

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

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ROMANS 103 – 1

Remembering that Romans, Chapter 4 is closely connected with what Paul has just told you in Chapter 3:

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4:1)

That word “then” refers to what he just said in Chapter 3. In other words, *In light of what I just said, what is the situation with Abraham?*

Going back to Chapter 3, Verse 28, Paul draws the conclusion about the doctrine he has presented previous to that:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (Romans 3:28-30)

Verse 28 and 29 there are very important because those two verses indicate both a revelation about justification that is a “now time” revelation given to Paul about how all men, in every age, have been justified, and also about a tremendous dispensation change that has now taken place with Paul’s ministry. I asked you about Verse 29 on your exam, asking what that verse indicates with regard to the dispensational change.

“What important dispensational point is made concerning when the Body of Christ began by the leveling of Jew and Gentile in Romans 3:29?”

Do you see in that verse above: *[Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles?* In Time Past, Folks, he was *not* the God of the Gentiles. Now, because that middle wall of partition has been broken down, he *is* the

God of the Gentiles also. He could not have said Verse 29 if the Dispensation of Grace had not begun. That is an indication that when someone tries to tell you that the Dispensation of Grace did not begin until after Acts 28, that they are wrong. That when they tell you the book of Romans does not indicate there is a dispensational difference between the ministry of Christ and the twelve, and Paul - that also is not true. Under Christ's ministry and the twelve's ministry the middle wall of partition is up. *Now* it is broken down. So there is a dispensational change that has taken place. The Dispensation of Grace has been introduced. He also draws the conclusion that *all men* are justified by faith. Through the revelation given to Paul in the gospel of grace, we now understand that the issue in all men's justification has been faith. That is what Paul says in Verse 30. The issue has always been faith whether it has been "by faith," that is, that faith was the source of the action the people in Time Past executed (they had a work to perform but the work wasn't the issue). Their faith was the source of the work. Now, works are excluded and it is by the channel of faith as well as the source of faith. Both the instrument and the source today are faith.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. (Romans 3:31)

The purpose of the law was to create faith in people's hearts. You cannot have faith without God's Word. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) You have to have a message from God in order to have faith. There is no other way. The law was given so men would have faith, not so that men would go out and be saved by offering a sacrifice. There was no merit in the sacrifice. It was so that they could have faith and by faith come to God in God's way. These conclusions that he draws after setting forth God's remedy for sin in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ are "now time" conclusions that explain how men in all ages have been justified by the blood of Christ and the issue has always been faith. Paul was given the capstone of progressive revelation. Without Paul's revelation you would not understand how people in Time Past, in the prophetic program, were justified or on what basis. We now have that.

Paul says, based on that, what shall we say then about Abraham? What we've learned – that the deeds of the law will justify a man. What did Abraham learn about the flesh? **This is important.** Now Paul is going to do more than illustrate what he has already said.

There are two tremendous issues in Romans 4 about justification by faith that you must grasp. I want you to concentrate a bit on the issue of Abraham and what he learns about the flesh.

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4:1)

There are two ways to read that verse: You could say: What has Abraham our father according to the flesh (us Israelites) found?

Or you could say: What has Abraham our father found out about the flesh?

Either way you read it the end result is the same, which is that Abraham found out something about the flesh that is critical to what Paul is dealing with in this passage – justification by faith.

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. (Romans 4:2)

The “works” there are the works of the flesh – works that originate in the flesh. What he found out about the flesh is that if what you can generate in your own energy (what you can produce to please God) would give you something to boast about, but not before God. God will not accept the works of the flesh. Abraham learned that the works of his flesh (what he could produce in the energy of his flesh) was not acceptable to God. He could boast in it, but not to God because God did not accept it. **This is tremendously important** as it relates to all that follows.

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3)

Let's recall the story about Abraham for a minute and look at something he learned about what his flesh could do.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: (Genesis 12:1)

Notice the past tense, “had said.” He had said it previously.

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram [was] seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. (Genesis 12:2-4)

God made Abraham a promise and Hebrews 11 is very clear that when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, he did so by faith. He went by faith, responding to the promise of God who said he would make him a great nation and a blessing to people. In the next chapter God begins to define that covenant more clearly. Abraham has gone down into Egypt in Chapter 12, Verse 10 and come up out of Egypt in Chapter 13, Verse 1. In Verse 14, Lot, who had gone with him, has now left him:

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to **thy seed for ever**. (Genesis 13:14-15)

Abraham is going to have a “posterity” – a seed. They are going to inherit that land forever.

And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, [then] shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed [his] tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which [is] in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD. (Genesis 13:16-18)

So Abraham gets a promise about a seed. Remember you learned in Chapter 12 that he is 75 years old. That is kind of old to be thinking about having a child. In Chapter 16 Abraham is now 86 years old.

And Abram [was] fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16)

Fourscore is eighty. Eighty and six. So there is a ten year period between Chapter 12 and Chapter 16. In that period of time, Abraham has God's promise that he will have a child *and* that God was going to make Abraham the father of a great nation. Abraham began to worry about how this could happen especially as the years went by and he went childless for another ten years or so.

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I [am] thy shield, [and] thy exceeding great reward. (Genesis 15:1)

God tells Abraham not to worry because God was all in all – everything he would need.

And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus? (Genesis 15:2)

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD [came] unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (Genesis 15:3-5)

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

You need to get the idea of the psychology going on there. For ten years Abraham remembered the promise from God that he was going to have a son, but he was getting old and it had not happened because of the deadness of Sarah's womb. She too was past child-bearing age. So Abraham begins trying to figure out in his own mind what God meant. Perhaps God meant Eliezer would be his heir. But God said, "No," he, God, was going to give Abraham a child that would give Abraham posterity that he would not be able to count. Abraham bowed his head and simply believed God. He told Sarah, but nothing seemed to happen.

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name [was] Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong [be] upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. (Genesis 16:1-5)

The possible contention between Abraham and Sarah after ten years of waiting for a child to be born of them as God promised could be played out in several scenarios but the end result was that they took matters into their own hands when Sarah suggested Abraham take Hagar resulting in the birth of Ishmael. Sarah later admits it was “my wrong.” She found out it was not Abraham’s inability to father a child; it was hers. Hence she is despised in the eyes of Hagar.

The point here is that Abraham wants a seed. After going into Hagar he has a seed – a son – named Ishmael.

But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid [is] in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou [art] with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand [will be] against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. (Genesis 16:6-12)

Ishmael was to be the name of the boy born when Abraham was 86 years old.

Thirteen years later:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I [am] the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, (Genesis 17:1-3)

A long time (13 years) since Abraham had heard from the LORD.

As for me, behold, my covenant [is] with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but

thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. (Genesis 17:4-5)

The word Abram means *exalted father*. The word Abraham means *the father of a great multitude*.

And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:6-8)

God was promising Abraham eternal life – a seed that lives in a land forever. That is the basic promise, having to do with a seed. When God renewed that promise, he changed Abraham's name.

And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah [shall] her name [be]. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be [a mother] of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall [a child] be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. (Genesis 17:15-22)

What is taking place there is very important. Abraham was told that Ishmael was a product of his own doing; God didn't help Abraham have Ishmael. Abraham had the physical ability to produce that child. His body still had the capacity for procreation and he did it in his own strength, but God came and told him Ishmael was not the seed. God waited until Abraham was almost one-hundred years old and said to him, *Now that you can't have a child – now that you are no longer physically able to produce a child, it is time for you to have the child.* God would have to give

Abraham the ability to procreate - to do for him what he couldn't do for himself. If Abraham could have produced the child himself, he could brag about him.

Sarah also had to have it demonstrated to her that she could not have a child. So in Genesis 16 we see the demonstration of her problem. Her womb is dead. She was barren. It was not a virgin birth, but it was a miraculous birth. That is the reason Galatians 4 says that Isaac was born of God (born of the Spirit.)

Right in the middle of Genesis 17 God gives circumcision as a sign.

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This [is] my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. (Genesis 17:9-11)

Circumcision was a token. Romans 4:11 says it was a sign or a token of the covenant between God and Abraham. Circumcision is the cutting off of the flesh. It says *death* to the flesh. It means death to what the flesh can produce.

And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which [is] not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. (Genesis 17:12-14)

That wall of partition goes up here with the issue of circumcision as God tells Abraham he is going to have a great nation coming from him but they are going to be a different kind of people, not like everybody else. They will be a separated people, begotten of God. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born AGAIN." The nation of Israel was born the first time when God begat them physically, because God gave Abraham the capacity to beget Isaac. And circumcision was a sign that what Abraham's flesh could produce was to be cut off. (Ishmael)

Ishmael and Isaac are compared:

But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman [was] by promise. (Galatians 4:23)

Ishmael, born of Abraham and Hagar, was born after the flesh. Abraham learned there was no value in Ishmael being his descendant alone. The value was to be the child of the promise – what God promised. It was by promise that it might be of faith, not of works.

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. (Galatians 4:28)

We get our blessings today by faith, not by the works of the flesh.

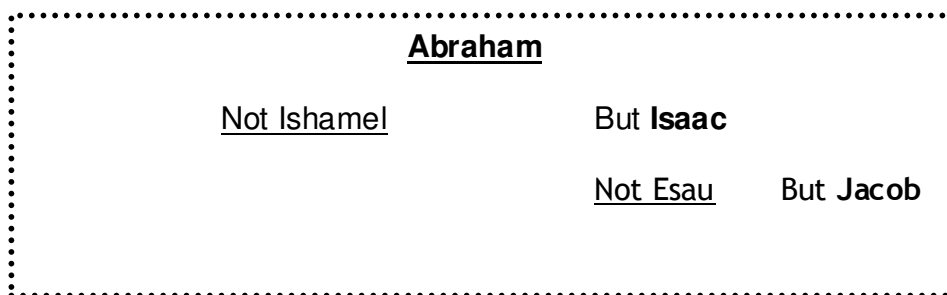
But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him [that was born] after the Spirit, even so [it is] now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (Galatians 4:29-30)

We are not children of the bondwoman, or children of the flesh. We are children of faith. So Abraham learned something about the works of the flesh and it was embodied in the circumcision.

And he [Abraham] 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: (Romans 4:11)

Circumcision was a sign that Abraham, in his flesh, could not produce anything that pleased God. That circumcision was a seal of a covenant of the difference that God was making with Israel. It was a symbol of the pure line of the people begotten of God. It was a token of the faith that begat them. But Israel took the token, the seal, and made it a status symbol. They made it something God never intended it to be.

The issue was being a son of promise. That is why we read: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.



Did you notice it said twelve tribes would come from Ishmael? It is not enough to be of the twelve tribes of Ishmael. The covenant with regard to Ishmael promised to make him a great nation also. Did you know that the Arabs today are the Ishmaelites? They still live in that land and are still arguing over that land. They claim Abraham as their father. There are 15 million Jews in the world, but 500 million Muslims. The Muslims feel in control because of their numbers. They don't understand why. Do you? Romans 11:12 says the "diminishing of them" is the riches of the Gentiles. Let's go back to Romans 4.

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4:1)

What did Abraham find out about his posterity? If Abraham were justified by the works of the flesh, (like having Ishmael):

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:2-3)

Abraham demonstrates that it is by *works of faith* not the *works of the flesh* that justification comes. Paul is going to build upon that issue later in the chapter to demonstrate how *all* men are justified, whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised, just like Abraham was. That is how Abraham is the "father of all them that believe."

What I want you to get from this lesson is that your flesh is not going to do anything that God will accept. Abraham learned that all the effort he put in to trying to help out God was not acceptable to God. Do what you do because God tells you to do it. That is "the works of faith."

The issue in circumcision you should get from this lesson is that, what God was saying and Abraham was announcing in his situation – that this nation was not produced by Abraham and Sarah, or Isaac or Jacob. It was produced as a result of faith in God. They are a nation with God near to them. God builds up that wall of circumcision that makes a difference between the nations operating in the works of their flesh and Abraham and his descendants who were to walk by faith in the word God gave them.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 2

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4:1)

We found out in the last lesson just what it was that Abraham found out about the flesh. We saw that Abraham sought to fulfill the promises of God in the energy of his own flesh and that God rejected his efforts. We saw that he learned God's attitude toward the works of his flesh. That was taught sort of as an aside to the issue in this passage, but it is a very important side issue. You need to understand that circumcision means death to what your flesh can produce, or "the works of the flesh," and that circumcision is a sign that "*we are a people produced by God.*"

Coming to Chapter 4 now, we need to pay attention to that word, "then." "What shall we say *then...*" Paul is going to add more details to the Gospel of God. In Chapter 3, Verse 21 and following, we have already seen the issue of God's remedy for sin through the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the satisfaction of the justice of God forever. The revelation given to Paul in Verse 25 and 26 is a two-fold declaration. In Verse 25 it declares his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God. That is, the revelation that we have now about all that was accomplished at Calvary explains and declares that men in time past were justified through the forbearance of God – God knowing that Calvary was going to come. He set up a means – a provision – for men to have their sins forgiven giving them right standing with him. Men by faith believe what God said about the provision his forbearance made to take care of their sins; God honored their faith and justified them knowing that Calvary was coming. Now we understand since the work has been accomplished (Verse 26) how he can now accomplish the justification. So we know how men in *time past* and men *now* are justified and we know the issue has always been faith.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:17)

That is a “now time” revelation. It is part of what you learn from the grace of God – that the issue has always been faith.

In Romans 3:29 he asks the question, *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.*

Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (Romans 3:30)

The message they believed might have been different in different times, but the issue has always been faith. Because of that, because of our present understanding about the details of what has been accomplished for us at the cross, Paul is going to continue in Chapter 4 to develop the details of the gospel of the grace of God that was committed to him.

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4:1)

Most of the time you hear Romans 4 taught as though Abraham was introduced into the issue here simply because he is an example of justification by faith. One after another of the commentaries on the shelf in my study tell you that Abraham and David are introduced because they are the two great figures in Israel. Abraham is the great example of justification by faith and that is why he is there in that verse. He is not *just* an example of that. There is far more to it than that. The people that do that only scratch the service because Abraham is not really a typical example of how God justifies people. The way you know that is to compare Romans 4:3 with James 2:21.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (James 2:21)

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: [Genesis 15] and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (James 2:22-24)

Who is the illustration of that? Abraham.

When people take Abraham as the typical example of how men in all ages have been justified by faith, someone will come by and ask about James 2. That is an example of how men have been justified *not* by faith only, but by faith plus works. That brings all kinds of confusion about James 2. If you want to hear some interesting theological gymnastics, get the ideas of the brethren that take James 2 from the different points of view – (each has his own theological hobby horse he is trying to promote) – and go through that passage. What a mess you'll be in, in a hurry. One of the interesting ones is in a Scofield Reference Bible. What Scofield said has nothing to do with what the bible says about it. The way to get around it is to believe what Paul says. Abraham is not a typical example of how God justifies people. If he is an example, then he is a confusing example. You know better than that! Romans 4 reveals something very unique about the manner of Abraham's justification that we need to understand because God did something in Abraham's justification knowing that the Body of Christ – the Dispensation of Grace – was coming. There is something special about the manner in which Abraham was justified that affects you and me in this Dispensation of Grace that explains why Paul introduces him in this record.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Galatians 3:8)

Because God knew he was going to justify *you*, he “preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed.” There is something that God did in regard to Abraham's justification that he did because he knew the Dispensation of Grace was coming. He did not reveal it but we can *now* look back and see that God had us in mind all along and made provision for us. Mr. Stam said it over and over again: when you study the rest of the bible in the light of Paul's revelation, you see that God had us in mind all along. He did keep it secret. He did not tell anyone about the Body of Christ or the Dispensation of Grace, but God knew about it and provided for us. Abraham therefore was justified in a special, unique manner, so that he could be a **dual father**.

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. [That's Romans 4:3 and Genesis 15:6.] Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:6-7)

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Verse 9)
Abraham had a **dual justification**: Romans 4 and James 2 sets forth each. People get really messed up about that because they do not understand the unique message committed to Paul.

[Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? (Romans 4:9a)

Now what did Romans 3:29 say?

[Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: (Romans 3:29)

[Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. (Romans 4:9)

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

Abraham was an uncircumcised Gentile when God justified him in Genesis 15 and he received the “sign” of circumcision – the seal of the righteousness of the faith that he had “yet being uncircumcised.” Why did God do that? Notice the purpose:

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**: (Romans 4:11)

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. (Verse 12)

Abraham has a dual fatherhood. He is the father of the circumcision but he can also be the father of the uncircumcision because there is a unique feature in his justification – the dual justification making him a dual father. That is why Paul, in Romans 4, brings up the issue of Abraham. Not because he is the example of how all men have been saved by faith. He *is* an example of how we are saved by faith and we will see that. You and I ought to be able to understand these special things

he did with Abraham in view of the fact God knew the Body of Christ and the Dispensation of Grace was coming.

I hope I can convey this to you in this lesson so that you come to the same enjoyment and understanding that came to me in my study. And men, in your ministry be sure you don't dangle something "special" before your people without telling them what is there.

There is something here that has to do with the prophetic program and the mystery program, and how God made provisions with Abraham's justification so that you and I in the Dispensation of Grace, could be included when he set the nation aside. Without this provision you could not "get in" and would never have eternal life. God "foreseeing" that we would be coming along, did what he did.

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. (Romans 4:1-2)

We talked about that last week. If Abraham were justified by the works of his flesh, he could then say, *Oh, look at my boy and what he is doing!* But God would say he was not interested in that.

For what saith the scripture? [*What does God say?*] **Abraham believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3)

Hold your place and look down at Verse 21:

Who against hope believed in hope, [*It looked impossible but he believed in it anyway*] that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. (Romans 4:18) [*That's Genesis 15:5*] [*The quote in Verse 3 was from Genesis 15:6*]

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: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (19-20) And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (21)

Verse 21 tells you what it means to believe God. Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised he was also able to perform. That is a good

definition of what it is to believe. You take God at his word and are fully persuaded God is going to do what he said he is going to do . . . an excellent definition of faith.

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

Those two verses are great verses to show the difference between faith and works. If you work, the reward is reckoned not of grace but of debt (you owed it.) But to him that worketh not, but **believeth** on him . . . do you see how those are put in juxtaposition to what another? Not working – but believing. They are opposites: works and grace are exact opposites.

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, (Romans 4:16)

GRACE and FAITH go together. “By grace are ye saved, through faith.” But grace and works do not; and works and faith are opposites of one another. There is something you need to notice about Verse 5 and Verse 16: if faith is a work, as some of the theologians say, then Verse 5 and Verse 16 don’t mean anything. A work does not produce grace. Verse 4 says that if you work it is not grace. If it is faith so it can be grace, then faith can’t be a work because a work can’t produce grace. Faith is a non-meritorious system of perception. There are three ways to know (to perceive) things:

1. Empiricism (I can feel it or touch it, or sense it; demonstrable)
2. Rationalism (I can figure it out with my brain)
3. Faith (Believing what I’m told)

There is no merit in faith. The value is in who you believe not in what you are doing. The worthiness of your faith is in the object of your faith.

Therefore, Verses 4,5 and 16 are proof texts you need to know about as they demonstrate in the bible that faith is not a work. People will tell you that when you tell a man to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that you are telling him to work for his salvation. That is just theological “gas!” Open the window and let it out!

Verses 1, 2 and 3 are talking about Abraham; and Verses 4 and 5 are also talking about Abraham. They are written in relationship to Abraham and they explain why it is that Paul brings up the manner of Abraham's justification at this point.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. (Romans 4:4)

In Verse 3, did Abraham work? No. Then what was the manner of his justification in Verse 3? Works or Grace? Abraham was justified by hearing a message from God that required no works. – a message of grace. He believed that message of grace and it was counted to him for righteousness. Abraham's justification is very similar in its mechanics to your justification and that is why Paul brings it up in this passage.

Verses 4 and 5 refer to Abraham because he was justified by hearing a message of grace. Abraham's justification in Genesis 15 is very much like your justification is explained to be in Romans Chapter 3. He is an example of our justification by faith – not of everybody's, but of ours.

