5).
D. God first promised Abraham the land before he was declared righteous by faith (Gen 12:6-7).
E. He confirmed the promise of the land in specific terms at the time of his faith (Gen 15:6-21).
F. Why is it called *the world?* Because Israel was a figure for heaven (Heb 11:13-16; Lu 16:22).
G. Why is it called *the world?* Because we understand new heavens and new earth (II Pet 3:13).
H. Why is it called *the world?* Because all things are Abraham's and his seed's (I Cor 3:21-23).
I. Why is it called *the world?* Because *all things* include the world (Rev 21:7; Ps 37:9,11,22).
J. Decent arguments can be made for other promises given to Abraham as intended by *the world* here, but we believe this is the choice best by several considerations against others.
    1. The language – the word *heir* – indicates an *inheritance* of land (Heb 11:8-10,13-16).
    2. The geography – the word *world* – indicates a place or territory to inherit and inhabit.
    3. The comprehensiveness – the word *world* – can include all the other promises of Gentile blessings, father of many nations, and defeating his enemies.
    4. There is another promise in context, 4:17-21, but it is not the world; it does not include his seed; and it does not make him an heir.

Was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law.

A. The promise of inheriting the world, as defined above, was not conditioned on Moses' Law.
B. Here we can see Paul moving from arguing against circumcision to arguing against the Law.
C. Paul went further in Galatians 3:17 to identify 430 years between the promise and the Law.
D. God made and confirmed the promise of the land by virtue of Abram's faith (Gen 15:6-21).

But through the righteousness of faith.

A. God's promises to Abraham were made and confirmed in association with Abraham's faith.
B. They were not made or confirmed through Moses' Law, which came all of 430 years later.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

For if they which are of the law be heirs.

A. Paul left circumcision to argue against Moses' Law having a role in promises to Abraham.
B. He will propose our eternal inheritance by the Law and prove it not so by the consequences.
C. Who are those of the Law? The Jews, who were given Moses' Law on Sinai by God Himself.
D. Remember here and everywhere in the early chapters of Paul's fight against Jewish legalists.

Faith is made void.

A. Faith and the works of the Law are mutually exclusive – you cannot have them both; if you include works of the Law, then by definition you exclude any role for faith, like Abraham's.

B. If Moses' Law from Sinai is the condition, instrument, or means of obtaining justification or God's promise of eternal inheritance, then the faith ascribed to Abraham is nothing.

C. What did God's declaration of Abraham's faith mean (Gen 15:6), if the Law is what matters?

And the promise made of none effect.

A. God's promise to Abraham is worthless, if the Law is the means, based on its impossibility.

B. As the next verse explains, the Law cannot bring good, since no man can keep its terms.

C. Further, the Law was never to be a condition for salvation, but of condemnation (3:19-20).

D. What was the Law's purpose? To cause sin to abound as exceeding sinful (Ro 5:20; 7:7-13).

E. What was the Law's purpose? To prove sinfulness and drive men to Christ (Gal 3:19-24).

F. What is the possibility of keeping the Law? It is impossible. Its terms are onerous (Gal 3:10).

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Because the law worketh wrath.

A. The Law brings God's wrath, for every man breaks it, bringing its dreaded curse (Gal 3:10).

B. Paul had already introduced the wrath of God (1:18), which he then brought to a conclusion from the Law itself, for no man, including the Jews, could keep its terms (3:19-20).

C. During his argument of condemnation, he denied the Jews any salvation by the Law (2:1-24).

For where no law is, there is no transgression.

A. Moses' Law is not a good thing, when justification and obtaining promises are the goals.

B. The effect of laws, whether human or divine, is to identify transgressions, thus causing guilt.

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,

Therefore it is of faith.

A. Justification and our eternal inheritance are of faith – claimed by faith as the stated evidence.

B. As throughout this whole fourth chapter, faith is set opposite the works of Moses' Law; therefore, conclusions should not be drawn in this limited arena and by Paul's limited scope to address free will, election, decisional regeneration, Arminianism, Calvinism, etc., etc.

C. The sense in which justification or the promise is of faith is the same as the role held by works – they are

both evidence. Paul condemned works as conditions here in this chapter.

D. Ephesians 2:8-9 in its context declares the vital phase of salvation to be by grace, with man hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins. What does faith serve? It is our claim and evidence.
E. God did not do all He could by grace but leave the results up to reprobates to exercise faith!

