

## **Abraham the Pattern of Faith**

(Rom 4:1-3)

- Romans 4 begins a new sub-section, but is still part of the greater section beginning at Rom 1:16 and running through Rom 4:25
- I. Division of chapter
  - A) Rom 4:1-5- Abraham's example according to the O/T
  - B) Rom 4:6-8- David's inspired statements in O/T (Psa 32)
  - C) Rom 4:9-12- History of circumcision and its beginnings in the O/T
  - D) Rom 4:13-17- History of the The Law and its beginnings in the O/T
  - E) Rom 4:18-22- Exposition of Abraham's case
  - F) Rom 4:23-25- The same holds true for every believer
- II. Rom 4:1-3- Paul here begins working out something he has said multiple times already
  - A) Rom 1:1-2- The gospel promised before in the O/T scriptures
  - B) Rom 3:21- The gospel witnessed by the O/T scriptures
  - C) Rom 3:31- The gospel establishes the Law
- III. Paul's message is not only not "new," it is no different whatsoever as salvation in the O/T
  - A) Rom 4:11- Abraham the "father" of faith
    - 1. This doesn't mean he is the first one saved, but instead that he is placed at the head in the scriptures in God's explaining of justification by faith
    - 2. Gen 15:6- The clear statement of justification by grace through faith in the scriptures
  - B) Paul proves that "justification by faith" was merely hinted at or foreshadowed to come in the O/T, but was the method of salvation then just as now
    - 1. For the sake of the believing Jews
      - i. Who had been taught all their lifetime a misunderstanding of the scriptures, and this wouldn't pass easily, as with Peter at Antioch
        - a) The hardest cases are those that can be "seemingly proved" by a misapplication of the scriptures (such as Dispensationalism)
    - 2. For the sake of the unbelieving Jews
      - i. Who rejected all Paul said based on their misunderstanding of the scriptures
        - a) 2 Cor 3:14- O/T scriptures veiled to unbelieving Jew
    - 3. To bolster the statement on the oneness of God and the oneness of man
      - i. God is always the same and man is always the same, therefore salvation must always be the same

- ii. There is only one Covenant of Grace, and only one Gospel, and that can never nor has ever changed
    - a) Eph 2:11-22- The great statement concerning the gentile believer being brought into heir-ship with the O/T believer and doctrine of prophets
      - 1) There is only one inheritance for God's people, and it has always been that way
      - 2) Heb ch 11 proves this
- 4. To further prove there can be no boasting on behalf of man
  - i. If Abraham can't boast, then certainly no other Jew or man could
- C) Paul chooses the 2 greatest men (Abraham and David) in the mind of the Jews, as well as the 2 men that stood at the head of the covenants
  - 1. What's true of the father is true of the sons, and what's true of the king is true of the subjects of his kingdom
  - 2. Matt 1:1- Matthew places these same 2 men at the head of Christ's genealogy
- IV. Rom 4:1- Meaning of the statement
  - A) The translators rightly put the commas, so as to show that it isn't making Abraham the fleshly father of all believers
  - B) The meaning is "what did Abraham our father attain to with respect to his flesh?"
    - 1. Flesh- refers to all that a man is prone to rely upon for his salvation
      - i. Phil 3:3-7- Attainments of the flesh, condition, works, zeal, morality, etc.
      - ii. There are those that teach that Abraham did his best to worship God and therefore God forgave him and saved him, but Paul completely disproves this
        - a) Rom 4:5- Abraham believed God justifies the ungodly
        - b) Rom 4:17- Abraham believed God's promises to him, while as yet possessing none of them, i.e. righteousness, a son, the inheritance, etc.
        - c) Dispensationalism says "believing" is the thing which we do that then saves us, and thus turns believing into a work
          - 1) Again giving a man something to boast in in glory
  - V. Rom 4:2- 1<sup>st</sup> proof- If Abraham was saved due to anything found in him, then he can boast before God
    - A) "But not before God" is like "God forbid", for how can that possibly be that a man might boast in the presence of Almighty God
      - 1. Rom 3:27- Where is boasting?
        - i. "Boasting" same as "glory"

VI. Rom 4:3- 2<sup>nd</sup> proof- The scripture (sing)- Gen 15:6

A) Far from denying the book of Genesis as the High critic has done, Paul bases everything here upon one scripture from Genesis

1. Matt 22:32- Same as the Lord Jesus Christ did
2. Gal- 3:16- Paul does the same again

B) Terms

1. Believed- This is not simply an intellectual assent
  - i. It means to be fully convinced, to trust, to commit unto, full reliance upon and subsequent action proving the same (James 2:14-21)
  - ii. Notice it says Abraham “believed God,” and not “believed in God”
    - a) In other words, Abraham believed what God testified unto him
      - 1) Gal 3:8- Gospel preached unto Abraham
      - 2) John 8:56- Abraham saw the day of Christ His Redeemer
      - 3) Rom 4:14 & 17-18- Prove the preaching unto Abraham
    - b) Abraham’s subsequent life was proof of his faith, dwelling in tents in the promised land and expecting the Messiah would come through his loins
2. Counted- 3 different translations in this single passage:
  - i. 4:3- Counted
  - ii. 4:4- Reckoned
  - iii. 4:6- Impute
    - a) “To put to someone account that which they do not possess”
      - 1) Phile 18- “Put that on my account”
    - b) God puts something to our account when we have nothing at all, and it becomes the cause of all his dealings with us (sonship/righteousness)
      - 1) Thus the child of God is declared to be that which he isn’t yet, and relies upon that fact as true and expects it in reality simply because God has said so
      - 2) Thus we “Believe God”
      - 3) Abraham believe what God said concerning the way in which God saw Abraham, even when Abraham saw himself in an entirely different light