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3)

Now that is a reference to Genesis 15. You have to understand what is going on back there. Abraham is called out of Ur of the Chaldees in Genesis 12. God made the covenant with him in Chapter 12 and again in Chapter 13, 15 and 17, and again in Chapter 22. When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees he left by faith.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. (Hebrews 11:8)

Did Abraham leave by faith in Genesis 12? Sure he did. Then was he justified by faith? Did God wait until Genesis 15 to impute righteousness to him? There is something about Romans 4:3 that no one ever talks about. They say, *Abraham was saved by faith without works.* Are they trying to tell me that Abraham does not get justified until Genesis 15 after God called the man out and the man obeyed by faith, and God made a covenant with him, confirmed that covenant and re-established it, and he is still an unjustified, hell-bound sinner? What kind of a God do

you think we worship? Certainly Abraham was justified by faith when he obeyed God. But it is not revealed in the record of God's word until Genesis 15:6. Question: Why? What does Genesis 15 have to do with the Body of Christ? There *is* something special there and it has to do with you. There are at least **two** fantastic **reasons** why God waited until this point to explain in the record that Abraham was really justified by grace through faith, like all men have been.

Abraham heard a message to go out into a land that he is to inherit and he *obeyed*. He left. He got up and left. That is working. Was Abraham our father justified by faith alone? By faith and works, he got up and left. Genesis 12 is therefore not an illustration of how *you* get justified. That is an illustration of how James 2 works but not how you work.

In Genesis 13 God tells Abraham to get up and walk in the land and Abraham got up and walked around that land.

But in Genesis 15, all of a sudden Abraham is given a message that does not tell him to do anything. He came to the end of himself, saying, *Lord, I'm childless. Who will my heir be? I can't do it myself.* That is when God said he would do it for him and Abraham believed what God told him. This is the place where Abraham heard a message of grace, with no works involved in it. He believed what God said. He heard the message, he believed what God said and God counted that to him for righteousness. That is why Paul says what he does in Verses 4 and 5 in our passage. Abraham's justification was very similar to ours. He had faith in a message of grace which makes his justification quite unique among people in the bible. There is a whole period of the law – the law is added to the promise given to Israel – and the Gentiles are without that promise. Paul skips over that period of the law and goes right back to the example in Genesis 15 of Abraham's justification by faith. That is unique in that it fits Abraham and it fits us.

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, (Romans 4:16)

There is no salvation for anyone outside of Abraham!

(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. 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. 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: (Romans 4:17-19) And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; **But for us also**, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (Romans 4:22-24)

You see, Abraham's justification was very similar to ours and because of that, he has a dual fatherhood. He can be a father not only to those who are of the law but to those who are not of the law. He can be a father not only to the "circumcision" but to the "uncircumcision" because his justification takes place in Genesis 15 on a message of grace, with no works, as Verses 10 and 11 demonstrate.

A minute ago I said there is no salvation outside of Abraham. There was a *promise* made to Abraham *and to his seed* that you and I get in on because he is our father too. That is why it is important that we have Abraham as our father. It is that this promise was made to Abraham and the only way to get a part of that promise is to be one of the seed of Abraham.

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. 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 if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. 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**, (Romans 4:12-16)

There were a lot of promises made to Abraham, but there is one central promise that has to do with him being the heir of the world. An heir inherits something. The only way that Abraham will be able to inherit the world, and the only way *his seed* will be able to inherit the world . . . is not Abraham and most of his seed dead? Have they received the promises? Will they? How? What has to

happen to Abraham before he can receive the promise? He must be resurrected. The inheritance comes through the possession of “everlasting life.” The one, central issue in the promise made to Abraham was the promise of **eternal life**. Abraham understood that. For a gentile to inherit eternal life he had to become one of the seed of Abraham. They are the people who are going to inherit eternal life. Where is the seed of Abraham today? The physical seed has been “set aside.” Therefore you would be in a mess if there were no way to be a seed of Abraham except through his fleshly descendants, wouldn't you? So God justified Abraham in a unique and special manner while he was in uncircumcision that he might include a lot of uncircumcised people in the seed who were justified by hearing a message of grace and believing it just like Abraham did. Paul is trying to explain to you that God has a special thing going on in our justification and God even had it planned out with Abraham. Paul talks about that hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie, promised before the world began. Foreseeing that we were coming in the Body of Christ, God justifies Abraham in a special and unique manner to make it possible for us to have what we have; for it to be possible for Abraham to be a dual father, thereby bringing to pass God's purpose.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

Now there were a lot of promises made but there is only one central promise.

Look at this:

For if the inheritance [be] of the law, [it is] no more of promise: but God gave [it] to Abraham by promise. (Galatians 3:18)

That is the issue of the inheritance there.

[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (Galatians 3:21)

The giving of “eternal life” is the central promise in everything given to Abraham and to his seed. When he says in Verse 9, “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” the thing they are blessed with is the promise of

eternal life. To be blessed with faithful Abraham is to get in on that promise of eternal life given to Abraham and to his seed.

Not only does Paul introduce Genesis 15 into the record because that is the place where Abraham believes a message of grace and it is imputed to him for righteousness, but Genesis 15 is also the place where Abraham's justification is revealed because it is the place where Abraham believes in the God who is able to give life to the dead. Hebrews 11 says, *Though he were as good as dead, yet he believed God.* That is the issue in Genesis 15 – eternal life.

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I [am] thy shield, [and] thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD [came] unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:1-6)

So the issue there is faith – with no works. He gave him a message about his seed and Abraham just believed what God said.

And he said unto him, I [am] the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? (Genesis 15:7-8)

Abraham asked for confirmation of the promise that he was to inherit the land. And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. (Genesis 15:9-12)

Abraham went to sleep. God made the covenant and Abram had no part in it because he was asleep. It was grace, folks.

And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites [is] not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: (Genesis 15:12-18)

And he goes on to describe the perimeters of the land. That covenant that God made with Abraham was given to confirm the promise to inherit the land. But notice: (1) his seed would not get the land for at least 400 years and (2) Abraham was going to die. (Verse 15) There is something real basic in what is going on there. If I am going to give you the land – and to your seed - but your seed isn't going to get there for 400 years, there is a whole bunch of seed that will die before anyone gets there. That means you will have to be resurrected. The only way for the promise to be fulfilled is that God is saying to Abraham that he is going to resurrect him and his people and is going to give them life – everlasting life. They were to get that land “forever.” We find the same thing in Chapter 17.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:7-8)

Abraham and his seed must be resurrected into the land forever. Everlasting life is basic. Without it there will be no inheritance for Abraham and he understands that. He had an advanced understanding of the resurrection.

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, [here] I [am]. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son] Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young

men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. (Genesis 22:1-5)

Abraham knew that if he obeyed God and killed his son that God would raise him up, because Isaac was the seed. That was the promise and he had God's word on it.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [son], Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (Hebrews 11:17-19)

Abraham understood the issue of resurrection and eternal life being basic to the promise. For a Gentile to have had eternal life he had to become the seed of Abraham because the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed. In Prophecy that Gentile became one of the seed of Abraham by becoming a proselyte; by receiving the blessing from Israel. Do you know what the blessing is? Eternal life – the kingdom is eternal life. That is why in Luke 18 the kingdom is equated with being eternal life and eternal life is equated with going into the kingdom. (Luke 18:30) They understood that possessing that land meant eternal – everlasting life.

But now, Israel has been set aside. Yet God is still able to make Abraham the father of the uncircumcision. God knew about the Mystery program. He knew it was coming, so he justified Abraham in a special manner while he was in uncircumcision, so that we could be children of the promise also. So, Romans 4 points to Genesis 15 for two reasons:

1. That is where Abraham believed a message of grace – about his seed. He heard the message; he believed it and it was counted unto him for righteousness. That is where Abraham's justification parallels and exemplifies ours. But more than that,
2. It is where he believed in a God who could give eternal life. That is the promise we get in on. Abraham did it while he was in uncircumcision.

God did all that because he could foresee the Dispensation of Grace and our need to be in the promise.

That is what Paul meant when he said in Romans 3:21, “BUT NOW the righteousness of God without the law is manifest being *witnessed* by the law and the prophets.” It was not revealed in them, but we can look back there and see that the provisions have been made with our inclusion in mind.

If you will get the understanding of what is going on in Romans 4 on the basis of what we have gone over in this lesson, it will save you from a lot of heartache and misunderstanding with the extremes in dispensationalism (either the Acts 28 position or the “covenant” position – that we are prophetic Israel), and it will help you with Galatians 3 – where it says:

And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

Now you know what the promise is and how you become a Mystery Program heir because of the special provision God made in Abraham to include us.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 3

Notice that the conclusion in Romans 3:28 is based on the details of the gospel of grace that Paul had given in Verses 21 through 27. Then he asks:

[Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: (Romans 3:29)

There has been a tremendous dispensational change take place in God's dealings with men. The middle wall of partition has been broken down and now God is the God of the Gentiles on an equal basis with the God of the Jews. That could not be said in Time Past, But NOW (Verse 21) it can be said. The "now time" revelation given through Paul is that the status of the world before God has been changed and now he is God of both the Jews and the Gentiles equally,

Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (Romans 3:30)

One thing the gospel of grace does is explain to us that the messages that men heard in Time Past were not always the same, but the issue was always the same – faith – approaching God in his prescribed way. That has *always* been the issue. The messages differed but the gospel of the grace of God declares to us that this issue before God was always the same – faith. In Chapter 4 Paul will begin with Abraham to demonstrate to the Jew that faith has always been the issue.

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:1-5)

Abraham demonstrates that justification has always been on the basis of faith. We can appreciate Abraham's justification now, especially in view of Paul's presentation back in Chapter 3 of what justification really is.

Paul continues in this Chapter to point out some very special things about Abraham's justification that affects us today. In Verse 10 he asks,

How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. (Romans 4:10)

Paul begins to talk about the *manner* of Abraham's justification. That manner demonstrates how Abraham could be our father (the uncircumcised) as well as the father of the circumcised; how he could be a father to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; how the Gentiles can be included in the promise made to Abraham – that of eternal life. If you want eternal life, you have to get it under the promise made to Abraham because it was promised to Abraham. Before the foundation of the world God promised *us* eternal life. How do we get in on it? God made the promise to Abraham in a very special manner that allows for our inclusion: Abraham being justified while he was still in uncircumcision, so that he could be the father of the uncircumcision as well as the father of the circumcision. That begins in Verse 9. But first you have Verses 6, 7 and 8 to go through.

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

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord **will not impute sin**. (Romans 4:6-8)

Why would Paul bring up David in that passage? David is certainly not an example of righteousness imputed without works – *except* as you understand the gospel of the grace of God. David lived under the law and was required by God under that law to perform certain activities to gain righteousness and to have a right standing before God. The Law says, "They that do them shall live in them. This is your righteousness, that ye do these things." How is it then, that David, living under the law, could be an example or a man to whom God imputes righteousness without works? That seems like a contradiction but it is not if you have understood what he said in Chapter 3.

Again, Paul is building. He is building blocks, laying one foundation then another, and another. He is adding details now about the gospel of grace he has been proclaiming as revealed to him. These details that we have already learned in Chapter 3:25 – how God has declared his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the *forbearance* of God – we understand. The Gospel of Grace explains to us how through the provision that God made in Time Past, (to pass over sin by his forbearance – to cover over, atone for sin, until the cross came) when a man put his faith in the provision that God made for him, he could be forgiven of his sins through faith. His faith in the provision was the issue. Faith does not make void the law, but the law establishes faith. The law was given – not to justify the man because works were not going to do it, the cross was going to do that – but the law is given to give man a message to believe so that he would be able to have faith. The law was given in essence to establish faith, to create faith, to give a man something to believe; a message to believe and God honors the man's faith. We are now able to understand that. I trust you do.

What Paul is doing here is to pick out David because he has a quotation from David. But he is not focusing on David as an example of justification by faith without works. Notice:

Even as David also describeth **the blessedness of the man**, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, (Romans 4:6)

David did not understand how it came about; he did not understand the Gospel of Grace, but he did know something about the joy of the forgiveness of sins. That word, "blessedness" means "happy." Come back to Genesis 30 and let me show you how to do something. If you think your bible is has hard to understand, "archaic" words, etc., do you know that one of the easiest ways to find out what a words means is to look for another verse that defines it? I have a list in my bible of two or three pages where over the years I have written down words that are defined for you in verses.

The word "let" for example, when it is used to mean "hinder" is defined for you in three verses in the bible that define the word in that way so that you cannot misunderstand what it means. If you read your bible rather than commentaries or

critiques and just keep reading, someday you will have answers to your questions. There are about 30 things written down in the back of my bible I am still waiting for answers to, but I know there is a verse in that book somewhere that will help my understanding someday. This is "believing bible study." Come to that book in prayer, asking that GOD show you and don't worry about commentaries. Here is an example for the word "blessedness."

And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher. (Genesis 30:13)

And the name Asher means *happy*. Here Leah says, "Happy am I, for the daughters will call me *happy*. The word "blessed" is the same as you read in Matthew 5 – *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. So the word "blessed" means happy. You can figure out what a word means if you want to. I realize you already knew what that word meant, but that is an example of how to define any word by finding other verses in the bible.

What does the word "gospel" mean? Good News. How do you know that?

The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to **preach the gospel** to the poor; (Luke 4:18a)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to **preach good tidings** unto the meek; (Isaiah 61:1a)

The expression "good news" is not found in the bible. However it is a modern way of saying "glad tidings." While you are reading the bible *think that way* and it will help you as you go along. When you think *constructively* you can learn from what it is there in the bible.

Back to Romans 4 - where we find David talking about the joy, the happiness of a man who has his sins forgiven. David did not know about the cross and the finished work of Christ, but he does know his sins are forgiven. He does not understand why, but he knows they are forgiven because Nathan told him. So he said in Psalms 32:1,2 as Paul quoted it in Romans:

[Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [Iniquity] (Romans 4:7-8)

If you go back to Psalms 32, you will see that David is not really saying everything Paul explains him to be saying. That is because Paul has now explained to us things that David did not understand.

Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile. (Psalms 32:1-2)

Now where did David learn that God had forgiven him his sins? He learned that from Nathan in 2 Samuel 12, when Nathan came in and said, “Thou art the man.” Do you remember that? The sin was the sin David had committed with Bathsheba, etc, adultery. God’s prophet came in and dealt with him. David replied, *I have sinned* and he repented. (The repentance of a man of God) Nathan told David that God had not held his sin against him and had forgiven him, but that he would still have to pay the price for his sin. So he was joyful about that. Look at what he did in verse 3:

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. (Psalms 32:3-6)

David lived under the law and under the law they had a “short account system.” When you sinned under that system, you had to immediately go and get forgiveness by confessing your sin and bring the proper sacrifice. They had to keep “short accounts” with God. They had to maintain a constant, daily fellowship with God through their many sin offerings because they had no conscious knowledge of total forgiveness for their sins. Their “short account system” kept them in fellowship with God and that is what David was dealing with here in Psalms 32 – the daily maintenance of the covenant relationship he had with God.

Paul uses that in Romans 4 to describe the issue of *total* forgiveness.

Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [Iniquity] (Romans 4:7-8)

God will not write the sin down to your account. In David's case it was a particular sin, but Paul is using this to describe the blessedness of people who understand the Gospel of Grace; people who understand that God imputes righteousness to us without works. He tells us that David talked about the joy, the thrill, of not having God impute sin to your account.

To impute something is to write it down, to charge it to your account. Paul said God will not write your sin down. When God imputes righteousness to your account – look at verse six:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, (Romans 4:6)

And,

Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (Romans 4:7)

Blessed [is] the man to whom **the Lord will not impute sin**. (Romans 4:8)

Imputing righteousness in the passage is equal to not imputing sin. When God imputes righteousness to your account, he not only erases all your sins but he writes righteousness to your account. When God writes "Righteous" across your account, then there is no way to come along and write sin down. Sometimes I say it this way, "he picks up the board and throws it away." God is not up in heaven writing down every sin you commit. The short account system is over with. That was worked under the law principle, but we work under grace where we have absolute, total forgiveness which means that God forgave the past, the present and the future sins with equal effectiveness. And we know about it. David did not know about it.

It is important that you understand that the issue of total forgiveness is a basic truth of grace. You are not properly oriented to the grace of God and to the Gospel of the grace of God until you understand this issue of absolute, total forgiveness, and the fact that we do not work under a "short account system" as they did under the law. I realize a lot of people don't believe that but it is because they work under the principle of the law. You have to be properly oriented to grace in order to function as a believer. Paul is dealing in Romans 4 with grace. What is grace? It is "all that God

is free to do for us because of Calvary.” Imputing righteousness is equal to not imputing sin. If all I am imputing is “rightness” then I can’t come along and impute “wrongness.”

The two principles of Grace and Law and how they work, you need to grasp. We will spend some time talking about the difference between how each works.

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (Romans 6:14)

Why does the verse say that sin shall not have dominion over you? **“For ye are not under the law, but under grace.”** You will never have victory over the dominion of sin until you are properly oriented to the assets you have under grace. Those two principles of law and grace are opposites.

The law principle is what we call, the “If then,” principle. IF you do this, then I will do that. IF this happens then that will happen. The law says if you perform this, you will get a blessing. If you don’t do that you get a curse. It is a performance system.

On the other hand, grace says – here, and hands you the blessing. Grace is all that God is free to do for you through the cross. Grace gives you a blessing freely. Turn to Galatians 5 where we will see why this is important to understand.

[This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Galatians 5:18)

If you walk in the Spirit, if you are led of the Spirit, you are not under the law. The old sin nature works on the basis of the law. Your old sin nature works on the basis of reactionary legalism. It works on the basis of developing a lifestyle that seeks to resist God’s efforts to show us that we are sinners and to manifest his love and his grace to us through Christ and Christ alone. The old sin nature works on the basis of performing, working, doing. If you walk in the flesh, you are going to work under the law principle. If you walk in the Spirit you walk under the grace principle. Walking and being led by the Spirit does not have anything to do with the Spirit of God taking control of you and leading you by the hand. Being led by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit means that you walk in line with what he says he is doing today.

When you are filled with and walk under the principles of grace, then you are walking by the Spirit. If you walk under the principles of the law – the “if, then” principle, - then you are walking in the flesh.

The law is a performance/fear syndrome. If you perform you get the blessing; if you don't perform, I'm going to curse you. That system uses fear as motivation and the result of that is a guilt complex when you fail.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth [is] mine: (Exodus 19:5)

Notice the *IF* and *THEN* principle. The issue in this passage is keeping the law. The law says, *perform and I'll bless you*. They said they would do all that the Lord tells them. They found out they could not perform. Notice in the next passage that the motivation is fear.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, **that ye sin not**. (Exodus 20:19-20)

Fear of punishment was to motivate them to perform and get the blessing. Fear of what would happen to them if they did not perform was to be their motivation to perform. If you do not do what is required to get the blessing, you would get the curse. Fear of the curse is designed for motivation.

[Specially] the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn **to fear me all the days** that they shall live upon the earth, and [that] they may teach their children. (Deuteronomy 4:10)

And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to **fear the LORD** our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as [it is] at this day. (Deuteronomy 6:24)

And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to **fear the LORD thy God**, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, (Deuteronomy 10:12)

When we fear punishment there is an emotional reaction. In other words, punishment creates an emotion and that is fear – shame and hostility. When a man violates the commandment he expects to be punished by God. He begins to have feelings of shame and rejection, reproach and low self-esteem. He feels worthless because he failed to measure up. If he becomes ill he thinks God has punished him with bad health. Personal tragedies bring out feelings of failure and fear of punishment. Fear of rejection – the silent treatment from God. They may have been told they are temporarily out of fellowship with God. That doctrine is legalism. It is the “short account system” of the law and is what brings out shame.

Legalism produces psychological guilt which is a subjective feeling of fear, shame and rejection. Those are sinful emotions that are authored by the old sin nature and do not promote repentance. They promote reversionism, the opposite of repentance which would be to get the thing right. When you put yourself under that performance system of the law, (performing to get a blessing), that will produce a false guilt, a guilt complex that makes you fearful and worthless.

