

ROMANS 4 (Summary)

Introduction: This chapter connects effectively with the first three chapters

- Romans 1 – ‘the righteousness of God’ is revealed in the gospel, which is on that account the power of God to everyone who believes.
- Romans 2 & 3 -- The apostle shows at great length that this way of salvation is necessary for man, proving both by the fact of man’s life and by Scripture, that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God, and that, consequently, no man can be justified by his own obedience.
- Paul reveals that this righteousness which God provides is provided in His Son.
- Romans 4 – Apostle first gives an Illustration of these truths
 1. First by counteracting the veneration the Jews held for their great forefather, Abraham
 2. This veneration might lead the Jews to suppose that Abraham could be an exception to the doctrine of justification by faith by furnishing an example of one justified by works
 3. Paul refutes the objection in the case of Abraham and confirms the truth of justification by faith through the testimony of David
 4. Making use of the history of Abraham, Paul proves what he had been asserting, to show that in the matter of justification before God there is no exception and no difference between Jews and Gentiles

I. Illustration (Abraham & David) of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith (vv.1-9)

- This case is to show both Jews and Gentiles (especially Jews) how vain is the expectation of those who look for justification by their own works
 1. Abraham was a revered patriarch, holy, the head of the nation of Israel, the friend of God, the father of all those who believe, in whose seed all the nations of the world were to be blessed
 2. David was a man after God’s own heart, the one through the Messiah came, the great personal type of the Messiah, and a chosen and anointed king of Israel
- If, then, Abraham had not been justified by his works, but the righteousness of God imputed to him through faith; and David declared that the only way that a man can receive justification is by his sin being covered by the imputation of that righteousness, who could suppose that it was to be obtained in any other way
- By these two references, the apostle shows that the way of justification was the same from the beginning, both under the old and the new dispensation
- Both the ‘Law and the Prophets’ (Romans 3:21) bore witness to the righteousness of God, which is now manifested, and which is upon ‘all them that believe’ (Romans 3:22)

II. Circumcision not Valid for Justification (vv.10-12)

- Circumcision contributed nothing to Abraham's justification
- Righteousness imputed to Abraham before his circumcision, with the express intention of proving that righteousness is imputed to all who believe though they be not circumcised
- Circumcision is simply a 'sign' and a 'seal' of the 'righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised,...' (v.11)

III. Abraham's Inheritance of Promise (vv.13-16)

- Promise of inheritance not through obedience to the law, but through that righteousness which is received by faith
- The whole plan of justification was arranged by God in this manner in order that this blessing through faith by the grace of God might be made sure to all the seed of Abraham – 'to the children of promise' (Hebrews 9:8) – whether Jews or Gentiles.

IV. Abraham's Faith (vv.17-25)

- Benefit of exhibiting Abraham's faith to believers
- Abraham's faith expounded here for the purpose of the benefit and blessing of believers
- All that is brought out is his faith, not his sanctification
- The whole of this chapter is specially calculated to make an indelible impression on the Jews

Conclusion:

- Special note: not a word said respecting Abraham's sanctification, although his whole history, after leaving his own country, furnishes a remarkable example of a holy walk with Jehovah
- All that Paul brings into our view is Abraham's faith
- May the day come soon, before it is eternally too late, when multitudes of Jews (Gentiles also) will read this passage in faith, believing in their Messiah as their Savior