That it might be by grace.

A. Grace means it is unconditional – a promise by a sovereign Benefactor – without conditions.
B. For unconditional salvation.
C. See the other appendices at the end of this chapter for more about unconditional eternal life.
D. God did not do all He could by grace but leave the results up to reprobates to exercise faith!
E. If circumcision or the Law were required, then it would not be grace but rather man's works.
F. If anything is required that God must wait on for man to perform, then it is not of grace.

To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.

A. Any conditions for obtaining the promise would guarantee some, many, or all missing out.
B. Arminians come up wanting here, for there is nothing sure about their plan of salvation, except that most of the seed God intended to save and tried to save will end up in hellfire.
C. What promise? The eternal inheritance of the elect, inclusive of all the promises to Abraham.
D. Since all will be saved that God intended to save (Rom 8:28-39), how was it accomplished?
E. Because the eternal, legal, vital, and final phases of salvation are all by unconditional grace.
F. For the phases of salvation.

Not to that only which is of the law.

A. How could God fulfill His promise to those following Moses' Law? By unconditional grace!
B. These are the Jews, being of the Law by race, nation, and creed, as distinct from Gentiles.

But to that also which is of the faith of Abraham.

A. The distinction here, from those just described as being of the Law, are Gentile believers.
B. To be Abraham's seed in this sense, Abraham must be their father, which was true (4:11).

Who is the father of us all.

A. Abraham was not the father of the Jews only, which they were foolish and quick to claim and trust (Matt 3:9; John 8:39).
B. He was also the father of Gentile believers, which Paul had already shown (4:11-12).
C. Paul elaborated on this fact of Gentile inclusion as Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29; 4:21-31).

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.***

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)

A. There is a connection here between 4:16 and the following description of Abraham's faith.

B. Where is it written? It is written in Genesis 17:4-6; but read carefully for the verb tenses, for 17:4 and 17:6 use the future tense, but 17:5 uses the perfect tense, which Paul quotes here.
   1. The perfect tense (or present perfect tense) describes an action completed in the past and continuing to the present; or in other words, an action perfected in the past and still true.
   2. We are sure of this point, because Paul here argues this exact sense from the words.

C. Modern Bibles corrupt the source passage in Genesis 17:4-6 to deny Paul's argument here.
   1. The Message (2002), a popular version endorsed by Rick Warren, America's pastor as some call him, uses the future and present tenses, but not the past or the perfect tense.
   2. The Contemporary English Version (1995) uses the future tense for all three verses.
   3. The New Century Version (1991) using the future and present tenses for the verses.

D. Why do modern Bibles corrupt the source passage in Genesis to deny Paul's argument here?
   1. Because they have no regard for the words of God, instead just wanting to give an idea.
   2. Because they have no regard for the doctrine of God, choosing to contradict Paul instead.
   3. Because they have the highest regard for themselves, so God turned them into fools, according to His promise to confound scribes claiming wisdom (I Cor 1:19-20; 3:19-20).
   4. Because God wants His children to know their books are not scripture, because scripture cannot be broken, and these books are easily broken by this contradiction (Jn 10:34-35).

E. What are the nations referred to here, and in what sense is Abraham the father of them all?
   1. Abram was the natural father of many nations by Ishmael, Isaac, and the sons of Keturah.
   2. The coordinating phrase, *as it is written*, indicates also the father of believers from 4:16.

Before him whom he believed, even God.

A. The words, *before him*, describe God's consideration of Abram as father of the faithful, for a person or thing is in your sight when before you. In God's view, Abram was such and such.

B. Abraham's faith was in God alone, the integrity of His word, and the power of His ability.

C. What did Abram believe? The context indicates his revived fatherhood that extended from fathering Isaac by Sarah to fathering six sons by Keturah much later. Give God the glory!

D. In this and the following verses, God gives an inspired description of Abraham's faith that is precious for both doctrinal matters of God's word and personal matters of life and living.

Who quickeneth the dead.

A. **Quicken**. To give or restore life to; to make alive; to vivify or revive; to animate (as the soul the body).

[OED].

B. There is something man cannot do, under any circumstances, for it is a divine ability and prerogative, which is only shared in the sense of man being a passive instrument in the work, as in the cases in both testaments of God resurrecting dead bodies by prophets and apostles.