Under the Mosaic Law there was a “short account system” set up to take care of that guilt. They had to confess their sin and offer the prescribed sacrifice and God forgave them. In Psalms 32 David is describing the same situation found in Psalms 51:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden [part] thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice. (Psalms 51:5-8)

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. (Psalms 51:9)

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: [and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. (Psalms 51:14)

That fellow says that the guilt he had under that law was like the breaking of bones; it was like “bloodguiltiness.” You talk about shame and rejection! Talk about misery! That guy had it. That is what the law is designed to do. It produces that kind of guilt; the subjective inner feelings of fear, shame and rejection. Their “short

account system” was designed to take care of that. It was the way to get the victory over it. They had a way to have their sin problem taken care of. It took care of that psychological guilt created by the law principle. They confessed their sins, acknowledging them before God, and brought the appropriate sacrifice and God said they were then forgiven. David said it was blessedness and joy to come out of that black hole and be established on the Rock.

Under the grace principle there is no “short account system” because there is no law principle. God is doing something entirely different. What is the grace principle? What does Romans 3:24 say?

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Romans 3:24)

Grace has given it to you *freely*. In Chapter 5 he talks about the *gift* of grace, the *gift* of righteousness. The Grace principle is freely handing you the blessing. Now what is the blessing in this context? Chapter 4:7 and 8:

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

That is a Grace – not performance; not the law and fear program. The motivation is love.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (Ephesians 1:3)

ALL spiritual blessings IN Christ Jesus. We have an absolute, perfect standing in Christ.

And ye are complete **in him**, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:10)

In Christ we have a perfect position by God’s grace. Now what about your walk, your daily life?

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

It is **by faith** we have access into grace. In our lives day in and day out we are to recognize the merits of the finished work of Christ – to realize what that means.

We are then by faith to appropriate those things because they belong to us. We are to see all that Christ has done through Calvary. We are to realize that all Christ did there “is mine.” You discover in the Word of God all that he has done for you in Christ and then, by faith, you say, “that’s mine! It is mine because I am *in* Christ Jesus.” Paul says in Ephesians 6:10, “be strong in the Lord.” He is not saying to let the Lord strengthen you. He is saying to be strong in the position you already have in Christ. Take your stand where God put you – in Christ. If something comes along and tries to make you feel rejection and punishment, you say: *Lord, I have been made the righteousness of God in HIM.* Eph. 1:6 – *I’ve been made “accepted in the beloved.” In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;* (Ephesians 1:7) Do you see the grace principle there – that everything is given to me *in Christ*?

The motivation of the grace principle is love. It is gratitude. God gave it all to us. The motivation for service is our gratitude to God. Do you remember what Romans 12:1-2 says?

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Here’s another great passage!

That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. (Titus 3:7-8)

Paul said, *Titus, teach these things about God’s grace; explain to them and exhort them about God’s grace all the time.* Why? “that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” That is **grace motivation**.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; (2 Corinthians 5:14a)

He doesn’t say, “MY love for Christ makes me serve him.” It is Christ – HIS love for me. When I see all that Christ has done for me at Calvary and see the

marvelous, manifold riches of his grace, it is what causes my heart to respond in gratitude. Grace motivation is the motivation of love, of gratitude.

What do we do when we sin? Instead of producing a false or psychological guilt, grace produces real guilt. What does that mean?

Sometimes people get the idea that the issue of total forgiveness means that sin doesn't matter. God did not save you just to let you go live any way you want to live. You were living that way before God saved you. He could have left you in the condition of a lost, hell-bound sinner. God saved you by his grace – not by your works. But that does not mean that works and your life do not matter. God set you free so you could then serve him. You could not do that before you were saved.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only [use] not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, **but by love** serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)

Love is the motivation of grace – not the fear motivation of the performance system of the law, but “by love” – by grace motivation – “serve one another.” The only way to serve God effectively today is on the basis of his grace, motivated by your gratitude.

Total forgiveness does not mean that your sins do not have an effect. Sin does a lot of things in your life. Sin interferes with your best personal adjustment. It interferes with your ability to function properly as a member of the body of Christ and it will cause you to be unhappy personally. You will lose your joy. It damages the lives of other people, especially those that are closest to you. It messes up your testimony and your effectiveness as an ambassador for Christ is weakened. Other people will look at you and say, *If that is a Christian count me out.* That is why personal holiness is so important rather than self indulgence. It will cause you to lose rewards that you could have received at the judgment seat of Christ. The ultimate natural consequence of sin in our lives is physical death. So sin does have an effect. You can hasten your physical death by constant intemperance in sin because it tears down and the natural consequences of sin come into play.

However, when we sin as believers under grace, the Holy Spirit seeks to bring us, not under a system of condemnation, but to bring us under a system of discipline and conviction. God, the Holy Spirit uses his Word to bring us to discipline and conviction about what we are doing so that we will think soberly about what we are doing, God knowing that if we ever think soberly about who we are in Christ, we will once again be motivated to act like it. He knows that if we can be brought back to sound reasoning and thinking, recovering ourselves from the snare of the devil, we will realize who we really are in Christ. We aren't that old dead sinner in Adam but a live saint in Christ. Those assets can motivate us to serve him.

There are three methods of conviction:

1. **Direct intervention** – of the Holy Spirit by the use of the Word of God. Doctrine stored up in your soul. 1 Thes. 2:13; Phil. 2:13 Brings conviction. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

There has never been a man that believed that drinking liquor was right. There has never been a man or a woman that believed that looking at pornography, lying, cussing or cheating on their income tax that ever thought that was right. That isn't what that verse is talking about. Men know – they have that law written in their hearts – “their conscience bearing them witness, either accusing or excusing them.” That is why you need that Word of God stored up in your soul – so the Holy Spirit can draw upon it. That is direct intervention: the Holy Spirit takes that Word and applies it, bringing you under conviction.

2. **Indirect intervention** - the Word of God being ministered to you through the confrontation of other believers.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (Colossians 1:28)

We come with the Word of God and admonish them. We say, *Look, I'm warning you that the course of conduct you are following is going to bring you unhappiness and ruin*, and we take to them the Word of God and rebuke them. We are rebuked by that Word. The Word is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit taking that

other believer who through care and love of our soul, and performance of his responsibility to other members of the Body of Christ, takes the Word and ministers it to us, and then that Word brings conviction. If ignore all of that, there is then a third one:

3. **The natural consequences of sin** – You will reap what you sow, folks.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7-8)

He wrote that to saved people. If you refuse the direct and indirect intervention of the Word of the Holy Spirit by the use of God's word, the consequences of sin will come to bear. Those things tend to discipline us, to bring conviction; they make us think again about who we are in Christ. Once you begin to focus on who you are in Christ, then the love of Christ motivates you to serve him. That is "grace motivation."

All of that kind of thing does this:

<u>GRACE</u> (God's grace – Love – In Christ)	<u>LAW</u> (If - then) (Performance – Fear - Guilt)
Godly Fear – Reverential Respect (Eph. 5:21)	Fear of Punishment
Godly Confidence (by his faith)	Rejection by God
Godly Sorrow over sin	Shame, Reproach, False Guilt

Under the law there is punishment and fear of punishment. Sin came between the sinner and God and prayer went unanswered. If a man wanted to be well, there were seven things to do to get healed.

Under grace, rather than fear of being punished there is a godly fear. Hebrews 12:8 speaks of "reverence and godly fear." The people being spoken to in this verse are no longer under the law and now have reverential respect. Eph. 5:21: "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." That is that godly fear, the reverential respect for God and all that he has done for you.

Godly confidence says that *I know I can come boldly before the throne of grace because of the faith of him.* Not my faith, but his.

Under grace I can look at my sin and have true, open, factual accounting of it and say, "That's wrong." My godly sorrow does not debilitate me; it does not keep me from moving on. It reminds me to put off the old man and put on the new man, focusing on a future of correct behavior. I can set things right and get on with my life.

False guilt comes from subject feelings that destroy you. This is dominion.

Real guilt (under grace) is objective facts (looking at things like they really are) and dealing with them in the light of who you are in Christ and moving on. That is liberty.

So you need to understand that the issue of total forgiveness affects the very basic things you do day in and day out. Live under grace as the new man you are – in Christ. And rejoice in that. Reap the benefits of grace living by walking worthy, motivated by God's love.

When people criticize you because you talk about doctrine, they do not understand the doctrine of grace. When you extol the riches of God's grace, it produces gratitude and that produces grace living.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 4

There is one issue in this passage that we have yet to study and we are taking a little excursion off the main thought that Paul has here in Romans 4, because there are two important issues that are dealt with in Verses 6-8 that necessarily affect, doctrinally and categorically, the thoughts that he expresses in Romans 4.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4:6-8)

We talked last week about the fact that Paul brings up David in Verse 6 after having described Abraham's justification by faith alone in Verses 1-4 where he does not work but just believes. Then he says,

... his faith is counted to him for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. (Romans 4:5b, 6)

The question arises: why did Paul bring up David and say what he does about him in Verse 6? David describes the joy and the happiness of a man to whom God imputes righteousness without works; he quotes Psalm 32. How is it that David can be an example of a man to whom God imputes righteousness without works when David didn't know all about that. David is not an example of righteousness imputed without works in the Old Testament. He lived under the Law, under a works program. How is it that he can be that example? The reason is that is not the issue. It is the blessedness that he is describing.

But David was a man to whom God imputed righteousness on the basis of faith. We understand that, though, as we understand what was going on in Chapter 3.

A lot of people come into Romans 4 without going through Romans 3:21-31. They do not understand the basic issues of the Gospel of Grace. They don't

understand how the Grace Gospel explains the issues of justification in Time Past. Therefore, they come into Chapter 4 and say, “Well, see? Those people back there were justified just like we are in every way, and that they knew they were justified like we are.”

Those people in Time Past did not receive a message from God that excluded works. The message that David got from God included works. That Old Testament Jew never disassociated works from his acceptance with God, but we now understand and we can now see how that faith has always been the issue with God. Not the works, but faith. The Gospel of Grace committed to Paul in Chapter 3 establishes faith. We can see how faith worked under the Law in Time Past, and we can see also that it is exclusively the issue today. You have to get Chapter 3 and what Paul says about the Gospel of Grace.

Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: (Romans 3:25-26)

There is a two-fold declaration in the Gospel of Grace committed to Paul:

1. He declares his righteousness for sins that are past through the forbearance of God. God forgave all those sins in Time Past on the basis of his forbearance.
2. He also declares the “Now Time” situation - how he is now just and the justifier of them that believeth in Jesus.

What you have there in Chapter 3, Verse 25, is the explanation of how God, in Time Past, could remit their sins. He could pass over their sins knowing that Christ was coming. He set up a system of forbearance, and those who approach God in faith - in his way - rely on the provision that he made for the remission of their sins. Those people were justified. We now know they were justified, but *they* did not understand that. We now know that it was legitimate for God to impute his righteousness to them because he knew the cross was coming, and he knew what was going to be accomplished. Those people did not have that information. They had a different system.

David describes the joy that a man has when his iniquities are forgiven, when he knows that God will not impute sin to him. That's the issue of absolute, total forgiveness. (We talked about that last time.) The basic truth of Grace is that Christ has done everything for us and that there is absolute, complete, total forgiveness. Folks, I entered into a little excursion about that issue because you have to be properly oriented to Grace in all of its ramifications. We are going to get more involved in it as we go through Romans. We work under the principle of Grace, not under the Law principle.

Walking in the spirit is not having God the Holy Spirit come down and take control, and give me a good shake and tickle my spine and make me shout, "Glory to God! Hallelujah!" and all that kind of stuff. That isn't walking in the spirit. Walking in the spirit is walking under the principle of Grace. Walking in the flesh is to walk under the principle of the Law. When you walk under the principle of the Law, you are in the flesh. I don't care how good you feel. When you walk under the principle of Grace, you are walking in the spirit.

You can objectively identify in your life where you are on the basis of how the doctrine of Grace operates, be oriented to it and walk in it. That is walking by the leadership of God the Holy Spirit. When you walk under the Law principle, if you do this, you get that. Do this and get the blessing. When you walk under those things, folks, you are not walking in the spirit; you are walking in the flesh, and if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law (Galatians 5:18). When you walk in the Spirit, you walk under the Grace principle. That's why Paul says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under the Law but under Grace." (Romans 6:14) That's important. David describes the joy and happiness that can be yours and mine as we function under Grace.

There are two issues in Verses 6 and 7 that you want to know: 1) the issue of total forgiveness functioning under Grace, and 2) the security of the believer in Time Past.

I am going to take that up here because it is very important to understand. This is one of those passages that sort of "ties the rag on the bush" for you which I guess you would call "truth from a remoter context." You would not expect to find an

explanation about security in Time Past in Romans 4, and yet that is what you find. You do not find the message that the men believed, but you do find a little interesting thing here about the security that these people had.

The issue of security for the believer in Time Past is cleared up by Paul's Gospel. Just like Paul's Gospel explains how those people were justified in Time Past, so it is that his Gospel explains the issue of their security in Christ. Folks, God remitted the sins of those people in Time Past through forbearance. God's forbearance passed over their sin because of their faith in what he told them, because they were approaching him in the way that his forbearance provided for them to approach him, although it was by sacrifice under the Law system, the elaborate system of sacrifices and offerings that the Law provided.

All that extra stuff in the Law provided a message for people to believe and the Law establishes faith. The Law was given to create faith in people because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." He gave them his word, his Law, his statutes, and that was a way to produce faith in them. If they did not have a message they could not believe anything. Faith isn't just sitting down and grunting against things and convincing yourself to believe something. Faith is being persuaded that what God says is so. It was legitimate for God to take that man who approached him in faith - not on the basis of his works, but on the basis of the man's faith - and to acknowledge and honor the man's faith by imputing righteousness to the man.

Believers, in Time Past, had the imputed righteousness of Christ laid to their account. It is in light of Paul's revelation here that we know how justification in Time Past took place, and we know that those people stood in the merits of Christ. No man has ever been saved in any age apart from the blood of Jesus Christ. Those people were equally saved by the blood even as we are saved. Their justification is equally theirs - as our justification is ours. The people in the future out there will be saved through the propitiation of that satisfying sacrifice that is in the Lord Jesus Christ's work at Calvary.

If they were in Christ, and they had the righteousness of God imputed to them, were they secure? You had better believe they were, brother. They were just as secure as you are, but they did not know about it.

You say, "Well, you can't go on the basis of what they knew." No, but you can go on the basis of what we *now* know and what God knew.

The reason I raised this issue is that this passage right here settled this question for me sometime ago. I spent many years studying passages of scripture that indicate that people in Time Past could lose their salvation. Come back with me to Psalm 51. I can give you a list of about forty passages that indicate - in fact they teach - that a man can lose his salvation. I used to read those passages that say you can lose it. Paul says you can't, and evidently those people could lose it and we cannot. I struggled with that until I began to get a clear understanding in Romans, Chapters 3 and 4, of what I now know through Paul's Gospel about the other ages also. We now have a full understanding of what was accomplished at Calvary. Part of what was accomplished is the two-fold declaration: remission of sins in Time Past *and* right now, that all men in every age have been justified before God simply on the basis of faith in the merits on the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If his shed blood takes care of us, what does it do to them? It takes care of them. If his shed blood makes us secure, what does it do for them? It makes them secure, too.

But there are passages in the Old Testament that certainly don't indicate that. Why would that be? They don't know about Christ. They don't know about the propitiation he's going to offer at Calvary. There is something else in view in their program. Let's look at some passages. Psalm 51:11 - David is talking.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. (Psalms 51:11)

Now does that sound like a guy who is real secure? It doesn't sound like it, does it? Come over to Hebrews and let me show you why.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (Hebrews 2:14)

That word “power” is the word “might.” He had the ability to make death an intimidating enemy.

And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:15)

That Old Testament saint was subject to the bondage of the Law. Why? - Because of the fear of death. You see, that man worked in a system that said, “You do this and you’ll live.” So that man in faith approached God in the way that God said to approach him. What is the way God said to approach him? It said, “Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it.” So what does this guy do? He fears dying and being found when he died, not doing it.

You see, folks, the works system of the Law never gave any assurance of salvation. Works, human effort - when those things are involved in the message - never give you any assurance that you are secure. Why? - Because you might quit performing. That fear of death out there kept those people in bondage rather than having liberty.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Romans 8:15)

We have not received that spirit of bondage unto fear. Do you remember last week we talked about working under that Law principle, that there was that constant fear? It is that Law-fear syndrome where the Law says, “Do this,” and you fear losing the blessing. You fear the consequences of losing the blessing - the curse. The motivating factor under the Law is fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of punishment. Fear of shame and reproach being placed upon you by God and others and yourself.

Grace doesn’t do that. Grace motivates you by gratitude and love. Do you remember all that? That is what is going on here. These people are under that Law principle and do not know the glory and freedom of Grace that we know today, and yet they had justification as we do. They just were not able to know about it yet. So, the Law system keeps people under bondage and keeps them bound. “They were all their lifetime subject to bondage” because they had the fear of death coming along.

Come with me to Matthew 24 and I'll explain why you will find a passage like this in the Bible.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
(Matthew 24:13)

That is pretty clear, isn't it? What do you have to do get saved? Endure to the end. Not halfway, but unto the end. Is that right? That is what it says. There are two things to notice:

1. The *end* is the end of the Tribulation period (Verses 15-21). Notice that word "saved": Come back with me to Jeremiah 30.

And these *are* the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day *is* great, [What day is that? The day of the Tribulation, the Day of the Lord. They travail, as in First Thessalonians 3.] so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:4-7)

2. What kind of salvation is he talking about? Verse 8:

For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke [the anti-christ's yoke] from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. (Jeremiah 30:8-9)

He is talking about their getting saved into a Kingdom - physical salvation for the nation Israel into a kingdom.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:13-14)

Then, in Verse 15, the antichrist shows up. You see that salvation has to do with salvation into a kingdom. What you are going to find in these passages in the gospel accounts that indicate conditional salvation is that they are looking at the nation Israel. It is an issue of a nation looking for its salvation into the kingdom. It is a national picture of the nation being saved and delivered into the kingdom.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; [Redemption. Salvation.] As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. (Luke 1:67-75)

They were looking for a physical salvation into a kingdom in which there they could serve God spiritually.

What you are going to find in these passages in the gospels that look like you can lose your salvation is that they are dealing with the conditional aspects of salvation for the nation into that physical kingdom. In other words, that physical reward over there in the kingdom.

John, Chapter 10, is a passage that is often used to prove eternal security.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and *my* Father are one. (John 10:28-30)

Now, that passage looks like a great promise of security, doesn't it? I have heard that passage quoted, over and over and over again, to prove security. The problem is that isn't what that passage says. The sentence starts in Verse 27, not in Verse 28 and you can't leave Verse 28 dangling by itself.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
(John 10:27)

Now, what do the sheep do? They "hear my voice" and "they follow." "I give unto them (the sheep) ..." Who are the sheep? The people who "hear my voice" and "follow me." How long do they "follow me"? Notice that the hearing and following is in the present tense. It does not say, "They heard my voice and they followed me." It says, "They hear my voice, ... and they follow me." Present tense. *They are constantly and continuously hearing what I say and constantly and continuously (in the present tense) following me.*

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; (John 8:31)

If you do what? “Continue in my word.” *If you keep on hearing my word and following my word, then are you my disciples.* Now, that is an interesting thing. That’s a conditional aspect. People quote John 5:24 all the time referring to salvation. Nobody ever seems to pay any attention what it says.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, [*You hear what I am telling you and you believe on God the Father.* Is that what you tell a man to get saved today? No. You don’t say, “Hear what Christ said and believe on God the Father.” You say, “Hear the Gospel of Grace and believe on God the Son who died on the cross for your sins.”] hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)

The man who hears, believes and follows has everlasting life. Someone asks, “How long is everlasting life?” Well, it’s everlasting, but what does everlasting life mean in this context? Look back at John - Chapter 8.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. (John 8:51)

If you never saw death, would that be everlasting life? It would, wouldn’t it? Do you know what they are talking about? They are talking about eternal life in the kingdom.

Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. (Luke 18:28-30)

Life everlasting was to be resurrection kingdom life in the world to come.

