

Sons of Abraham – The Legacy of Salvation by Faith

Romans 4:1-25 (ESV)

¹ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.**”

⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: ⁷ “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

⁹ Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, ¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. ¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”

²³ But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

The Big Questions:

What is salvation?

How are people saved?

How were people saved in the **Old Testament**?

Abraham ...

- Old Testament
- _____ the Law
- The model of salvation by _____ for Jews

3 clear teachings:

1. Abraham’s life shows that justification by faith alone isn’t _____ (v.1)

2. Abraham's life shows that justification by works cannot be _____ (v. 2, 4)
3. Abraham's life shows that a righteous status comes only through _____ (v.3, 5-12)
1. Abraham's life shows that justification by faith alone isn't **new**. (v.1)

The standard of salvation has always and will always be _____

God's covenant with us has always been one of _____

Thus, there is continuity between covenants ...

It began in Genesis 3:15 ...

The covenant was expressed more specifically to Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17)

The seed of Abraham was more than just future people; it was the future Christ. Surely Abraham knew and was told by God exactly of what was to come thru Jesus.

2. Abraham's life shows that justification by works cannot be **true** (v. 2, 4).

Jews tend to believe that Abraham (and others) are saved by _____

If we are saved by works, says Paul, then we can _____ before God! (v.2)

If we are saved by works, says Paul, then salvation is like " _____ " (v.4) They are "not counted as a gift but as his due".

3. Abraham's life shows that a righteous status comes only through **faith** (v.3, 5-12).

Abraham's _____ led to his righteous status before God (v.3, 5).

Paul quotes Gen 15:6: "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." (v.3)

Paul also says that "his faith is counted as righteousness" (v.5)

This doesn't mean that Abraham's faith is a meritorious act by which God rewards him with salvation; it means that faith is the instrument by which he gets a righteous status.

Abraham's experience was the same as David's (v.7-8)

Paul cites Psalm 32:1-2.

If God will not "count" our sins against us (v.8), then who are they counted to?

Abraham was _____ by faith *before* his circumcision (v.9-12)

Abraham was circumcised _____ after he was pronounced righteous by faith!

Paul reminds us that circumcision was never a means of being saved anyway; instead it was "a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith" (v.11)

Why is this so important?

Concluding thoughts:

True, biblical religion is a religion of _____, not _____.

This means ...

Consider the Ten Commandments ...

Consider the sacrificial system ...

We are redeemed by ...

Christ Jesus is the ultimate substitutionary _____ for all people, at all times.

Rev. 13:8, John 6:39, Hebrews 13:20

Both Moses and Elijah anticipated it: Luke 9:30-31

Abraham had "the Gospel" preached to him: Galatians 3:8

Jesus' testimony was that Abraham "rejoiced to see His day": John 8:56

Simeon, holding the baby Jesus in the temple, declared that this is the One he had been waiting for: Luke 2:27-32

Galatians 3:5-14 (ESV)

⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—
⁶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? ⁷ Know then that **it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.** ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God** would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."
¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:27-29 (ESV)

²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.