C. God is the source of all life, and He can give or restore it as He chooses (Gen 2:7; Deu 32:39; I Sam 2:6; II Kgs 5:7; Ps 68:20; Mat 3:9; Jn 11:25-27; I Cor 15:45; I Tim 6:13; Re 1:17-18).

D. A proof of Jesus Christ's divinity was His ability to raise the dead by His power (Jn 5:17-30).

E. It is this life-giving power that works the quickening, or regeneration, or being born again, of sinners from a state of spiritual death in trespasses and sins (Ep 2:1-3; Tit 3:5; Jn 1:13; 3:8).

F. Abraham had complete confidence in God's ability to raise the dead in any sense whatsoever.
   1. By context (4:19), he was confident God could quicken Sarah's and his dead reproductive powers, which He did gloriously for him to father children for decades (Gen 25:1-10).
   2. In light of Hebrews 11:12, we understand that God quickened Abraham reproductively.
   3. In light of Heb 11:17-19, he was confident God could easily resurrect Isaac from death.
   4. In light of pains he took for Sarah's burial, he believed in her resurrection (Gen 23:1-4).

G. Rather than trust in doctors, who cannot cure the common cold, put your trust in the LORD.

And calleth those things which be not as though they were.

A. Jehovah of the Bible is able to operate above verb tenses by virtue of His ability and power to accomplish and perform His purposes with absolute certainty (Dan 4:35; Job 9:4; 34:29; 40:9-12; Job 42:2; Pr 21:30; Is 43:13; Acts 5:39; 11:17).

B. Instead of telling Abram He would make him the father of many nations, He declared it to Him as a thing already perfected in the past (perfect tense) and still true in the present. Glory!

C. Believer, He has declared similarly of your glorification (Rom 8:28-30)! Believest thou this?

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.

Who against hope believed in hope.

A. How can hope be against hope? By taking hope in a hopeless matter! Have hope, brother!

B. Hope is usually grounded on probabilities of success based on existing abilities to perform a work, but Abraham had no such hope, for both Sarah and he were dead reproductively.

C. Note the timing of this particular promise, when he was 99 and she was 89 (Gen 17:5, 17,24).

D. The hope of believers, as Paul will shortly explain, is sure waiting for a certainty (8:24-25).

E. Mankind is generally hopeless, but believers should abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, for they are believers in the God of hope, Who gives hope (Rom 15:13; 5:3-5).

F. You will not face a temptation that is uncommon and has no way of escape (I Cor 10:13).

G. The Bible is filled with examples and illustrations, which we commonly call Bible stories, which should

build our hope in God by learning what He did for others (Rom 15:4).

1. How in the world could Abraham find a good wife for his son Isaac (Genesis 24:1-67)?
2. Hannah could not conceive (she is not the only one), but God gave her Samuel and more!
3. Luke traveled with Paul during a terrible storm, but Paul did not lose hope (Ac 27:20-25).
4. More examples could and should be multiplied indefinitely and shared among believers.

That he might become the father of many nations.

A. Abraham delighted in such a wonderful promise from God, as a man would (Prov 5:16-18).
B. Though God declared the event as done, Abraham knew he still had to father more children.
C. Every promise in the Bible, from child training working (Pr 22:6) to long life by honoring parents (Eph 6:2-3) and many, many more, should be desired and laid hold of by faith.
D. God promised David fantastic things, and see David's claim of them (II Sam 7:11-16,25-29).

According to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

A. Harking back to the earlier promise, Abraham knew his seed would be numerous (Gen 15:5).
B. Paul by the Holy Spirit here shows us that Abraham's faith was of the same in both places.
C. Paul by the Holy Spirit here shows us that Abraham tied both promises together in faith.
D. When you have God's word, you should not need anything else for your faith and hope.

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:

And being not weak in faith.

A. Never forget God pities His children and overlooks their weaknesses in faith (Ps 103:13-14).
B. Consider some of the entries in the Hall of Faith – Gideon? Barak? Samson? Moses? Etc.
C. Both Abraham and Sarah initially laughed at this promise of God (Gen 17:17; 18:12), but they are both listed here or in Hebrews 11:11 for their faith in this specific promise of God!
D. Weakness in faith is marked by doubts, questions, worries, details, etc. But Abraham did not!
E. If you have a fit or season of doubts, then confess your weakness, forsake your foolishness, and take up the shield of faith again and believe God's promises (Eph 6:16; Heb 11:6).