Do you remember, just two classes ago, we were studying about Abraham? In Romans 4, the basic promise made to Abraham was a promise of eternal life, resurrection life into a kingdom. In prophecy, eternal life is a resurrection life lived in a literal, physical, visible, earthly, Davidic kingdom with David raised up and ruling over them. David is resurrection life, brother, resurrection life, life in the kingdom.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. (John 11:25-26)

There were people standing there who had the possibility of never dying and living on and going into that kingdom and living forever in that kingdom. It is kingdom life that we are talking about. The issue in the passage that you are dealing with is not the same as when we talk about eternal life today as a present possession in a spiritual sense as members of the Body of Christ operating under Grace. God has a different agency today. Abraham was a dual father - a father in the prophetic program of the circumcision but also a father in the mystery program of the uncircumcision. (We'll get back to that in Romans 4.)

My dear friend, the issue in these passages about security is a national issue, and they are looking forward to a physical reward in a kingdom. That everlasting life was a resurrection life in that kingdom out there. That is what they were looking for. Come over to John 15. I'm giving you some passages that indicate that you can lose your salvation, and I'm trying to express to you (on the basis of what Paul says about what was going on back there) we can now go back and understand these passages more fully.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:1-5)

The word "ye" there is plural. In Old English, the words "thou" and "thee" are the singular, second-person pronoun. The plural, second-person pronoun is "ye" and "you." He is not talking about *you*; he's talking about you, his apostles.

Now, about abiding: "I am the true vine..." What he's talking about is that little nation, that little remnant. Do you remember that in Luke 12:32 he called them "the Little Flock"? That is who he is talking to. He is talking to this group of men he has gathered together who are going to be the governmental authorities in his

kingdom. He says, *You guys abide in me because that's where you are going to have the power, the ability. Without me, you can't get into this kingdom.*

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:6-7)

We do not have time tonight to go into what that fire is, but we will get into it when we get into the Book of Daniel. That "fire" is the Tribulation period. Tribulation is described over and over in the Bible as a fire that burns and purges out the dross and impurities from the nation Israel. He says, "If a man abide not in me." It was the individual Israelite's responsibility to be a part of that Little Flock. They were responsible to come and join that Little Flock and to become a part of that new nation, that "righteous nation" (among the apostate nation), that nation to whom God was going to give the kingdom. How do they get into that Little Flock? They get in by repentance and water baptism. Water baptism is the door into that Little Flock - the baptism of repentance. They come and repent; they receive the counsel of God against them and are water baptized. When he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the salvation is the same as in John 15, the same salvation as in Matthew 24. It's the same salvation as in Jeremiah 30. It is a physical deliverance into that kingdom over there, and that is what they are looking for.

The issue here is a national reference with the Tribulation in view. It is a national issue looking for physical rewards out there in the future kingdom.

Now, go with me to Second Peter. Maybe I am just boring you, but for me this issue was a problem for a long time, and it was not until I studied carefully and thoughtfully through Romans 3 and into Chapter 4 that God ran over me with a Mack truck big enough to catch my attention, and it dawned on me that the answer I was looking for was in Paul's Gospel all along. When I went back and began to study these other passages in the light of where they fit, then I said, "Hey, I can see this. Where have I been all my life?" This is national salvation, and the man's responsibility is to be a part of that nation, and if he isn't, it is because he does not have faith to respond to what God is telling him.

God, on the basis of the man's faith, imputes righteousness, and that man does not even know it. We *now* know it. We *now* have the opportunity to know what God's mind in Time Past was, when they didn't even know it. Are you going to scoff at that? You are going to rejoice in that and understand the Bible in the light of it.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11)

There is someone trying to make his calling and election sure by continuing in some things, by adding to his faith. You see, God had a calling and election, a purpose in that nation. These people are a part of that program.

You say, "What about somebody who doesn't make it, somebody who falls away in this program?" He gets in and then he goes away like Ananias and Saphira.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (1 John 2:19)

That Tribulation, that fire of persecution, burns on that nation and they are put in that furnace of fire. *I'll wash you like a fuller's soap and I'll refine you like silver and gold. I'm going to demonstrate publicly and openly before the world which of you people really believe in me.* God knows it, but he is going to demonstrate it publicly because that is the group of people that are going to inherit that kingdom.

He says that when you see one go out, what is he? He was not *in* to start with. Their status is going to be demonstrated at the end. That's what I keep telling you about that Second Coming. You and I work under Grace. We get it all up front. We work under the program of Grace.

God has never let go of any individual who ever trusted his word to him. Any man who believes God's word to him - God never let go of that man. That is not true of the nation, and that isn't true of the hope of that nation. It is not true of every believer to whom God imputed righteousness when his nation refused that he did not suffer the consequences of his nation's activity. But as far as individual security goes, we understand from Romans that God has taken those people and imputed the

righteousness of Christ to them, and they have a complete and perfect standing just as you and I do.

We are going to start in Romans 4:9 and go on down. Again I say to you that I took a little excursion from Verses 6-8, and we are going to go back now and get what Paul is talking about in Romans.

The issue of total forgiveness and the issue of security of the believers in Time Past, for me, have been real important, and I have been helped tremendously by that passage there in Romans Chapter 4, so I couldn't resist sharing all that with you. I tell you, folks, it fascinates me how it is that in Paul's Gospel - this "now time revelation" - we have the answer to things that aren't clear in other scriptures.

Now, in Verses 1-5, he talks about Abraham and Abraham's justification. Then he talks, in Verses 6-8, about the blessedness, the joy, that belongs to the man who has his sins forgiven, who has this imputed righteousness.

Verse 9 - *Cometh* this blessedness (this joy of having God impute righteousness without works to your account. With this justification comes this joy, this happiness, this blessedness.)

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. (Romans 4:9)

Well, does it just come upon circumcision (that's Abraham's seed), or can the uncircumcision get it also? He has already told you, in Chapter 3, Verses 28 and 29, that he is the God of the Jew and the Gentile alike. He justifies the circumcision and the uncircumcision on the same basis.

So he says, *Wait a minute, guys. Abraham was justified by faith alone. David talks about the joy we have and we experience this blessedness that we get from justification by faith. Now, are the Jews the only ones that get that? He says, You are not thinking.*

Do you remember Abraham? We say that faith was reckoned for righteousness to Abraham. How was it reckoned? Look at Verse 10:

How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 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 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. (Romans 4:10-12)

Abraham was justified in a special and unique manner. There's something special about Abraham's justification that includes us today. Come over to Galatians 3. Notice the last phrase in Verse 5: "the hearing of faith."

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:5-9)

Now, wait a minute. God promised eternal life to Abraham and to his seed after him. Well, if you are going to get eternal life, you are going to have to become a seed of Abraham to get it. There is not any salvation, there is not any eternal life, outside the seed of Abraham because that is whom God gave it to.

Well, what about us? Are you the seed of Abraham? You would be in a mess, wouldn't you - a bunch of uncircumcised Gentiles coming along. In the prophetic program you could go and become part of Israel and be identified as a proselyte and get in that way, but what has happened to Israel now? Can you go join Israel today? Where are they today? They are fallen and set aside. They are cast away. There is no Israel to join today. Now what?

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God" was going to do something in the mystery age, knew that he was going to justify the heathen (the uncircumcised) through faith. You see, God knew that Calvary was coming, and he knew the Dispensation of Grace was coming, and because of what God knew, he did something very unique in the justification of Abraham that allowed Abraham to have a dual fatherhood. He can be a dual father. He is the father of the circumcision because he's the man to whom God gave the covenant, the sign and the seal, and it is his. He can say, *I've got it, it's mine, the covenant belongs to me, and I'm the father of the circumcision because I'm the man God made the deal with.*

But God justified him when he was yet uncircumcised in order that he could also be the father of the uncircumcision. God took Abraham and did something very unique with him: he justified him by faith alone. Abraham just heard a message from God and he believed it, and God imputed it to him for righteousness.

Abraham believed God in Genesis 12, but you don't read that God imputed it to him for righteousness. He believed God, and he obeyed what God said; he went and did it. When you get to Genesis 15, Abraham doesn't do anything except believe what God told him. Then you read in the Bible that God justified him - imputed the righteousness to him. He did that in uncircumcision in order (Romans 4 says) that he might be the father of them that believe though they be not circumcised.

In Galatians 3, he did it to Abraham when he was yet in uncircumcision. He did it when it was just faith alone so that he could be the "father of all them that believe." Abraham has a dual fatherhood: one that makes him the father of the prophetic program of the circumcision and the other where he's the father of all them that believe in the mystery program in the Dispensation of Grace.

That is a good place to quit, but it's very important that you grasp what is going on in Romans 4:9-12 because Paul is not simply raising Abraham as an example of justification by faith. He is saying that the very reason that you could be justified by faith, the very reason you could receive eternal life is because God planned this thing ahead of time and fixed it so that you and I could be included. To me, that is fantastic, and that is a joy. So we have Abraham as our father also. Why? Because God justified him in a special manner before he circumcised him, and that allows us to be included.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 5

Romans 4:9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also?

That blessedness is defined back in Verse 6.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, (Romans 4:6)

This blessedness is the imputation of righteousness without works.

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? (Romans 4:9)

Paul has already told you the answer to that back in Romans 3:29 and 30. We've already studied the issue and so you should already know how to answer that question. No. It comes on both of them.

... for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. (Romans 4:9)

In other words, there is a problem. If faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness and Abraham is the father of the circumcision, are the circumcision the only people that can get this? Or, can the uncircumcision get it also?

How was it then reckoned? when he [Abraham] was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. (Romans 4:10)

In other words, Abraham was justified in a very special manner. His justification was something God did in a very special and unique manner. There is something involved in how he was justified. By that, I don't mean whether it was by works or by faith, but the circumstances that surrounded his justification are something that you and I need to understand. It was done in that peculiar and particular manner because God had us in view. God knew that we were going to

come along in the future and he did what he did with Abraham because you and I were in view coming along in the Dispensation of Grace.

It is just like back in Chapter 3 when he says that God declared “his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.” In other words, God would have a system of forbearance for remission of sins in Time Past in view of the fact that he knew the cross was coming. He did something back here in view of something that he knew was coming.

He did something with Abraham and justified him in a special and unique manner in view of the fact that he knew we were coming. What was so special about it? Verse 10 – He was justified in uncircumcision. Abraham was an uncircumcised man (just as we are the uncircumcision) when God counted his faith for righteousness. When he had the righteousness of faith imputed to him he was in uncircumcision.

And he received the sign of circumcision, (Romans 4:11)

That word “sign” means a mark to identify something (like poles as markers on the roadside). They are a sign to mark something out. Circumcision was a sign.

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: (Romans 4:11)

In other words, Abraham had the sign or the seal of circumcision. Circumcision was given to Abraham for the purpose of pointing out something. You will remember that we dealt with the issue of circumcision back in Verse 1 several weeks ago when we discussed what it was that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh hath found. Do you remember what we studied and found out about what circumcision meant? What it is a sign of? What does **circumcision** represent in the Bible? **Death to the flesh**. Do you remember how Abraham had a boy named Ishmael. God made him a promise – *You’re going to have a seed*. So, in his own energy and his own ability through the reproductive capacity of his own body, he went out and had Ishmael by Hagar. God said: *Cast out Ishmael. He is not going to be the seed. I am going to give you a seed. I am going to give you a son.*

When Abraham got so old that his and Sarah's physical capacity were dead – they were unable physically, humanly, to have a child - God said, *Now I'm going to give you the seed.* Now, when all that took place he said: *Throw out the bondwoman and her son and you take Isaac. Now I'm going to give you a sign of circumcision and you cut away the flesh.*

That sign was a blessing, a mark, a seal. It separated apart that group of people, the circumcision - Abraham and his seed - and identified them as a different kind of people. These were people who were set apart by that sign. It was a mark of the righteousness of faith they were to have. It had to do with the fact that they did not receive the blessing that they had because of fleshly activity. They received it as a result of the righteousness of faith. Circumcision was a sign. There was no merit in the circumcision. The merit was in the fact of what circumcision pointed to.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: (Romans 4:11)

Abraham did not receive the blessing and the Circumcision do not receive the blessing simply because they are the seed of Abraham after the flesh. They have to be the children of Abraham in that they are the children of faith like Abraham. It is not enough just to have the outward sign of circumcision even for an Israelite.

Now, the Jews misunderstood that. They had a problem there – a real bad misunderstanding about circumcision all through the bible. They thought they could just go out and get this religious ceremony performed and *therefore "we're in."* God said, *No, no. no. You misunderstand that.* Paul is pointing out that the Jews misunderstand circumcision. The circumcision was just a sign, something that pointed out the fact that they had faith and the righteousness that comes by faith.

In Romans 2, notice how the Jews have a misunderstanding about this issue of circumcision and Paul is correcting their misunderstanding here.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29)

You see, physical circumcision is not what made a man a real Jew. What made him a real Jew was the circumcision of the heart. Paul is saying in Romans 2:

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, (Romans 2:17)

You guys boast in the Law, all the works of the flesh. All the fleshly circumcision is going to get you is the wrath of God. You have got to have a circumcision of the heart.

Now, these people already had the fleshly circumcision and that was not enough. They thought that was all they needed. Paul said the justice of God will visit wrath on the works of their flesh. That is the subject of Chapter 2. They never did understand that.

Now, there is something you need to remember in regard to your ministry. What these Jews did with their circumcision is what men by nature do all the time with their religious rites. It is something you are going to have to contest and deal with and Paul is pointing it out in Romans 4 when he talks about the Gospel of Grace and he gives us these further details. Folks, fleshly operations, whether they are circumcision or other kinds of things that men want to perform, they are not the issue. Faith – the righteousness of faith - is the issue.

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. (Matthew 3:5-9)

Do you see the point? Those guys were saying: *We're okay, man. We don't have any problem. We are the descendants of Abraham. Don't you know that puts us in?*

And John says: *Hey. It's going to take more to get into the kingdom than just being a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It takes a whole lot more than*

that. It takes your being the child of Abraham by faith. You're going to have to have a circumcision of heart as well as the flesh.

You see, folks, getting into the kingdom involved not just the issue of being the seed of Abraham after the flesh. They had to be the seed of Abraham after the Spirit, that is, after the circumcision of the heart and in the Spirit. It was not just an outward thing, but they had to have the faith of their father Abraham which would then produce the other things – faith that produced the works. The works were not the issue. It was the faith that was the issue.

Turn to John 8. If you want to study psychology here is a passage to study. Most of the people who talk about psychology today have studied Freud, Jung, Rogers and others, but if you want to study some psychology, a passage like John 8 is a good one. Christ is talking to the religious leaders of Israel, the Pharisees, etc.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? (John 8:33)

There's a bunch of liars right there. They were in bondage right then. Who was controlling them in John 8? Rome controlled them. Why, you floor-flushing rascals, you. They were lying to him. They were puffed up and blind and couldn't see what was going on. Abraham's seed was in bondage over and over.

What they were saying is: *We are the physical descendants of Abraham. If anybody is in, we are.*

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

“Ye do that which ye have seen with your father.” See how pointed he is getting to them?

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. (John 8:37-41)

Do you know who were the first people who said that Jesus Christ was born of someone other than a virgin? (Did you hear of that church over there in England that burned down a week after they installed a bishop who got up in his inaugural address and denied the Virgin Birth of Christ? Some people said, "That's the wrath of God or a miracle of God." Lightning struck and burned down that famous cathedral that was built in the thirteenth century.)

They were denying the Virgin Birth during his lifetime right to his face. You know what they were calling his momma? Not a very pleasant thing, was it?

Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; (John 8:41 b-42a)

He is talking about not just being the physical seed, the physical descendants, of Abraham but he is saying "if ye were Abraham's children." It is a difference between being the physical seed of Abraham and being the children of Abraham, the difference between being the physical descendant and the spiritual descendant of Abraham, that is, someone who had faith in God and in the Word of God.

Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:43-44)

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God. (John 8:47)

You see, just being a physical descendant of Abraham was not the issue. You had to be a child of Abraham by faith. Now, that is true all the way through the bible.

When you go back to Romans 4, you see that Abraham has learned something. (We've already seen this.) Abraham learned that his flesh could not produce anything that pleased God or anything that God would accept. Circumcision was a mark (a sign) that demonstrated that to people.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith (Romans 4:11a)

What should circumcision have said to an Israelite? *We are the descendants of Abraham and it all depends on God and it is all of faith. Without faith, Isaac would never have been born. We would not be here. We are a nation begotten of God not ourselves. We are God's people.*

It should have been by faith but these dudes in John 8 belonged to the devil. Why? Because they were in the flesh.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised [Notice how it was that God justified Abraham – in uncircumcision, in a special, unique manner. Why did he do it? “That” – the word “that” means purpose, the intent. “That” introduces a purpose clause.] that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them [the uncircumcision] also: (Romans 4:11)

God justified Abraham the way he did in order that he might be the father of everyone that believes.

Verse 11 – that he might be the father of the uncircumcised people that believe.

Verse 12:

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, [the Jews who believe but who have not just the physical performance] but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised. (Romans 4:12)

In Verse 11, Paul is literally saying that Abraham is justified in uncircumcision that he might be the father of the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) so that righteousness can be imputed to them by faith. In other words, God justified Abraham in a unique manner when he was in uncircumcision seeing that he would later justify us. He fixed it so we are not excluded. Foreknowing he would justify the heathen through faith, he did this. So, we are not excluded because Abraham was justified in uncircumcision.

Also, it demonstrates to the circumcised (the Jew): who must you be like in Verse 12? You have to be like Abraham - when he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Uncircumcised.

Paul is saying that today the circumcised have to be like the uncircumcised. That is the Gospel of the Uncircumcision. Paul said, *that is what is committed to me.*

Don't be like Israel, the circumcised, like one of the Jews, but the Jews have to be like old uncircumcised Abraham was. What do they have to have? They have to have the righteousness of faith.

By the way, that chapter right there is another demonstration that the book of Romans is different from early Acts. This is a different message, another demonstration for the Acts 28 people that there is something different going on here in the book of Romans than in early Acts.

What's going on here in Romans is like what is going on over in Ephesians. Uncircumcised Gentiles are being justified on an equal basis with the circumcised, not by being brought up to Israel's former standing but by the circumcision people being put down to their lack of standing. The Jew and Gentile are now on equal basis in this issue. Peter could never have said under the prophetic program that "you circumcised people have to be like the uncircumcised." Paul is preaching the Gospel of the Uncircumcision. That is not just good news to the circumcision. That is the good news of the Uncircumcision. That is the good news that everybody who does what uncircumcised Abraham did can get saved. Everybody who will have the same faith in God's word to them that uncircumcised Abraham had will have their faith counted to them for righteousness and will experience the righteousness of faith. And, it is for everybody. There are no distinctions anymore.

I want you to understand this. Paul tells the Jew: *You go be like a Gentile.* That is the opposite of prophecy. Through the fall of Israel (the casting away of Israel), salvation goes to the Gentiles.

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (Romans 9:30-32)

The idea is that the Gentiles were not trying to be righteous – I mean, they just took their place as a bunch of lost sinners that Christ died for and they received the righteousness of faith. They said: *Hey, there isn't anything we can do. We'll just trust him.* And, they got it.

The Jew came along -

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Romans 10:3-4)

That old Jew is going out with the righteousness of the Law saying: *I'm going to work; I'm going to strive and I'm going to get it*

Paul says: *Hey! The Gentiles got it because they sought it by the righteousness of faith.* The Jews didn't get it. Why? They didn't seek it that way. They thought they had to work. Now, watch them in Verse 11.

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: [Why does he magnify his office?] If by any means I may provoke [to copy and do the same thing] to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead? (Romans 11:13-15)

Paul says, *I'm trying to get these Jews to act like the Gentiles. I'm magnifying my Gentile ministry and trying to get all Gentiles saved everywhere* "if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh [Israel], and might save some of them."

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall [Israel's fall] salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. (Romans 11:11)

Notice the last part of that verse that we don't usually quote. Do you see that? Paul says that salvation has gone to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, to be like the Gentiles. Paul is telling these people: *Look, you Jews need to get out here and act like the Gentiles are acting.* That is not prophecy, folks. That is the mystery program. What are the Gentiles doing? They are receiving the righteousness of faith. They are being like uncircumcised Abraham in his justification. They are the children of Abraham. They are walking in the steps of that faith "of our father Abraham."

What he is saying in Chapter 4, Verses 11 and 12, has to do with just the basic issue of the Gospel of the Uncircumcision. Listen, folks, it is very important that you understand this issue of how Abraham was justified.

Paul is bringing it up here because it demonstrates that special, unique manner in which the wisdom of God in his foreknowledge and his planning ahead of time, knowing what was coming in the future, knowing that the Dispensation of Grace was out there, knowing his eternal purpose, knowing he was going to justify the heathen by faith. God made a provision in the manner by which Abraham was justified - in the circumstances through which he was justified - that allowed Abraham to be a dual father. He is the father of the circumcision but he is also the father of the uncircumcision.

Abraham was justified in a special and unique manner so that he could have this position as a dual father. He was justified in uncircumcision so that both the circumcision and the uncircumcision can look back to Abraham as their father. There is no eternal life for anyone outside of Abraham. Now, I know that bothers some people but that is a fact because God made the promise of eternal life to Abraham and his seed.

Folks, if you can't look to Abraham as your father, you can not get in on the promise of eternal life because God limited it to Abraham and his seed, but not his physical seed – that is the point here. He did not limit it just to the descendants, the circumcision, but he did that in a special manner so even the uncircumcision who walk in the faith “of our father Abraham,” who believe like he did, can also be included.

(Answer to a student's question: Paul sees the issue of justification by faith. In Galatians 2:16, Paul says to Peter: *We know – we've settled this. We've got this thing straightened out. We know that a man is justified by faith.*

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

Peter learned that. That is part of the Gospel of the Grace of God. It is one of the details of Paul's Gospel that he communicated to those men [in Galatians 2]. It is that further revelation about the work at the cross that they get from Paul. Their program is based on that, after that meeting, just like ours is. It is the basis of everything. It is that "Now Time" revelation about that propitiatory work of Christ at Calvary. The justice of God is free to impute righteousness to those that believe. That's always what he has done. We now know that.

Now, there is something else here in Chapter 4. Not only can the justice of God impute righteousness but in Chapter 4 we learn that the justice of God can impute eternal life to us. Now, righteousness was one thing. He takes care of that by the propitiatory work of Christ at Calvary. He takes care of all of our sin and he makes that fully satisfying sacrifice so the justice of God can give us righteousness. But **eternal life** is something else because God had limited and placed eternal life in a promise. It is part of the promise that he gave and confirmed to Abraham and his seed. How, if God had limited it to Abraham and his seed, can we who can't look physically to Abraham as our father get into that promise?

He says, *Hey, wait a minute. There's something special about Abraham that you haven't thought about. God saved Abraham in uncircumcision so that he could be your father too.* "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith," God, **foreseeing** – you see, God had already purposed the Body of Christ and justification by faith for the heathen, the uncircumcised.

Can you see the wisdom of God in that? Can you see the manifold wisdom of God in the layout of the details of his gospel? He is beginning to share with you and bring up all these details. Now, when you get over in Ephesians you see it in its fulness. You are just beginning here, you see, to get the things laid out for you. The manifold wisdom of God is planning these things, even down to intricate little details like this.

For the promise [the blessing of Verse 9 is contained in this 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. (Romans 4:13)

Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it* [the blessing] *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, (Romans 4:16)

In order for the Gentiles to receive the promise, in order for the Gentile to inherit eternal life, (that's the very basic thing in the promise – the inheritance of eternal life) that Gentile had to become the seed of Abraham because the promise was made to Abraham and his seed. In order for the promise to be sure to all the seed, we had to get in. It is not through the Law - that is the idea in Verses 13-16; that the promise is not through the Law - but it is through the righteousness of faith. It is not through the works of the Law. It is not through the physical activity of circumcision or commandments. It is through the righteousness of faith that Abraham had being yet in uncircumcision - "Abram" instead of "Abraham."

I want you to compare Galatians 3. Romans 4 is amplified in Galatians 3. Do you remember when we were in Romans 1 and we discussed the issues of Paul's unrestricted apostleship. We looked at Galatians 1 and 2 and I showed you at that time and told you that Galatians 1 and 2 correspond with Romans 1 in that Galatians 1 and 2 lay out the details of the certificate of Paul's apostleship.

When you get to Romans 4, he is dealing with the same issue as in Galatians 3. Remember that I told you that Galatians and Corinthians are commentaries on Romans and we will see that more with Corinthians as we get further into the book but it is certainly true here. Romans 4 compares with Galatians 3 and 4.

Notice that he is fighting the same issue. At Rome, these Jews misunderstood it, and they were adding circumcision, the works of the Law, to the righteousness of faith. It is the same problem in Galatians 3.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3)

He says, *That's a dumb way to think, fella. If you were made perfect in the Spirit; I mean, if you began in the Spirit, what is the flesh going to add to you? It doesn't add anything to you.*

Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:4-5)

How does he do it? - By the hearing of faith. See, they thought the blessings were going to come by the works of the Law, not by the hearing of faith. They had had somebody come in there and try to put them back under the Law to get the blessing.

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. (Galatians 3:6)

That is the righteousness of faith – Romans 4.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7)

Now, they are not necessarily the physical descendants of Abraham but they are the spiritual kindred of Abraham. Why? They walk in the steps of that (same) faith of our father Abraham.

The word “father” can be used in a lot of different senses. I have three boys and they look at me and they call me “daddy” - father. They are my physical descendants. But, you know, we have other fathers. We talk about George Washington as the “father of our nation.” How many of you are physical descendants of George Washington? Well then, how can he be your father? You understand how that can be, don't you? He is the one who laid down the principles upon which we function as a nation. We talk about the founding fathers. Abraham is a father in that kind of sense.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7)

Paul says: *Know this. Get this thing straight that the children of faith are the children of Abraham.*

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen [that's us] through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:8-9)

The apostle Paul “ties the rag on the bush” with that verse. Verses 7-9 is Romans 4 in a nutshell. The long and the short of it is that the wisdom of God provided so that the Gentiles today who are justified through faith can look back to Abraham as their father and claim the blessing of righteousness of faith mentioned in Verse 6 just like anybody else can. God’s wisdom fixed it that way.

You ask, “How is it that Gentiles can be blessed through Abraham?” That is what Acts 28-ers do with that passage. “How can a Gentile – uncircumcised, out-of-the-covenant, on the wrong side of the wall of partition - be blessed with Abraham?” The answer is back in Romans 4:1-12. How was it reckoned to Abraham? It was not reckoned to Abraham when he was on the right side of the wall of partition. There wasn’t any middle wall of partition at the time. The middle wall was circumcision. It was not up yet.

You see, we can be the children of Abraham and therefore be blessed through Abraham in that special and unique manner by which Abraham was justified. We are the children of Abraham in accordance with the manner of our justification. It matches Abraham’s. That was not true in the prophetic program but it is true today because God has changed the program.

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.
(Romans 4:13)

The blessing is found in the form of a promise and what Paul is going to begin to do now in Verse 13 and following is to begin to examine the promise. You notice he says the promise is that Abraham should be the heir of the world.

Now, we have already discussed that and I just call to your remembrance the fact that we talked about what it means to be the heir of the world. What did we study already and see that the very basic promise involved in that is? Genesis 15.

Remember, God promised Abraham the land. The land of Palestine is certainly involved, but when he promised him that land he promised him something more basic than that. He promised him eternal life and the basis upon which Abraham was going to be the heir of the world is the basic promise of eternal life. Do you remember in Genesis 15, he said: I'm going to give you this land. He puts Abraham to sleep. *I'm going to give this land to you and your descendants. Abraham – you're going to die.*

Wait a minute! If you're going to give me the land - but I am going to die?

Your descendants are going to be carried off to a strange land for 400 years and then they're going to come in and get the land.

Now wait a minute. If my seed and I are going to get the land and it's going to be better than 400 years before we get it, well, we are going to die. How are we going to get it? There's no way unless we come back from the dead.

Abraham understood that. Look at Hebrews 11.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: (Hebrews 11:8-9)

The promise is an inheritance (Verse 8). The promise God gave to Abraham was that he would be an inheritor (Romans 4:13 - For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world). Isaac and Jacob are heirs with him according to the promise.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. (Hebrews 11:10)

You see? He is looking for something different than just something on the ground, not just a city. He is looking for something that God is going to build.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, (Hebrews 11:13a)

Do you know what Abraham knew? He knew he was going to get the land but he also knew he was going to die and a bunch of his descendants were going to die

and then they were going to get the land. He knew he was not going to get it right then. He knew he was going to get it way over down yonder along the line.

... and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Hebrews 11:13)

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (Hebrews 11:14-19)

Folks, Abraham understood the issue of being raised from the dead. He understood the issue of resurrection life and he knew he was going to get eternal possession of that land in resurrection life. Now, my dear friend, resurrection life that lasts forever is called “eternal life” and they understood that.

When he says, “Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead;” he was not just talking resurrection of the dead. The words are important: “from the dead” is not “of the dead.” Resurrection of the dead – that is dead people coming up, *all* of them. But, resurrection from the dead – there are some folks stay down and some folks come up. Do you see the difference in that? What you’ve got there is the issue of resurrection life. You see, there’s a resurrection unto damnation and then there is a resurrection unto life. Abraham knew he was going to get life.

Eternal life, in prophecy, is a reference to the kingdom. In prophecy “eternal life” is used over and over as a reference to the kingdom.

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: (Mark 9:43, 45, 47)

Do you see that he says “life”? The third time he doesn’t say “life” he says “kingdom of God.” See how the kingdom is used interchangeably with life? They understand that life to be kingdom and kingdom to be life.

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (Matthew 19:16)

Folks, what he has been talking to them about has been the kingdom. The man wants to know what he must do to have eternal life.

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:17-23)

What did that young man want to get into? Eternal life. Jesus said: *It's going to be tough for a rich man to get into the kingdom*. The kingdom – eternal life. When they thought of that kingdom, in their mind it was eternal life. It is resurrection life that never ends. It goes on for eternity in an eternal kingdom. That is in prophecy. That is what that Jew thought about eternal life.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (Matthew 19:28-29)

He is going to inherit everlasting life. When is he going to get it? Notice the comparative passage in Luke 18.

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. (Luke 18:29-30)

That fits our chart in the Ages to Come. He is talking about that kingdom over there in the world to come. He is going to get life everlasting. That is Genesis 15, brother. That is that kingdom life.

Now, in the mystery, (in Paul's epistles) eternal life is not simply what it is in the kingdom program. It is more than that. God in his wisdom knew something. That is why he promised to set it up the way he did. You see, the wisdom of God knew ahead of time some things about this promise of eternal life.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7a)

Because we have had the experience that Romans 3 tells us about – “being justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” – that fully satisfying sacrifice:

... we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
(Titus 3:7b)

That is why Romans 4 says what it does after Romans 3 says what it does. It is an added detail of Paul's Gospel. Being justified, because we have the righteousness of faith, we qualify to receive eternal life.

... we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
(Titus 3:7b)

What hope is that? The word “hope” there means a confident expectation, not “I wish” but a confident expectation of eternal life. Look back at Chapter 1.

In hope of eternal life, (Titus 1:2a)

That is the reference. You see people, you want to find verses that link up and explain things for you.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised [to Abraham? No! Look at what that says.] Before the world began; (Titus 1:2)

“Before the world began.” Before God made that promise of eternal life to Abraham, he had first made it to somebody else “before the world began.” “Before the world began” God made the promise of eternal life to himself. He had an eternal life conference in Time Past and set up a purpose and he promised eternal life to the Body of Christ out here in the future.

Then, later on in the execution of that purpose in time he promises eternal life to Abraham and to his descendants. But, he did it in such a way that it does not eliminate and does not void, and it does not prohibit the previous plan that he had in Time Past. His wisdom promises eternal life to Abraham - an inheritance eternally on the earth and the possession of that land of Palestine. But, in that promise of eternal life to Abraham he does it in such a way that Abraham’s physical descendants are not the only ones that get the provision of eternal life. He does it in such a way that he does not void the previous plan that he had, but in his wisdom he allowed for it and provided for it. God justified Abraham in a special manner to allow our inclusion in the promise.

God chose to shuttle the thing through Abraham. Why? Who is Abraham’s one seed that counts? Christ. He funneled it down through Abraham that he might purpose it all in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will finish studying Galatians 3 next week, but look back there with me at one verse. That is what you’re going to see in the rest of Galatians 3.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, [interpretation] which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant [the covenant of promise], that was confirmed before of God in Christ, (Galatians 3:16-17)

When God confirmed that promise to Abraham, in God's mind he was confirming it in Christ. The reason he narrows that down to Abraham is because his seed is Christ.

Folks, you have to be in the Lord Jesus Christ, either in prophecy or in the mystery program, to get the blessing. There isn't any place for blessing outside of Christ.

Now, you and I, as we come to Romans 4 and as we go on down through the passage, are going to see how the justice of God has made it possible not just to impute perfect righteousness to us on the basis of the righteousness of faith, but he has also made it possible to give us eternal life. His wisdom has devised the plan in such a way that his justice can give us eternal life and be right in doing it or else he would not do it.

Now if you get a hold of Romans 4 and Galatians 3 and what is going on with Abraham, people, you are going to understand some things about Romans 3 and 4 that are going to keep you out of the garbage can, dispensationally. The Acts 28 position is a complete flop when it comes to these passages. They just do not understand it. The Acts 2 position is a complete flop when it comes to these passages. The Acts 28 position looks at you and says: *You're not in any of that. You're an old heathen, uncircumcised Gentile. These are people getting it through Abraham.*

The Acts 28-ers get the part about the circumcision, but they can't see Romans 4 that Abraham was in uncircumcision and that God foresaw he was going to justify the heathen and justified Abraham when he was just like they were. Knowing this keeps you from tearing up your Bible.

The Acts 2 people can't get it so in Galatians 3, the amillennialists come along and take them to the woodshed. They say, *See, God intended it to be Christ all along and confirmed the covenant in Christ so there aren't really any physical blessings. The New Testament churches are a continuation to the "Old Testament community." (That's the amillennialists' expression). See? We are spiritual Israel so we take all their blessings and spiritualize them and leave all the curses on them and get rid of them.*

The Acts 2 position breeds amillennialism. The Acts 28 position breeds death to the gospel and to your opportunity to be an inheritor and receiver of eternal life for the righteousness of faith.

I say that to you so you understand the cross-currents that are going to go through here. I am not going to try to refute all the cross-currents. I am going to try to take you through Romans 4 and Galatians 3 understanding what Paul is saying.

Now, my dear friend, there is something about Romans 4:13 that you might as well know right now.

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

You are an heir according to the promise and you get everything God promised and gave to the Lord Jesus Christ – the kingdom and all. When you tell Grace people that, they go up the wall.

But you see, there is a mystery part of that kingdom that was never spoken about to Abraham. Do you remember that in Ephesians? There is that heavenly kingdom in the heavenly places. Those are positions of rank and authority in the heavenly government that God is going to use the Body of Christ to fill up.

There is a oneness in what God is doing. There is more than just the kingdom on the earth. We are going to have a part in that but all of that is going to be under his headship. I tell you over and over that God is going to restore the earth back over to his authority through the instrumentality of the kingdom vested in Israel and restore his authority in the heavenly places through the instrumentality of the Church, the Body of Christ. It is going to have one head, Jesus Christ over all.

Do you see how magnificent God's plan for us is and do you see how broad the details of the Gospel of the Grace of God committed to Paul are? There is a lot more than saying "You're saved by grace through faith plus nothing." It tells you how men in Time Past were justified and how they will be justified in the Ages to Come, how God planned for us, and the basis on which he puts all these things together perfectly.

About “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” – that matches Ephesians 1:4 (before the world began). You see, our part in the inheritance has to do with the mystery part that goes back before the world began – the part that is not in prophecy.

Next week when we study Galatians 3 we will learn what Jesus Christ inherited and you will see that the basic issue is eternal life, immortality in a glorified body. There are other things he inherits - part of it is the inheritance of the whole universe, the governmental head of the universe. Now, God is going to have the governmental head on the earth through Israel.

How is his kingdom going to extend out in the heavenlies? Through us. That is what he planned before the world began.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 6

(Father, we now pray that you would take these passages that we're going to look at and make these things real to us. May they be things that our hearts see and understand, not with our emotions but in the depth of our souls, and may we marvel and be captivated in soul-stirring awe at the manifold wisdom of God in planning even our redemption and then the use you have for us in the Ages to Come to bring glory and honor to yourself. Seeing that, may we be thus motivated to serve you faithfully and we thank you for it in Christ's name. Amen.)

Now, we are down to Romans 4:13 and we are discussing the issue of the promise that was given to Abraham that he should be heir of the world. We talked about the fact that the blessing that God had given was found in the form of a promise. This blessing is given to Abraham as a promise. In the passage here, Paul is going to examine the promise which is that Abraham would be heir of the world. That promise was not given to Abraham (Verse 13) or to his seed through the Law but through the righteousness of faith.

Before we get into examining the issue of the righteousness of faith, which is how the promise is obtained, I want you to be sure you understand the issue of the blessing and the promise and how it is that through Abraham we get the promise. Romans 4 is saying that God planned for us, knowing that we were coming, and made provision in Abraham's justification whereby you and I could be included in the promise made to him.

The basic promise made to Abraham was a promise of eternal life. That is the reason we talked about that last time. We saw how the basic promise in the inheritance is eternal life. God justified Abraham in uncircumcision. While he was an uncircumcised man, God justified him in that unique and special manner so that he could be a dual father, not just to those who were the circumcision, not just a father to

Israel and to his descendants after the flesh, but also that he could be a father to us who are uncircumcised. That has to do with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision.

We have seen how Abraham is the father of all those that believe though they be not circumcised. The issue is not whether you are circumcised or not; the real issue is faith. He has already told you that in Chapter 3. We learned in Chapter 3 of the book of Romans that one of the details explained in the Gospel of the Grace of God committed to the apostle Paul is that the issue with God in justification has always been faith. That is something we now know and can understand through the Gospel of Grace committed to Paul.

In dealing with the issue about Abraham he is not just simply pointing out that Abraham was justified by faith, but that God did it in a special way because he had you and me today in mind.

Now, I want you to go with me to Galatians 3 because Galatians 3 is a parallel passage with Romans 4. If you are going to understand one of the passages you are going to have to get both of them because it is difficult to get one without the other. I believe we went down through Verses 5-8 the last time, so let's start in Verse 6 and just read down and then pick up in Verse 9.

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. (Galatians 3:6)

In other words, Abraham was justified by faith. Now, here is something to understand and grasp.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7)

We looked at passages last time, did we not, that indicate that just because they were the physical descendants did not mean that they were really the children of Abraham? Do you remember that passage in John 8 where the Pharisees say, *Abraham is our father; we are the seed of Abraham?*

Christ acknowledges: *Yes, you are the physical descendants of Abraham, but you're not the children of Abraham. You're the children of the devil.*

The idea is that you could be the physical descendant but all they who are of Abraham (his descendants) are not Abraham's real children because the issue is not just being physical descendants. Circumcision was supposed to tell them that, and Abraham certainly understood it as being death to the flesh. It is not the physical issue – it is faith that is the issue.

“They that are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” Verse 7 is the principle in every situation, in prophecy as well as it is in the mystery. In the prophetic program it wasn't just enough to be the physical descendant of Abraham. In the covenant made to Abraham, you had to be his physical descendant to get certain blessings, certain physical rewards, but just being his physical descendant did not mean that you were going to get those rewards. You had also to be first the child of faith. You had to be a child of God by faith first. If you were not, well then, being Abraham's descendant did not do anything but what it did for the fellows in John 8.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Galatians 3:8)

“Foreseeing “- God knew ahead of time what he was going to do. “The heathen” (that's us). God knew that he was going to justify us in the Dispensation of Grace by faith.

Abraham was justified in a special and unique manner in order that we might be included in the promise - hence, in the blessing - because nobody gets eternal life except the children of Abraham; that is to whom eternal life was promised.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (Galatians 3:9-10)

Now, when you are blessed with Abraham, like Verse 9 says, you are blessed with the same promise given to Abraham because of the fact that you are the children of Abraham by faith. That promise has to do, again, with the issue of eternal life. The way Abraham was going to be heir of the world was through that basic issue of eternal life.

If you get the blessing of eternal life, how are you going to get it – by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith? That's the issue in Galatians 3.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (Galatians 3:10-12)

There is a performance system there and if you are under the Law, you are under the curse. If you are under faith, then you get the blessing.