He considered not.

A. It is a mark of skeptics or secret atheists to question God or consider difficulties of the Bible.
B. When dealing with divine revelation – the Bible – fussing about how tends toward atheism.
C. When you try figuring out how God did something or will do something, you are declaring you are an atheist, because you are foolishly forgetting your ignorance and His omnipotence.

D. We love believing Bible study (Edward F. Hills) by always giving God the benefit of doubt.
E. An apparent contradiction in the Bible is just – it only seems such to our ignorant view of it.
F. We do not need to see photographs of Noah's Ark to believe every fact written about it.
G. We believe the King James Version is God's word by faith, fruit, facts, and fools. We could hardly care less about manuscript evidence, textual criticism, or any other false science.
H. How did we get our canon of 66 books? … and how can we prove it? … by faith! And our enemies pertaining to the King James Version must eventually resort to the same canon faith.
I. We cannot see a human spirit created to enter a body, and we do not see it depart to God (though we see the effects), but we believe exactly as the Bible reveals the truth of it to us.
J. Why I Believe the Bible is Inspired.
K. Believing Ahaziah's Two Ages.

His own body now dead.

A. The Holy Spirit confirmed that the numerous seed came from a dead man (Hebrews 11:12).
B. Abraham continued to father children for at least another 50 years (Gen 23:1-2; 25:1-10)!
C. Because of his faith, Abraham did not consider how God would find and get sperm to Sarah!
D. God promised him a son by Sarah, so he went to bed with her and enjoyed the impossible!
E. When we bury dead believers, we need not consider how … because God will raise them!

When he was about an hundred years old.

A. We can gather only anecdotal evidence of the potency of the patriarchs with their long lives.
B. But we believe the record here and in Hebrews 11:12 that Abraham was dead reproductively.
C. Based on our knowledge of men, he would have had low testosterone levels, low desire, erectile difficulty, low sperm count, etc. In his opinion, he thought it ludicrous (Gen 17:17).

Neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb.

A. We can gather only anecdotal evidence of the potency of the patriarchs with their long lives.
B. But we can believe the record here and in Hebrews 11:11 that Sarah was dead reproductively.
C. Sarah being 89-90 years old (Gen 17:17), the Holy Spirit declared the fact that they knew.
D. Women typically enter menopause around 40-60 and cannot bear children after that age.

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

He staggered not at the promise of God.

A. The holy record has Abraham not only staggering, but falling down in laughter (Gen 17:17).
B. However, his overall faith in the matter is what God recorded in both testaments, repeatedly!

C. Do not forget God's pity of our weaknesses (Ps 103:13-14) … as He did Samson (He 11:32).
D. When you doubt or question God's word of any sort, you stagger in weak faith or unbelief.
E. When God declares or promises something, we should believe it, and that should settle it!

Through unbelief.

A. Unbelief is a terrible thing – you either doubt His will, His word, or His ability, or all three.
B. Which is it, reader? Do you trust His will, His faithfulness and truth, and His power to save?
C. When others doubt you, it is very discouraging and irritating, how about with Almighty God?

But was strong in faith.

A. Strong faith is unmoved by circumstances, trusting entirely without doubts in God's ability.
B. Strong faith does not worry about questions it cannot answer but believes God anyway.
C. How can you increase your faith? Pray for it (Mark 9:24), and read God's word (Rom 10:17).

Giving glory to God.

A. God has infinite and sufficient glory, but we give Him glory by declaring His glorious nature.
B. When you believe God against natural considerations or reason, you glorify His great power.
C. When you believe God can and will do what men believe to be impossible, you glorify Him.

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

And being fully persuaded that.

A. Are you fully persuaded God is willing, true, and strong enough to do all declared by Him?
B. Are you fully persuaded though you cannot answer all and every question scorners raise?
C. Are you fully persuaded God is able to keep your soul, if you commit it to Him (II Ti 1:12)?
D. Are you fully persuaded you can never be separated from God's love (Romans 8:38-39)?

What he had promised.