If you go back to the book of Deuteronomy and read the passages that talk about that, you will find that the curse has to do with death and ultimately with eternal death and damnation.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (Galatians 3:13)

In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross and bought us back. He brought us out and bought and redeemed us from the curse of the Law. He redeemed us from eternal death.

Do you remember when we studied Romans 3 we looked at this and other passages, and I tried to show you that Jesus Christ took your eternal damnation and bought you back from eternal death? That is the issue.

Notice carefully the purpose for which he redeemed us:

That [purpose and intent] the blessing of Abraham [of imputed righteousness and eternal life] might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; [not through the Law but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ] **that** we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:14)

The purpose for which Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law simply was so that the Gentiles could get the blessing of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ - so they could receive the promise simply by believing in the Lord as their Saviour. That is how we get the promise.

Now, the blessing of Abraham, again, is back in Verses 6 and 9 – that righteousness imputed by faith when you receive Verse 14 – “that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Now there is something I want you to see there in the second part of that verse. He redeems us that we might receive imputed righteousness, “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit“

We receive imputed righteousness. We are justified through the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are justified, then we are qualified to receive the promise of the Spirit. Maybe I can say it like this: the blessing of Abraham - that is, that imputed righteousness by faith - makes it so that we can receive the promise of the Spirit.

Go back to Verse 2: “... Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” The promise of the Spirit has to do with our receiving the Holy Spirit. Now, folks, do you know where you get eternal life from? The Holy Spirit. He is the giver of life. Eternal life comes from the Holy Spirit. My dear friend, there isn't any way to have that eternal life except from the Spirit of God.

... for if there had been a law given which could have given life ...
(Galatians 3:21)

You see, the issue in the passage is life, eternal life. No man can get that eternal life, folks, except he has that righteousness of God imputed to him first. Justification is the basic foundation on which everything else is built. The basic promise of eternal life is given to people who have that righteousness of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God has fixed it so that you and I are included in it. God's wisdom has planned it so.

In essence, Paul is saying this in Verse 14: *Look folks, this is what God planned for us [Verse 8]. This is not the prophetic program. This is not the kingdom program. This is what God planned for us. God knew we were coming, and he made some special provisions for us so that we would get in by faith as members of the Body of Christ. You people for whom God made a special provision - you heathen - to be justified by faith, and to give you eternal life based on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it's completely and totally wrong for you to go back*

under the Law system. There isn't any point in it. You've got the blessing of Abraham by faith. Going back under the Law to get the inheritance isn't going to do you any good. You've already got it all.

I keep telling you that is what grace says. Grace says to you: *You've got it all already.* Do you see that? Paul says: *You guys are just nuts. God has done all of this for you.*

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

You were made complete to start with. What is the flesh going to add to you?
He says: *God has done something special for us in this age. Don't go back under that like a Jew. You've got the blessing. You got it by grace. It is pointless to go back under the Law. Let me give you an illustration.*

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. (Galatians 3:15)

If you enter into a contract with someone, you do not change that contract. Common sense tells you that. The issue of the promise is real easy to understand. When I promise to do something and enter into a covenant, and I write it down and sign it, it is binding. I do not disannul it or cancel it out. You don't come along and add another provision to it.

I have a contract. I bought a house, and when I went to the closing, the seller's lawyer was a real jerk. (I understand why the Lord said, "Woe to you lawyers.")

That dude was sitting there and I kept saying, "But, wait a minute. We've got a contract here." I kept reading it to him. "Maybe yours doesn't read like mine. Look at Provision 8 there. Read that, will you?" Do you know what he didn't want to do? He didn't want to read that thing. Do you know why? He didn't want to do what it said.

You see, everyone knows when you have a contract, that's it. Watch what he said. It might be just a man's covenant yet if it be confirmed (signed and notarized),

“no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.” This guy did not want to do what it said. He wanted to add something else. Paul says: *We don't do that.*

Now, Paul is going to make the application.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant [the covenant of promise], that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance *be* of the law, [Folks, the promise involves an inheritance.] *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise. (Galatians 3:16-18)

How are you going to get the inheritance, by the Law or by promise? If God gave it to him by covenant and confirmed the covenant (Genesis 15) and said it was going to be by promise, then how are you going to get the inheritance? The Law comes along, but the Law is not going to get you the inheritance. The promise is going to get you the inheritance because that is the covenant God made.

Then, what in the world is the Law for? If the inheritance *be* of the Law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham. Then, what in the world is the Law for? Isn't that interesting you should ask that question. Look at Verse 19.

Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added [to the covenant of promise] because of transgressions, [It was added to point out sin. A lot of people don't read that word “till”] till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Galatians 3:19)

Folks, the Law was not given to you to insure you getting an inheritance. The Law was given to point out sinners. What does Romans 3 say?

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. (Romans 3:31)

The Law was there to point out: *Hey, you had better have faith.* Do you remember that passage we studied? (Romans 3.) Faith establishes the purpose of giving the Law which was to create faith in those people, to give them a message to believe and to point out the fact that they were sinners. It is God who is going to give

it to them, and they are going to have believe and rest in what God says and the provision that God has made.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, [interpretation] which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

God did not say “seeds” (all of them), he said “seed” (singular, not plural). Now, that word “seed” is an interesting word. Do you know the plural of the word “seed?” Seed. So, the word can be singular or plural. Now when you go back to Genesis 22, it is obvious he is talking about it in the plural.

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; (Genesis 22:15-17)

Is that seed in Verse 17 multiplied seed or a singular seed? It says, “I will multiply thy seed.” That’s “seed” in the plural, isn’t it?

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:18)

Is that seed singular or plural? In the context, it is plural. You can not read Verses 17 and 18 and say that the seed is not plural. Do you see that? But, Paul comes over here in Galatians 3:16 and says:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Do you know what he is saying? Paul is saying: *Hey, look. God made some promises out there to Abraham’s seed, but do you know who he had in mind all along? He had in mind all along the Lord Jesus Christ.*

That passage is like Romans 3:25 that we studied.

Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say, at this time* his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans 3:25-26)

We now understand how God, in his forbearance, could forgive sins in the past. We now understand that God, back there in Time Past, through his forbearance made a provision for men to rest in, but that provision back there did not justify them. It was the blood of Christ that justified them. God foresaw that Christ was coming and had Christ in mind all along. That is what Paul is saying here in Galatians.

You see, folks, it's not just any old generation in Israel – it is not Israel in herself – that is going to be the blessing to the nations. It is going to be Israel in Christ. It is going to be that seed of Abraham who by faith are the children of Abraham. Multiplied seed, yes, but the multiplied seed in Christ. That is what Peter had in mind in Acts 2. This is nothing new.

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Acts 3:25-26)

He said: Christ is going to bless you, and all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed by you, but you have to get the blessing from Christ first. It is not Israel that's the issue; it is Christ that is the issue.

Now, you can be in Christ according to prophecy (Genesis 22:18) or you can be in Christ according to the mystery (Ephesians 3:6), but you have to be in Christ. It is the righteousness of faith, not the righteousness of the Law, not the righteousness of works, but it is the righteousness of faith that qualifies.

Redeemed Israel (Acts 3) will be the blessing to the world, but they have to be in Christ first.

There is no blessing outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have just got to understand that. I know you know that, and that is what he is dealing with here in the passage. God foresaw Christ's coming and he planned things accordingly.

My head goes bouncing around on the ceiling when I think about that. Paul is saying: *Hey fellas, God had us in mind when he planned these things. You don't have to go back over to that Law to perfect you. The Law had something else to do altogether. The blessings of the promises come to you through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Notice the word "promises" in Verse 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Do you see that that word is plural? The last few words in Galatians 3:28 are "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." "Ye" is the Body of Christ.

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

Tell me something. Is Christ Abraham's seed? Are you in Christ? How can you be in Christ and then not be Abraham's seed? There no salvation for anyone outside of Abraham because Christ is Abraham's seed. To be in Christ is to be Abraham's seed and if you are not Abraham's seed you are not going to be heirs according to the promise and you are not going to be an inheritor of eternal life.

The Acts 28 people – the amillennialists – get all bent out of shape with passages like this. God is not talking to you back in the Old Testament; he is not talking to the Body of Christ, the Church today. He is talking to Israel. They are in Christ according to prophecy – an entirely different program. God had us in mind; he just kept it hid in himself, but you see he had us in mind.

Mr. Stam, in his book (and in person if you talk to him), says: *You see those things back there, and it's wonderful to see how God planned for us. He had us in mind all along.* That's what Paul says. That's Romans 3.

One of the details of the Gospel of the Grace of God shows you that God in his manifold wisdom had us in mind and made provision for us. God has done those things for us; therefore,

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

That “promise” is singular. Did you notice that? The basic promise is the promise of eternal life. But you know, there was much more promised to Abraham than just eternal life, wasn’t there? God promised Abraham a nation. Do you remember that? God promised Abraham a land. God promised that Abraham would be a blessing. God promised Abraham a whole lot of things. What he promised to Abraham, in essence, he was promising in Christ. There are other things involved than just eternal life, and, folks, we are blessed with all of them. I know that kicks the socks off some Grace people, but, people, we are blessed with everything that Abraham was blessed with and that includes the kingdom. I know what Grace people say, and some of them are ready to fight. But, my dear friend, you already know by now that there are a whole lot of things involved in the Gospel of the Grace of God that most Grace folks never really consider. You have already learned a lot of them, and there are a whole lot more for you to learn. Look at Verse 29 real carefully.

And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

By the way, let me say this to you: your inheritance goes back before Abraham. Our inheritance goes back before the world began. We saw those verses last week: Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:4. God takes that purpose and he focuses it in Abraham in order to focus it in Christ because when we receive Christ, we become Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. Christ receives the inheritance of Abraham and we are going to get everything that he gets. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Everything Jesus Christ inherits, we inherit.

Let’s take a minute and consider some of this. Come over to Hebrews 1. The Hebrew saints were having the same problem that the Galatians saints were having. They, too, were going back to the Law. They misunderstood where their inheritance was coming from. They misunderstood, or they forgot, that the inheritance comes through God’s Son, not through keeping the Law, and they were doing the same

thing that the Galatians were doing. The Galatians, members of the Body of Christ, are Gentiles – a different kind of situation – but yet, they had the same problem.

May I say to you gentlemen, in your ministry you are going to find that people are going to have the same problem that these two groups of people had. Here are the religious Jews; they get saved, and they see the blessings in Christ and then they forget that the inheritance comes through God's Son, and they go back to the Law. Do you know what religious people are going to do after they get saved? They say they are going to serve God through religion. There will always be that tendency.

The unsaved Gentile out here, that old heathen out here in the world who doesn't have any religion, comes in and do you know what he tries to do? He is going to get under the Law to be made perfect. Legalism is something you are going to battle and battle and battle. The reason is because when men walk in the flesh, they walk under the Law. They put themselves under the Law. Most of us walk in the flesh more than we walk in the Spirit. When we walk in the Spirit, we put ourselves under Grace as a motivating principle and operating procedure.

You need to be oriented to know how to combat that. The book of Galatians and the book of Hebrews are two fantastic books to do that.

Notice the inheritance. Paul, in Galatians, is dealing with the same issue that Hebrews 1 is dealing with – people going back to the Law.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Jesus Christ has been appointed heir of all things. Now, look at that. God has appointed him heir of all things. When did he do it? "In these last days." If God has appointed him to be heir of all things then I can assume that there was a time before when he was not the heir of all things. When did he become the heir of all things? Look at Verse 3.

Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:3-4)

My dear friend, his being “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” was when God sat him in the position of a son on his own right hand. That is a sign of his being appointed heir of all things. The appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ as the heir of all things was not in eternity past. It was not when he came as a babe in a manger. It was rather when he died at Calvary, was resurrected and then ascended up and was seated on the Father’s right hand. It has to do with the fact that Jesus Christ died and by himself purged our sins and then was raised from the dead, and at that point was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” Look on down in the passage.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? (Hebrews 1:5a)

He opens that verse with “For”; he is going to explain the inheritance that Christ has obtained. Notice how he does it. (He has been exalted above the angels in Verse 4.)

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? (Hebrews 1:5)

There are a lot of things in that verse. When he says, “This day have I begotten thee,” what is that a reference to? Is that a reference to eternity past? Is that a reference to when Christ was born and lay in a manger? Is it? How do you know it is not? Is he not called “the only begotten Son?” Yes, he is. “This day have I begotten thee.” What is that a quote from? Do you remember? Haven’t we been over this before? Come back to Psalm 2 and Acts 13. It is a reference to the resurrection of Christ.

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalms 2:7)

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise

which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Acts 13:29-33)

The “day” in Verse 33 is obviously the “day” of Verse 30 that God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ is the one who is begotten from the dead.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (Hebrews 1:6)

“The first begotten” – Jesus Christ bears a title that is a reference to his resurrection as the one who died at Calvary and then was resurrected from the dead. His resurrection from the dead was a birth. God the Father says, “This day have I begotten thee [from the dead].” There is something important to notice in that verse: “first begotten” (born from the dead). Come with me to John 1 and notice a comparison.

And the Word was made flesh [Christ], and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Do you see that expression “the Word was made flesh” and why he is called the “only begotten?”

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. (John 3:16a)

That “only begotten” there is a reference to the physical birth at Bethlehem of the Lord Jesus Christ. That term “only begotten” is a term that means he is the unique Son. He is a Son like no other son will ever be. There has never been a time - and there will never be another time - when God will take upon himself human flesh. That only happens one time. Jesus Christ is the only begotten and uniquely begotten Son of God. He is not just the only Son of God, but he is the only begotten. It is the only time in human history that the Lord becomes flesh.

That is a reference to the physical birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 1:5 and 6 the term is “the first begotten,” not the “only begotten” but the first begotten. Do you see the difference in the terminology? If you are the only begotten you are

the only one that will be that way, but if you are the first begotten, what does that imply? There will be some more.

Jesus Christ in his resurrection from the dead is the first of a whole bunch of people that are going to be begotten from the dead.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: ... And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (Revelation 1:4a-5a)

Jesus Christ is the first person to be born from the dead in the line of a bunch of people out here who are going to be born from the dead just as he was. What that has a reference to, my dear friend, is the fact that Jesus Christ was begotten from the dead in an immortal, glorified body. Now, he's the only one that has an immortal body yet.

[Jesus Christ] Who only hath immortality, (1 Timothy 6:16a)

The only one who has an immortal body at this moment is the Lord Jesus Christ, but, my dear friend, he was born from the dead. He received that immortal, glorified body that day when God the Father begat him from the dead. But he was begotten as the first in a whole line of people who are going to be born from the dead. There had been other people raised from the dead, but there had never before been someone begotten from the dead, raised in an immortal body, never to die again, raised in a glorified, resurrection body. Come to Luke and let me show you the difference.

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:35-36)

“Children of the resurrection” - they are begotten from the dead. They have eternal life. When Jesus Christ is said to be the firstborn from the dead, it is a reference to the fact that at the resurrection of Christ he inherited an immortal, glorified body. “This day have I begotten thee.”

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18)

He is the first one to come up from the dead with an immortal, glorified body never to die again.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
(Romans 8:29)

He is the first one born from the dead in the line of a whole bunch of people (both those in the prophetic program and those in the mystery program) who are going to be born from the dead like him with immortal, glorified bodies – different glories, different stations - but children of the resurrection.

One of the things in Hebrews 1 the writer there begins to delineate is the inheritance that Jesus Christ received, and he explains that God has appointed him to be heir of all things. What did he inherit? Number one, he inherited a glorified, immortal body. He was begotten from the dead. Number two, Verse 5 again:

And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
(Hebrews 1:5b).

Not only did he receive the glorified, immortal body but he received a sonship: “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.”

Wasn't he always the Son of God? Then how in the world could he say, “Then I'll be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son?” Do you remember the issue of adoption? Do you remember Galatians 4? Do you remember that in the scripture adoption is not taking somebody from another family and putting him in your family; it is taking your own son (though he is heir of all things, he learns obedience under tutors and governors until the time comes) and you declare him heir? You have his *Bar-Mitzvah*. You declare him the heir of all things and you proclaim him to be a full-grown son, and he sits at your right hand.

Christ received an adoption. Folks, he was declared to be the Son of God with power. God said: *Here he is! He is the one that is going to inherit everything!*

When he went away he said: *All authority in heaven and earth is mine.* He has not taken it up yet, but it belongs to him. He is the Man who has been appointed to be the King, the Potentate, the Head over the whole shebang.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith,
And let all the angels of God worship him [angelic subjection].
(Hebrews 1:6)

When we get over in the book of Ephesians, we are going to study more and more about how the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be the Head over the heavenly government. That is not the issue in the book of Hebrews. My dear friend, Jesus Christ has been appointed the Head over the heavenly government, and the subjection of the angelic creation has been placed under his feet – and that does not just mean angels running around picking up the trash after you.

The angelic creation is there for the rulership of the universe. There is a heavenly government, and Christ has been made the Head over that heavenly government. When we study the book of Ephesians and the book of Colossians, we begin to find out that the way that he takes up and exercises that headship over the heavenly government is through the instrumentality of the Body of Christ. You and I are going to be those through whom he inherits. Did you ever notice that verse in Ephesians 1:18 about “his inheritance in the saints?” Did you ever wonder why it is called his inheritance instead of our inheritance?

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:18)

He has been appointed heir of the heavenly government, and he is going to inherit it through us. You are a part of, and you do have a part in, that heavenly kingdom. That aspect of that kingdom is the mystery kingdom in the heavenly places. That is a part of the inheritance that God never told Abraham about (that he never told anybody about until he told Paul), and the average Grace believer does

not know anything about it, either, but it is there. It is some of that advanced information that we will get into when we get in the book of Ephesians.

My point is that the way you get over to Ephesians is to go through Romans 4. Ephesians goes back before the foundation of the world, but, folks, as we walk back there we walk through Abraham; we don't go around him, we go through him. In Romans 5, we have to go back through Adam and then we will go back before the foundation of the world.

Paul says: *This promise goes back here and takes care of Israel and then goes back over here [before the foundation of the world and takes care of us.]* That's wonderful. Read on down to Verse 7.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. [See, he gave the angels quite a position. They have a charge and responsibility.] But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. (Hebrews 1:7-9)

Jesus Christ inherited a kingdom - "Thy throne." He inherited a kingdom, and you are heirs according to the promise. Now, you don't learn the mystery aspect, the heavenly aspect of it, *except* through Paul. Hey! There is just one kingdom – just one - and it has to do with gathering all things together in the dispensation of the fullness of times. He will get it all together in Christ.

You would not know about all that God had planned for us except that you get the details in Paul's gospel, which is what we are trying to do. But, - they're there! And you can see how God had it in mind when he was talking about that kingdom; he was not talking about just a little piece down here. God sees the whole thing.

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. (Hebrews 1:10-12)

One day God Almighty is going to take this old universe off like an old garment and throw it in the dump heap and put on a new heaven and a new earth, and that belongs to Jesus Christ.

Job says the heavens are not clean in his sight today. One day God is going to take the whole thing and make a new heaven and a new earth and all that will belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is his inheritance, and we are going to inherit it as his joint-heirs. Now, you talk about an inheritance! That's an inheritance - an eternal, glorified, immortal body; that is the adoption. Doesn't he say over in Ephesians that he "predestinated us unto the adoption of children"? That is the complete, total status of heirs of all things - participation in the heavenly government, in the heavenly kingdom, in a new heaven and a new earth, showing that up with his glory.

Romans 4 is dealing just with the very first, most basic issue of the inheritance. Romans 4 is not dealing with the adoption and the heavenly kingdom and the new heaven. It is dealing with just the most basic aspect of inheritance and that is eternal life. We go back there and we see that, because Abraham had the righteousness of faith and God blessed him with the promise of an eternal inheritance. Because you and I, like Abraham, have the righteousness of faith God gives us a participation in that eternal inheritance.

Now listen to me: this is what Romans 4 is telling you. Do you remember, in Romans 2, to whom the justice of God gives eternal life?

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: (Romans 2:7)

The justice of God will give eternal life to the person who has absolute, perfect righteousness. If you have perfect, absolute, total righteousness God will give you eternal life. Do you have it? You sure don't. In Christ, do you have it? Therefore in Christ, you can have it.