A. When you have a promise of God, believe it! There is nothing to hinder Him from keeping it!
B. One promise He confirmed by swearing to give extra assurance of its certainty (He 6:11-20).
C. He promised that He will never leave thee nor forsake thee (Heb 13:5). Believest thou this?

He was able also to perform.

A. The world turns, and all things in the world, based on God's power to perform His promises.
B. Do you grasp and believe that Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3)?
C. Sarah laughed at God's word, so He asked if anything was too hard for Him (Genesis 18:14).

D. For much on this great subject, https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/is-anything-too-hard-for-the-lord.pdf.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

And therefore it was imputed to him.

A. The *therefore* draws a conclusion, which is God's recognition of such faith as great evidence.

B. When you believe God against men, nature, science, reason, circumstances, or enemies, it is evidence that God has done a work in you by His grace to so believe (Phil 2:12-13).

C. The word *impute* does not mean infuse or anything related – it is simply and only a synonym in this context for the related words *count* (Ro 4:3), *reckon* (Ro 4:9), and *account* (Gal 3:6).

D. God counted Abram's great faith, and declared it so, as proof of righteousness (Gen 15:6).

For righteousness.

A. Abraham's faith, at various stages of his life, was the evidence that he was a righteous man.

B. As God counted Phinehas's zeal for righteousness, it was evidence of it only (Psalm 106:31).

C. Otherwise you must require making shish-ka-bob of fornicators in order to make it to heaven.

D. And Abraham's faith was not enough by itself for evidence; he needed works (Jas 2:21-24).

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

Now it was not written for his sake alone.

A. Genesis 15:6 was not written just to tell us the evidence of justification about Abraham.

B. God has authored scripture with far more design and intentions than merely Abram's history.

C. Here is another indication from scripture for us to live by every word of God (Deut 8:3; Job 23:12; Prov 30:5; Luke 4:4).

That it was imputed to him.

A. The inspired record of Genesis 15:6 shows us the evidence of justification and righteousness.

B. God counted Abraham a righteous man by the righteousness of the faith He had in God.

C. But Abraham's justification by the evidence of faith was not the only reason for Gen 15:6.

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;

But for us also.

A. Genesis 15:6 was also written for our sake, so we could grasp the concept of justification and relate to a man described as faithful that had his own faithless events in his life.

B. Genesis 15:6 was written to encourage our faith by the example of God's recognition of faith.

To whom it shall be imputed.

A. God will count, reckon, or account us righteous, just as He did Abraham, by our faith in Him.

B. Our faith does not make us righteous, but God considers it an evidence of our righteousness.

If we believe on him.

A. Rather than count stars and believe God's promise of a great seed, we believe the gospel.

B. Believing the record and witness God has given of Jesus is proof of eternal life (I Jn 5:4-13).

C. Do you believe … as Paul did, that God would certainly keep his soul safe (II Tim 1:12)?

D. Do you believe … as Martha did, that Jesus was the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:24-27)?

E. Do you believe … as Peter did, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (John 6:68-69)?

F. Do you believe … as Paul, that to be absent from the body is to be with Christ (II Cor 5:6-8)?

That raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

A. Abraham believed an incredible promise about his progeny; we believe on about our Brother.

B. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fundamental and very important fact of our religion (Matt 12:38-40; Acts 2:31; 17:31; I Cor 15:1-8; I Tim 3:16; etc.).

C. The aspects of the gospel identified for faith include the resurrection (Rom 10:9-13).

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Who was delivered for our offences.

A. Paul wrote this epistle primarily to Roman saints, and this should be remembered (1:1-15).

B. Faith identifies us as God's elect and sheep for whom Jesus died (John 10:26-29; Ac 13:48).

C. Here is legal justification – Jesus died and finished the payment for our sins to God's justice.

D. He was delivered to Jews and Romans for crucifixion, even against Pilate's better judgment, which is a reminder of God's sovereign counsel in the matter (Ac 2:23; 4:27-28; Rom 8:32).

And was raised again for our justification.

A. Here is legal justification – Jesus died and rose to secure righteousness for us before God.

B. If He had not risen from the dead, the condemning guilt of our sins must have been too much.

C. If He had not risen from the dead, He could not have offered Himself to God (Heb 9:14).

D. If He had not risen from the dead, He could not have appeared in heaven for us (Heb 9:24).

E. If He had not risen from the dead, we are still condemned in our sins (I Cor 15:12-18).