That is the way it is in Galatians 3:14 – get the blessing, get eternal life, then you can get the promise of the Spirit.

The justice of God gives eternal life to those who have perfect righteousness and that same justice can give us eternal life as well as righteousness because we are the children of Abraham. Now, we get the righteousness in Romans 3. He says:

You've got righteousness. Why? Because God planned to give it to those who are in Christ. God made a provision and it is in Christ.

But the justice of God is not free just to say: *You've got righteousness and now I can give you eternal life* if that eternal life had been promised to somebody else. That eternal life was promised to the seed of Abraham.

Paul is explaining, in Romans 4, that the promise that limited eternal life to the seed of Abraham did not prohibit the previous plan that he had before the foundation of the world to give eternal life to us because God justified Abraham in a special manner that allowed for our inclusion. Do you see that? Do you understand what I am saying to you, what Paul is dealing with here? There is a detail of his gospel in Romans 3 - righteousness in Christ - so now you are going to get eternal life, too. You have been made heirs according to the promise and God had a special way of including you. Even though you are not a seed of Abraham according to the flesh God made a special provision. You see, God's promise to Abraham did not limit his ability to give it to us because God justified Abraham in a special manner so we could be included. That is the issue in Romans 4.

And, again, that is fantastic - the matchless, manifold wisdom of God to provide for our inclusion so that his eternal purpose can be executed in time with total precision.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 7

As we have gone through the book of Romans we are coming down to the end of the third semester. I had hoped we would be through the middle of Chapter 5 at this time, but we will aim for finishing Chapter 4 by the end of the next lesson. I can always teach a long time from one or two verses but we need to keep moving. I want to go over Verse 13 to 16 in this lesson and try to get the flow of what is going on. We have been seeing the details of the gospel of the grace of God committed to the Apostle Paul. We started off by seeing the issue of the wrath of God in Chapter 1, 2 and the first part of Chapter 3: how men deserve the wrath of God and the justice of God deals with men and how he will give eternal life to those who have perfect righteousness. Then we see how, in Chapter 3:21-26, that God's remedy for sin is available through the propitiatory work of Christ at Calvary. We went through that in great detail and you should have a firm grasp on that propitiatory work of Christ for our sins.

Then in the latter part of Chapter 3 we saw that the issue with God has always been one thing – faith, and that faith has always been what God was looking for with men in every age. The gospel committed to Paul explains to us not just how God was righteous in forgiving sin in Time Past, but that the issue has always been faith, a believing response to the word that was given in whatever the age would have been.

In the first 12 verses of Chapter 4 we saw the wisdom of God in justifying Abraham in a very unique manner so that gentiles today (us) who are being dealt with in the Age of Grace can get in on the promise of eternal life. In Chapter 3 we get righteousness. God can give eternal life to people who have perfect righteousness, but eternal life was promised to Abraham and his seed. So although we have the righteousness in Chapter 3, (through the blood of the cross) now Paul is further explaining the detail that God can also give us eternal life; that his justice is free to

give us eternal life because of a special way that he justified Abraham. The first twelve verses in Romans 4 are very exciting to me. I do not know if I have been able to communicate the insight these verses have to you but I hope you see the issue of how – because of God’s foreknowledge and what he had planned before (in regard to the dispensation of grace) in justifying Abraham, we can look back now and see how God had been planning for us all along. The wisdom of God in providing for us is magnified in the Gospel of Grace in that we become heirs according to the promise of eternal life given to Abraham. That special manner of Abraham’s justification allows him to be a dual father of the uncircumcision and of the circumcision also – in fact, the father of all “them that believe.” (Vs. 11,12)

All of that is preparatory to Verse 13 where Paul will go on and begin to deal with the issue that the inheritance does not come from the law either.

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. (Romans 4:13)

Notice that the promise is that he should be “heir of the world.” Now notice:

(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. (Romans 4:17)

Those two verses are a problem to many people because they take the verses to say that Abraham was promised to be the heir of the world, and since we are the seed of Abraham, what we have is what God promised to Abraham, e.g. the a-millennial position. They make the Body of Christ today to be Israel in the promises in the Old Testament. They say there is no literal, physical, visible, earthly, Davidic kingdom promised to Abraham’s seed. They think the promise that he would be heir of the world was a spiritual promise and covers us. They think we are the fulfillment of that promise because Verse 16 says Abraham is the father of us all.

... but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) (Romans 4:16-17)

The A-millennialists take this passage and Galatians 3:

And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

... And claim that *you* are Abraham's seed. The modern day Charismatics think that you can take the health and wealth and blessing promises from the Old Testament and apply them to yourself. The problem with all that is they try to take all the blessings and claim them, but take all the curses and say, they belong to Israel. Here is probably their most used verse:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

So they say, *We are Christ's (Verse 29) so we are the people promised to Abraham.* That is how the a-millennial and charismatic positions execute their doctrine to get rid of the literal fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

The problem with all of that is this. All of that fails to see one important ingredient in both these passages and that is, *THE MYSTERY.*

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Galatians 3:8)

You see folks, the whole passage in Galatians is based upon the provision that God made for us back there in the justification of Abraham, knowing we were coming. When you go back to Romans 4:13 –

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, . . .

People have a little problem with that passage. "Heir of the **world.**" Not just the heir of Palestine. Pre-millennialists do not have good answers in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 for the a-millennialists because they do not see the Mystery either. Failing to see the truth of the Mystery they do not have a really good answer for the a-millennial position and that is where the a-millennial position came from. It is by saying that the church, the Body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost, when it is clear that the thing that began on the day of Pentecost is the Prophetic program. When I was in school they used to teach us that the New Testament church is the continuation of the Old Testament community. That is a-millennialism. That says

that today the church is the outgrowth of Israel and what is going on in Acts 2, 3, 4, etc.

Trying to put the Body of Christ back into that gets things all confused. Christ had been teaching about an earthly kingdom and if the issue is that the spiritual Body of Christ is a continuation of the Jewish Christian church then they are right and we are wrong. But that is not the case. The pre-millennialists fail to see the Mystery and fail to have an answer. The a-millennialist in his confusion just continues on with this thing. Notice Verse 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. (Romans 4:17)

What are “the nations?” They are the gentiles. The word gentile means “the nations.” In this passage, Abraham is linked to an association that goes far beyond blood ties to the nation Israel. He is the heir, not just to Palestine, but of the *world*. In Genesis 17:5 he is said to be the father of “many nations.” That tells you two things. All salvation – individual or international – ALL salvation is tied up in the Lord Jesus Christ. You do not want to forget that. That is what Paul is saying in both of these chapters: that all salvation is centered and bound up in Christ – who he is and what he does. We have already studied that Christ is the heir of all things and we are heirs *with him*.

When you begin in Verse 13 and following you will see that the issue here is that the inheritance – not merely justification – the inheritance of eternal life (that the justice of God is free to give to us now that we have righteousness) – we are qualified to receive because of the special way God made the promise to Abraham to include us. So we are qualified to be heirs of the promise given to Abraham because he is the father of the uncircumcision as well as the circumcision. The point in Verses 13 to 16 is that the inheritance does not come from the law but comes from the promise.

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. (Romans 4:13)

That is clear enough, isn't it? The Jews assumed that they were going to get the inheritance from God that was promised to Abraham through the law. Even the believing Jews thought that. That was the battle Paul had to fight all along with the Judaizers.

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command [them] to keep the law of Moses. (Acts 15:5) ["them" = gentiles]

Even the believing Jew was working under the program that said you had to be circumcised and keep the law in order to get the inheritance. But Paul is saying, *My Gospel declares that you do not have to be circumcised – that is not the issue.* [Romans 4:9-12] *And you do not have to keep the Mosaic Law.* [Rom 4:13-16] So what Paul was addressing here are the two concerns the Jews had and he is laying them aside. He is showing that in the wisdom of God the Gospel of Grace is provided, whereby uncircumcised gentiles can be added and that the law is not the way anybody got the inheritance. Israel did not earn it; they got it by promise.

The issue is stated in Verse 14:

For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (Romans 4:14)

If the inheritance came through the law, it would cancel out the promise. If it came through the law, what would happen to the idol-worshiping gentiles? They could not get it, even with the provision made in Abraham's justification, because, even though they could be heirs of Abraham without circumcision, if the promise came through the law, the gentile would still be out. That is why God gave it by promise. God did it this way so that the inclusion is complete. In the comparative passage, in Gal. 3:15-19, the argument is historical. He says it is by promise, not by the law, because the promise is given first. Later on the law is added to it. When you are adding something, it does not disannul the first.

But the argument here (in Romans 4) is doctrinal.

For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (Romans 4:14)

If the inheritance comes by a legal contract, *faith* is made void. Faith is a verbal contract. The promise is then made of none effect. A legal contract negates any oral promises made in the past. The point is that if the inheritance came by the legal contract, the promise goes away – is negated. Look at the problem:

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. (Romans 4:15)

The law works wrath. That is proof that the law makes it impossible for anyone to receive the inheritance. The Jew said the law makes it possible for us to get it. Paul said, No, you misunderstand – the law makes it impossible because the law points at you and says, “Guilty.” Every criminal knows that the law works wrath. Have you ever seen a criminal run to a policeman and shake his hand? The testimony of the bible from one end to the other is that the law works wrath.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (Romans 3:19)

Do you see what the law does? It brings you in guilty.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (Romans 5:20)

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which [was ordained] to life, I found [to be] unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew [me]. Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. (Romans 7:9-13)

He is saying there that the problem was not with the law (the law was righteous and good), but the problem is in me – I am a sinner. The law accuses of sin and produces wrath. That performance system points out my lack of performance and works wrath.

But if the ministration of **death**, written [and] engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the

face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which [glory] was to be done away: (2 Corinthians 3:7)

For if the ministration of **condemnation** [be] glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (2 Corinthians 3:9)

The title of the law is "Death and Condemnation."

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (Galatians 3:10-12)

What is the problem there? No one can keep the law.

Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Galatians 3:19)

Was the law added to get one saved? No. It points out our sin and our need to be saved. A lady asked, *Do you mean to tell me that God puts all your sins on Christ and there punishes your sin, blaming Christ for it? And that is all there is to it? I just have to rest in that?* "Yes, good! You see it!" *I don't believe any of that*, she replied. She thinks,

Jesus paid a part and I a part, you know.

Sin had left a crimson stain,

We are going to wash it white as snow.

She is dead wrong about that! She never learned what verse 10 says:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, **Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.** (Galatians 3:10)

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is **guilty of all.** (James 2:10)

What God requires is perfect righteousness and you do not have it. There is only one place to get it and that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. The law is a killer.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was **against us**, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Colossians 2:14)

Folks, the law is against you. It was contrary to us. It opposes you. It works wrath.

O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? The sting of death [is] sin; and **the strength of sin [is] the law**. (1 Corinthians 15:55-56)

What makes death hurt? Sin.

What gives sin its power over you? Guilt.

That is why he says in Romans 4:15 (and why I go over verses you are probably already familiar with) – the reason no one can get the inheritance through the law is – we can not measure up! Yet, men still try to gain salvation by works. They continue to approach god in *their* way – on their terms – offering God things he will never accept.

We understand that we are not under the law today. The principle of grace is what is operative. Yet, there is a legal use for the law today. There is a way you can use the law in the age of grace.

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. (1 Timothy 1:5-7)

The “commandment” there is from Verse 1 – it does not refer to “the law.”

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, [which is] our hope; (1 Timothy 1:1)

Paul said that people trying to teach the law today are ignorant. If you try to build a ministry on the law principle, or a performance system, using fear and guilt to motivate people to serve God, Paul said you don't know what you are talking about. I know that people want to put a law into effect to control sin. Paul said when that happened, *sin revived*. God said, *Give them grace and that will control sin*. People

think the grace principle will make them sin. But God says they do not understand what God is doing.

But we know that the law [is] good, if a man use it lawfully; (1 Timothy 1:8)

What is the lawful use of the law?

By the law is the knowledge of sin.

The purpose of the law is to make known sin. Then the proper, lawful use of the law would be to show people they are sinners.

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. (1 Timothy 1:9-11)

If you are not sound in Paul's gospel, people will come along and put you back under the law. However, if you are a justified person, as Paul said to the Corinthians:

And such were some of you: **but ye are** washed, **but ye are** sanctified, **but ye are** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Paul told them they were no longer all those things they used to be (vs. 9, 10) so the law was no longer for them. But it *is* for unsaved people. It is designed to show them their sin and the fact they have come short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23) When I worked in the Rescue Mission, I guess at least twice a day I heard people say they believed they should keep the commandments. They were all probably guilty of being arrested in the last month! I used to ask them to name the Ten Commandments in order. Never could they recite them to me in order. How can you keep them if you do not even know what they are? That does not make good sense. Therefore, use the law "lawfully" today, folks. Paul said in Romans 4:15 that the law works wrath. Do not use the law to try to gain entrance to heaven or to make people think they can get to heaven by it, but use the law correctly – to condemn

them, to show them that they have violated God's righteousness, his standards, his mandates, his law – show them they are sinners short of the perfect righteousness God requires.

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. (Romans 4:15)

Because the law cannot get you the inheritance –

Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression. 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, (Romans 4:15-16)

It is to our great advantage to receive the promise *by faith alone* because that is the only grounds you will ever have that will give you total confidence and security. There is no toil or effort in faith. There are no works in faith, nor any merit and therefore, there is no boasting in faith. But there *is* the sure foundation of God's Word.

It is of faith that it might be by grace.

Paul wants us to see the security of the inheritance we have in Christ. He wants you to see the confidence and the security that is ours by virtue of the way God has provided the inheritance for us – GRACE. If you are going to have confidence you are going to have to understand what Paul says here about Abraham and how he got the promise by faith – not by works, not by the law. If you got it by faith, then you can not lose it by your works. You cannot lose it by violating the law because you did not get it that way to start with.

I had been saved about three or four months when an old fellow (in a denominational church) came up to me and asked, "Do you believe in once saved always saved?" I said I did not know except that I believed in "once born again, always born again." "Well," he said, what are you going to do when you sin?" At fifteen years old I had never thought of some of those things before. I answered him, "Well, I guess I was not trusting me to get me saved to start with, and I won't trust me to keep me saved!" That did not satisfy that old man, but I never forgot that

experience. That is what the verse is saying: “it is by faith that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure.” Secure to **all** the seed – to all of us. Notice when he says “that it might be by grace” that it takes you back to Verse 5:

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

We are justified by grace. We have righteousness by faith – by grace, but we also get eternal life on the basis of grace. Notice that he says, *that it might be sure to ALL the seed*. Not only to *that only which is of the law*.

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, (Romans 4:16)

He is the father of all those who simply take God at his word. That is fantastic! Just to know that God has provided righteousness and eternal life in such a manner – in his manifold wisdom – that we idol-worshiping gentiles, dead in our sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh (I hope you understand the importance of those two expressions in Colossians 2) -

Dead in your sins – (Ephesians 2:1-10)

Uncircumcision of your flesh – (Ephesians 2:11 ... on)

Spiritually dead. Dispensationally cut off; an outcast.

Yet God provides righteousness by planning ahead, foreseeing what he was going to do, and justifying Abraham in a special manner so that we can be his seed by faith. He has given us righteousness and eternal life – all by grace. All by what God is free to do for us because of the cross of Calvary. If there is anything that will thrill your heart any more than that, I do not know what it would be.

Notice when Paul says it is “of faith that it might be by grace:” Come with me to Galatians 4 for a little aside. In Romans 4:16, Abraham is said to be the “father of us all.” Abraham is the great example in the bible that stands for faith. But Abraham had a partner in all of this. Sarah, in Galatians 4, is set out as an example of grace. Just as Romans 4 couples faith and grace and marries them to one another, so it is that Abraham represents faith and Sarah represents grace. Abraham is said to be

the father of us all. Sarah is associated with the “mother of us all.” If you have ever wondered about that, look at this passage:

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman [was] by promise. (Galatians 4:21-23)

Ishmael was the son of the bondwoman whose name was Hagar. Isaac's mother was named Sarah. (You should be reading Genesis along with this study.)

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (Galatians 4:24-26)

That is the earthly Jerusalem – in bondage, and the Jerusalem up in heaven which is free.

For it is written, Rejoice, [thou] barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. (Galatians 4:27)

Sarah (grace) produced more children than Hagar did. She has more of a lineage and descendency.

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. (Galatians 4:28)

As in Romans, Chapter 4.

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him [that was born] after the Spirit, even so [it is] now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Galatians 4:29-31)

Hagar represents the law – the bondwoman. The law produces bondage and God will not accept that fruit.

Sarah is grace. Sarah's seed, Isaac, produces more. Verse 27 is important to note:

Again - Rejoice, [thou] barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. (Galatians 4:27)

People think that the law will produce greater results than grace will, but they are wrong. The problem with Galatia was that they were being encouraged to be under the law in order to please God. Paul said, no, they should be under grace in order to get more results by being motivated by God's grace. God's grace and the love of Christ will produce life. In your Christian life and your ministry, you must work under the principle of grace. You need to see all that God has made you in Christ and then respond in gratitude, loving him because he first loved you.

So, Abraham represents faith and Sarah represents grace. Abraham is "the father of us all." We all simply take God at his word and believe him. Sarah is associated with the Jerusalem which is above that is free and is the "mother of us all." All of our blessings come from that heavenly ministry, not the earthly, and they come by God's grace.

So what a blessing it is to be able to know that grace is far more productive and is also acceptable to God.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 8

The last part of Chapter 4 contains very important and interesting information about Paul's point here. In the conclusion of the chapter the apostle Paul points to Abraham as an example and says: *You see what he did? I want you to do the same thing so you can have confidence and the same hope (confident expectation) that he had.*

So Paul graphically pictures what Abraham did when he heard the promise that God gave him. Begin with me at Verse 16 where we finished last time.

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, (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. 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. 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: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Romans 4:16-21)

What he does there, again, is that he points out in the passage what Abraham did when he heard the promise. What Abraham did when he heard the promise is the thing that caused him to have the confidence that he had. "Therefore it is of faith," Verse 16 says, "that it might be by grace." The blessing comes by faith so that it might be by grace and not by works. The reason is "that the promise might be sure to all the seed."

Now, we have talked about the passage and I have tried to say to you that the only way you are going to have any security is for justification and eternal life to be the gift of grace. You never have security when you have to work. You never know if you did enough, if you did it right. I say to people all the time, "If you had to do that,

you would not know whether you did it right.” So, the least little thing – it has got to be God’s grace. So, it is by faith that it might be by grace.”

“To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” Now, that word “promise” is important. A promise is only as good as the one who gives it. Do you know that? I can promise you something all day long but if I don’t perform it, it is of no value. The word there for “promise” is a word that means to proclaim, to make a statement but it is in the middle voice.

The Greek language has an active and a passive voice just like the English does. The subject is doing the action of the verb or receiving the action of the verb. The Greek also has a middle voice which means the action of the verb is being done for the benefit of the subject.

When God makes the promise, it is in the middle voice. The idea there is that he makes the proclamation for himself. In other words, he is saying: *I’m saying this and I’m backing up what I am saying with myself. I am the one who is behind the statement that I’m making to you.* God backs the statement up by himself.

That is why “to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.” The promise is secure and sure because the promise is based on the veracity of God. The promise is based on God’s integrity.

Do you remember that verse over there in Titus 1:2 where he talks about the promise of eternal life?

In hope [confident expectation] of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (Titus 1:2)

See? The promise is based on the integrity of God – “God that cannot lie.” He is as good as his word. He promised something based on his own integrity.

Look at Hebrews, Chapter 6.

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two immutable things [two things that cannot change], in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Hebrews 6:17-18)

That is a fantastic passage! We “who have fled for refuge [to Christ] to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” We, by personal choice, have relied exclusively upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a promise from God and it is guaranteed, it is made sure by two immutable things: his promise and his word, and then he gives you an oath to go with them.

Here, this is not talking about us, of course. It is talking about Abraham but the issue is the same kind of thing.

He says: *I gave the promise to Abraham so he and his heirs would have confidence in it. I promised, I gave my word on it and then I swore by myself.*

The issue on a promise is just that. It is sure so you are confident. Why would a promise come through? Not because you performed but because of God’s word and his integrity. So he says:

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 [the nation Israel] but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham [the Gentiles, the uncircumcised]; who is the father of us all, (Romans 4:16)

“Who is Abraham” - Skip the parenthesis.

...before him whom he believed, ... (Romans 4:17)

In other words, in the presence of God, Abraham is the father of all that believe, all who simply take God at his word. Before God, “whom he believed,” Abraham is the father of them all.

Notice when he says “Before him whom he believed, even God.” Whom did Abraham believe? God. Notice carefully the object of Abraham’s faith is God. Now, there is no merit in faith, per se. If faith is not in the right thing, it is of no value. Faith does not have any merit. The object of faith is the issue. The object of faith is God. Notice what he says about God.

...God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. (Romans 4:17)

There are two things. First, Abraham believed God and God is the one who quickens the dead. God gives life to the dead. In other words, Abraham believed in the God of resurrection. He believed in a God who had power to do what he

promised to do. The promise had to do with an eternal inheritance. Do you remember how we studied that? It had to do with eternal life. Abraham believed God who gave life to the dead. We studied how he understood that Isaac was going to be resurrected from the dead in Genesis, Chapter 22. Abraham understood some things about God-given life. He goes back to Genesis 15 (where Paul begins Romans 4) and comes down to the end of the chapter and goes back to that issue of resurrection life. He says, "Abraham is the father of us all before God whom he believed." God is the one who quickens the dead. He gives resurrection life, eternal life.

Then he says, "and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

First, Abraham believed in God who had the power to do what he said he would do, and second, he believed in God who "calleth those things which be not as though they were." That's a great description of God. Come back with me to Isaiah 41 and notice the challenge that God gives to the heathen gods, the idols.

He "calleth those things which be not as though they were" – what he is saying is that what God says will happen, happens. He calls the thing that has not come to pass yet as though it has already happened. He can tell the future. When God says a thing is going to happen, do you know what happens? It happens. Abraham believed God who could do what he said he would do and when he says something will happen, it happens. God has that power.

It would be like in Romans 8 when he says "whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." All that is in the past tense. You are not glorified yet but as far as God is concerned, you already are.

He called those things that are not as though they were because as far as God is concerned, *for me to say and do it, it's done*. What he says is going to happen, it happens. You can bank on it.

You talk about a sense of humor, now. Watch the Lord. He's got a sense of humor.

Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: [Come on, we want to know whether you are a real god or

not. Do what a real god can do. Show us the future.] yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together. (Isaiah 41:23)

He says: *Don't just sit there, fella, if you're a god, go do something. Do something a god is supposed to do.*

Behold, ye *are* of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination *is he that* chooseth you. I have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as *upon* mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, *He is* righteous? yea, *there is* none that sheweth, yea, *there is* none that declareth, yea, *there is* none that heareth your words. (Isaiah 41:24-26)

I mean, brother, he hurls that accusation at them. You want to know if a god is a god or not? Let him put up. He says back in Deuteronomy: *the prophet that comes in and says this and that, you watch him and see if what he says comes to pass. If he's got it, it will come.*

Abraham believed that God quickens the dead, that he could do what he said he would do: quicken the dead, give eternal life and give resurrection life. Abraham was not believing in a God who could not do what he said he was going to do. Believing in fact and believing in somebody who could do someone's reality and a God, when he says something to you, it happens.

Notice that a promise is only as good as the guy that gave it and if the guy that gave it to you has the power to do what he said he was going to do, when he says something is going to happen, it happens. Can you trust what he says? Good assurance, isn't it? That is whom Abraham trusted. The object of his faith was God. You know, folks, the essence of faith is just to believe what God believes. It is to count a thing, reckon a thing, look at a thing the way God looks at it. That is what Abraham is doing.

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. (Romans 4:18)

When he says "Abraham 'who against hope believed in hope'" – what he is saying is that he believed what God said in the face of all the odds to the contrary.

Everything looked as though it could not come to pass, that everything was against what God had promised. Abraham believed in what God promised in spite of how bad things looked out there.

What was the hope? “That he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken.” Abraham believed that what God said to him was going to come to pass. Now that is the character of faith.

The object is God but the character and essence of faith is simply to believe what God says to you. Abraham took God at his word. He did not find the basis and the cause to hope in the realm of his senses and feelings or what he could see or circumstances around him, or his own abilities to perform. Abraham found the ground, the reason for his hope, in God and in God’s word to him. Abraham knew that when he trusted God’s word to him that God could do it. How did he trust God? - By trusting what God said to him.

If you are going to walk by faith, you will have to walk by believing what God says to you. A lot of things that people call “faith” are not faith. I said this to some people in that camp last week, “You cannot be water baptized in the Dispensation of Grace by faith.” I smiled when I said it but it is a fact. You can not speak in tongues today by faith. You do it by presumption, by credulity, but you don’t do it by faith because God never told you to do it today. God never told you to get water baptized today. You can not go out by faith and carry out the post-resurrection commission. God never gave that to you and me today to carry out and if God did not say for you to do it, you can’t do it by faith. You do it by presumption. You do it by delusion, self-deception, but you do not do it by faith.

Presumption and credulity and delusion – people call that “faith.” That is not faith. Faith is believing what God says to you. You can be sincere about things but if you don’t know what God said for you to do, you can not walk by faith. And, if you do not do what you did because God said for you to do it, you can’t do it by faith. It’s important that you understand what God’s word is for you.

So, the object of Abraham’s faith is God. The ground or the subject of his faith is what God said to him.

From Verses 19 to 21, there are seven issues listed about Abraham's faith. Paul lists these things to show you that Abraham had real faith, not mental assent or self-delusion. It was not presumption. It was not just being credulous but it was real, genuine faith.

And being not weak in faith ... (Romans 4:19a)

Do you know how you make something weak? You mix it up. Abraham's faith was not all mixed up with other stuff. He believed God.

... he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: (Romans 4:19b)

You understand that is a good verse about death. Was Abraham dead? No, he was a hundred years old. He was alive, but his body was dead. What does that mean? His body was functionally dead.

"Death" in the Bible does not mean cessation of activity. This death here is functional death. He had lost the ability of his body to function in as far as a father in reproduction. Notice, Abraham was not troubled by looking within his own body at his own personal weaknesses. (That ought to be an encouragement to you.) Abraham did not look inside and say: *Well, I can't do this so I can't be the man God called me to be.* He looked inside and said: *Man, I do not understand this. I wonder how God is going to do this. I'm going to watch and see.*

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: (Romans 4:19)

He did not look around at the difficulty of outward circumstances. He doesn't look in at his own personal weaknesses. He does not look at Sarah, his wife, at the outward circumstances. She can't have children. That is not a problem to him. He is not troubled by those things.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ... (Romans 4:20)

"He staggered not." What he is talking about there is being "double-minded." Come over to James, Chapter 1 and I will show you a parallel passage to that issue. The man knew what God had promised him so though it seemed impossible, though

his inward weakness, his outward circumstances, all seemed to mitigate against what God said would come to pass, Abraham does not stagger, he does not waver or vacillate.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8)

Listen, people, there will never be any stability in a guy who goes here and goes there.

Do you remember Aesop's fable about the fellow, with his friend, who got invited to two birthday parties and he came to a fork in the road. One party was at the end of one road and one party was at the end of the other road. He could not make up his mind and he'd go a little way on one road and then back up and go up the other road and in a little while come back. He spent all day going up one way and then the other. He could not make up his mind. His friend went one way to one party and spent half the day there and then crossed over the meadow and went to the other party. He made both parties.

I remembered that double-minded guy when I was a kid. He doesn't keep anything focused in his attention. The guy vacillates, he is tossed. He is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind, going anyway you want to go, man.

Abraham set God's promise before him and said: *That's what God said and that is what I am going to stick with.* That is fantastic. Do you know that? If you want some stability, that is how you have it.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (Romans 4:20)

Do you know why Abraham was strong in faith? Because he knew the Lord. He knew God.

You go to a motel. There's a bed. One guy comes in, takes a shower and gets in the bed and just enjoys the night's rest. The next night a fellow comes in and looks at that bed and says, "I wonder if that thing will hold me up." He looks at himself and looks at the bed. He goes in and takes a shower and comes out and

looks at that bed and shakes it and gets in. It squeaks and he lies there and worries all night whether or not that bed is going to hold him up. It held both of them up but one man enjoyed the nice rest and the other did not.

One had confidence in the bed and the other didn't. What is the bed going to do – fall down a foot? He just went ahead and did not worry about it. The other guy just fretted and did not get anywhere.

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Romans 4:21)

Abraham was strong in faith. He knew the Lord. He was “strong in faith.”

... giving glory to God; (Romans 4:20)

The idea there is that Abraham just thanked God for the answer before it arrived. He is not weak in faith that considers his own body or the outward circumstances with Sarah but rather, he staggers not “at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;”

He says: *Glory to God! We're going to get a seed. I am going to be the father of it.* He just glorifies God for it. He is thanking God before the answer even gets there. That is interesting to me. What pleases and honors the Lord most is faith. Do you know that? The thing that is going to please God the most in your life and mine is just taking God at his word.

And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Romans 4:21)

What does that mean? Abraham had his mind made up.

I met a lady down south one time when I spent a night in Philadelphia, Mississippi in the Delphia (philaDELPHIA) Motel. (I can remember *that* and have no idea about something important.) Another man and I were leaving and there were some people cleaning up. I went next door and gave them a gospel tract and talked with them a minute. This little lady says, “Yes sir. I'm saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost and got a made-up mind.” I thought, “Glory to God for that!” “I am fully persuaded.” That is great.

That is what Abraham was. He said: *I've got a made-up mind. God can do what he has said he's going to do. I know the Lord.*

In Verse 22, you'll see why God went through all that with Abraham.

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. (Romans 4:22)

In other words, because those things were true, his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. He had the righteousness of faith.

Please don't misunderstand what is going on here. Paul does not list the things in Verses 19 to 21 about Abraham's faith to imply that Abraham was justified because his faith was strong, but rather, what those verses are telling you is that these issues of his faith demonstrated that Abraham really, genuinely believed God. He had real faith. He had genuine, heartfelt trust in the Lord. He did not have just mental assent. You know people who have that. They just mentally agree to a set of ideals. They get in trouble and ask God to help them, you know, that kind of thing. Abraham was not being deceived (self-deception). He wasn't just denying reality. He did not just say; *We do not have a kid but we are going to make out that we are going to have one.* He was not denying reality. Abraham was not being presumptuous or credulous, that is, believing some outlandish kind of thing.

Those four things: mental assent, delusion, presumption and credulity, those four things that you are going to find in your ministry that people substitute for faith. You need to remember those things.

Mental assent, delusion (self-delusion, deceiving yourself, denying reality in the face of reality), presumption and credulity. People substitute those four things for faith. Abraham had genuine faith and that is what Paul is illustrating.

For example, "I've got my healing."

"Where is it, brother?"

"Well, it hasn't just arrived yet."

That is self-deception. That is denying what is true. Abraham was not doing that. He said: *We don't have a kid but God showed up and God told me that I am going to have one and I am believing God. I know he will do what he has said he is going to do.* He is not being credulous or he is not deluded. He has real faith. Because he had genuine, heartfelt trust in God's word to him, he had the righteousness of faith.

Verse 13 says: "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." That is the whole issue in the rest of the chapter. He got it not through the law, not through the rites of circumcision but he got it through genuine faith.

Now, in Verses 23 and 24, he's going to apply the issue to you and me.

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; (Romans 4:23)

In other words, God did not put it down just for Abraham's information because Abraham did not even read it. Moses wrote it.

But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (Romans 4:24)

In other words, the principle of righteousness by faith that is true in Abraham and that you see in Abraham is true of us because we are the children of Abraham.

But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, **if** we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (Romans 4:24)

Do you see that "if?" Please don't misunderstand that righteous and eternal life are imputed on the condition of faith in the God of resurrection IF we believe on him (God) that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

The content of our faith is different from Abraham's but the object of our faith (God and the character of our faith, believing God's word to us is the grounds of our faith) has to be the same. His revelation to us is different but the object and the ground of our faith is the same: it's God's word; to believe in God. Righteousness is imputed in this bible on the condition of faith. Now, that is what Verse 25 gets into.

We believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered [by God] for our offences [the negative side], and [Christ] was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:24b-25)

God delivered him up to the cross as the propitiation for our sins. Look back to Chapter 3, Verse 25.

[Jesus] Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Romans 3:25)

God set the Lord Jesus Christ forth as a fully satisfying sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. God delivered him up.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,
how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
(Romans 8:32)

You see, God delivers up his Son to the death of the cross. He pays the penalty for our sins. That is the cause of our justification. The reason that we can be justified is by that fully satisfying sacrifice of Christ who takes away *all* of the penalty. The justice of God is satisfied with his crosswork. He is raised there (Verse 25) for our justification. That is, it was for the purpose of declaring us righteous that God raised Christ from the dead. Write that down. It is for the purpose of declaring us righteous that God raised Christ from the dead. It is for the purpose of declaring the believer righteous that God raised Christ from the dead. That is what the verse says: “raised again for our justification.”

Now, the word “for” there is the little preposition “*dia*.” *Dia*, a preposition when used with the accusative case as it is here, means “on account of” or “because of.” So, sometimes you hear people say, “That should be “because of” and by that they mean that he was raised because we were justified in the past. Well, that is not true. It is *dia* with the accusative and it means he was raised because of our justification but that does not put the justification in the past. You can translate it “because” and still miss the point as a lot of people do. God did not raise Christ from the dead because he already justified us.

You have to be careful with these terms. I have talked to you over and over again about these terms that are used to describe what was done for us at Calvary. Christ was not raised because he, already in the past, has justified us but rather he was raised so that he could be free to do so, so he would be free to declare us righteous.

When Christ died on the cross, God took our sin and placed it on the body of his Son and poured out his wrath there on Christ at Calvary. When Jesus Christ died at Calvary, he paid completely and totally the penalty of our sin and provided redemption for all men – a complete payment. God Almighty’s justice was

propitiated. Remember Chapter 3, right? God's justice was satisfied by that payment for sin.

Now, because the justice of God was satisfied with that payment for sin when Christ died there, he was buried. Now, on the basis of his death, his fully completely, totally, satisfying sacrifice, the justice of God is now able to declare you and me righteous. On the basis of the payment being made we can then be declared righteous.

So, he raised Christ from the dead – what are the wages of sin? Death! It is not possible, Acts 2 says, that death should hold him because he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and he came up without sin. If any of the sin over here, folks, was not completely paid for, he could not have been raised from the dead. Death would hold him.

The resurrection of Christ signals the finished, accomplished work at Calvary. What the resurrection means is that the cross work paid it all and the payment is completely finished. The resurrection is sort of like a receipt marked "Paid in Full." Now, when you've got the receipt marked "Paid in Full," then what can you do for the guy? You can say, "You're right. You are righteous." And, if you are righteous God's justice is also free to impute eternal life to you because God will give eternal life to those who have perfect righteousness. (We learned that in Romans, Chapter 2.)

What happens is that the cross of Christ pays for our sin. You have the negative side in the first part of Verse 25 – "he was delivered for our offenses." He paid a fully satisfying sacrifice for our sin and that he was raised again. The justice of God is free to declare us righteous and to impute eternal life. He was raised again so that (for the purpose, on account of the fact) God is going to justify us who believe. If Christ had not been resurrected there would not be a receipt marked "Paid in Full." You would not know that the payment satisfied. He wouldn't be the author of eternal life. He would not be the possessor of life.

And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.
(1 Corinthians 15:17)

Do you understand how that works? - Death holding him because sin got him. He did not have any sin of his own so if he put away all of your sin, what is going to keep him down? Nothing. So, the only reason he would be kept down is that your sins are not paid for. "And if Christ be not raised," your sin has not been paid for. All you have to have is one that hasn't been paid for and you wind up in hell so all the work he did would not avail. But he paid for all the sins therefore he came forth as the author of eternal life. He can justify us, declare us righteous and give us eternal life.

The justification here, if you look over to Romans 5:18, is described as the "justification of life."

Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (Romans 5:18)

Now, that is a positive thing. The cross takes away. Justification gives to us imputed righteousness and eternal life.

Justification gives us a new position, a new standing, a new place in Christ Jesus.

For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God [justification] in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

You see, justification is not just taking away. It is a positive thing. Jesus Christ dies and is raised again so you could be declared righteous and be given eternal life. Boy, to me that is fantastic!

Don't let somebody come along and pull that word "*dia*" on you. People use that and say, "He was raised because ..." and that's a perfectly good way to translate it if you mean that he was raised because it was God's purpose to declare righteousness to those who believe. What people do is to translate it like that and then say that the justification is back there – and it's not. The justification is the sentence of God that declares us righteous on the basis of the propitiatory work of Christ at Calvary. It stands and says the work is done. It is paid in full. You are righteous. You've got eternal life. So, you need to leave the verse as it is.

There are three things I want you to notice before we quit here in relation to justification.

1. The penalty is paid by the blood of Christ, “delivered for our offenses.” Chapter 5, Verse 9 talks about our being justified by his blood. The penalty is paid at the cross.

2. He is raised for our justification. In other words, we are justified by his blood, then, he is raised for our justification. The ground of it is the blood of Christ. The resurrection is the sentence in our favor which assures the value of the blood to us.

3. If you look back at Verse 24, that “if” - IF - we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. In Chapter 5, Verse 1, he says, “Therefore being justified by faith.” Faith is that which puts us among the number whose representative Christ is and was on that cross. Faith is what identifies us there with him. We look back for the cause and the declaration of our justification to the cross and to the resurrection but we are not actually justified until we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

I say that because some people say we are justified before the foundation of the world because Christ was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Therefore, in the mind of God we were all justified way back yonder.

That is the problem. Can a justified man be lost? Can a justified man be outside the Body of Christ? Well, if you were justified before the foundation of the world, were you ever lost? You were not. The Holy Spirit lied to you when he told you that you were, didn't he?

Were you ever outside the Body of Christ? Sure you were or else why did he have to put you in the Body of Christ? If you were justified before the foundation of the world, you couldn't have been lost or else a justified man could be lost and get out of the Body of Christ and therefore, you do not have any security. You want to watch out for that.

Here I am: I trust Christ as my Saviour and look yonder to faith over there. God Almighty puts me in Christ and in Christ I have his righteousness. When I get in

Christ, all that he did back there becomes mine. In Christ, I was crucified back there. I am not crucified over here. That is the issue of federal headship just like when you were in Adam back there and you sinned. You were not there but you were in Adam, your head. You weren't there but when you become one with Christ, everything he ever did becomes yours. It becomes yours over here when you trust him. It is not given to you before the foundation of the world.

My dear friend, he says he has "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." If you were saved before the foundation of the world, you have a problem there because you got in Adam. You got out of Christ, in Adam and back into Christ. How do you know you are not going to get out of Christ over here? You have no assurance of that.

What God purposed to do was to form a Body of Christ and we who believe were made members of that Body. Do you remember the verse in First Corinthians 1:21 that we studied? It pleased God in his sovereign choice, in his free will, he chose to save them that believe (we who believe are in Christ). God chose all those people who get into Christ, who are in Christ before the foundation of the world. God had a purpose before the foundation of the world to form a body of believers.

Now, Chapter 3:21 to the end of Chapter 4 is a very important section. In Chapter 3:21 you get into this "Now time" revelation.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested: ... (Romans 3:21-22)

You see down through the verses the remedy for sin through the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. Then you see beginning in Verse 28, the result of revelation that faith has always been the issue with God. He is free now to justify us because of the sacrifice of Christ there at Calvary that satisfied the justice of God, but he is also free, having justified us, to impute eternal life to all those who believe. That is the issue in Chapter 4.

He overcomes the problem of us not being the seed of Abraham by the special, unique manner he justifies Abraham and he declares that we partake in that promise of eternal life on the basis of our being righteous and on the basis of having

the righteousness by faith and following in the steps of Abraham our father - genuine, real, heartfelt faith in God's Word to us.

We are justified by his blood. He was raised for our justification. We are justified by faith. Those three elements are brought together again here in this passage.

We need to have a test on Chapter 4, so we will do that next time.

GRACE SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE

ROMANS 103 – 9

TEST