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Read Read, Record, Reflect, Respond		Observation										
Prayerfully	Conscious dependence	<input type="checkbox"/> What does it say? <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Probe</td> <td>Mark—people, place, key word</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discover</td> <td>List—observations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Detect</td> <td>Summarize—main point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Explore</td> <td>Identify—what you learn about God</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Apply—“So what?”</td> </tr> </table>	Probe	Mark —people, place, key word	Discover	List —observations	Detect	Summarize —main point	Explore	Identify —what you learn about God		Apply —“So what?”
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Explore	Identify —what you learn about God											
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Reflectively	Constantly											
Extensively	Background issues Big Idea Basic structure and flow Broad strokes											
Creatively	Imagination and View points											
Intensively	Questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How. . . Repeated Alike Different Accentuated Related											
Specifically	Purposefully—with the view of the author in mind											
Effectively	By unit of thought— Think Context! Details, ask questions											
		Analyze <i>Interpretation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> What does it mean? <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Content</td> <td>Observe—ask questions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Context</td> <td>Context Rules!</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Comparison</td> <td>Scripture clarifies Scripture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Culture</td> <td>Bridge the gap Time—When? Space—Where? Customs—How?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consultation</td> <td>Last step</td> </tr> </table>	Content	Observe—ask questions	Context	Context Rules!	Comparison	Scripture clarifies Scripture	Culture	Bridge the gap Time—When? Space—Where? Customs—How?	Consultation	Last step
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Romans 4:1-25

1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham,
our forefather according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works,
he has something to boast about,
but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say?
“Abraham believed God,
and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

4 Now to the one who works,
his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

5 And to the one who does not work
but trusts him who justifies the ungodly,
his faith is counted as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing
of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised,
or also for the uncircumcised?

We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

10 How then was it counted to him?

Was it before or after he had been circumcised?

It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

11 He received the sign of circumcision
as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith
while he was still uncircumcised.

The purpose was to make him the father
of all who believe without being circumcised,

so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,

12 and to make him the father of the circumcised
who are not merely circumcised

but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham
had before he was circumcised.

- 13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world
did not come through the law
but through the righteousness of faith.
- 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs,
faith is null and the promise is void.
- 15 For the law brings wrath,
but where there is no law there is no transgression.
- 16 That is why it depends on faith,
in order that the promise may rest on grace
and be guaranteed to all his offspring
—not only to the adherent of the law
but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham,
who is the father of us all,
- 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”
—in the presence of the God in whom he believed,
who gives life to the dead
and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
- 18 In hope he believed against hope,
that he should become the father of many nations,
as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”
- 19 He did not weaken in faith
when he considered his own body,
which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old),
or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.
- 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God,
but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,
21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.
- 22 That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”
- 23 But the words “it was counted to him”
were not written for his sake alone,
24 but for ours also.
It will be counted to us
who believe in him
who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,
25 who was delivered up for our trespasses
and raised for our justification. (ESV)

Review: Paul has shown the need for salvation (1:18-3:20) and the provision of salvation (3:21-31), now he will turn to emphasize the means by which it is obtained through faith.
 Observations: 1) Repetition of words (justified, counted, believe/trust/faith, righteous) 2) Comparison and contrast
 Key Question: What is the hardest thing you have worked for? How did it feel to complete your hardest task? What was the greatest gift you have given? What is the greatest non-spiritual gift you have received? How did it feel to receive it? Why do people have trouble receiving free gifts?

Back to 3:27-28 picks up "boasting"

Romans 4:1-25

Thesis stated

1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?

Still seems to be speaking primarily to the Jewish audience

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Counted—credited, regard, account, impute

This is the key phrase of the section—and will lead Paul to an exposition of Genesis 15

Thesis illustrated

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

Focus: the concept of "counted"

5 And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Interesting choice of word "ungodly" but that's the key point—justification is not deserved it is a gift to those who can't earn it and do not deserve it

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Psalm 32:1-2 David's praise psalm after receiving forgiveness based on confession of sin

Illustrated validated

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?

Focus: the concept of "believe"

Paul again reinforces the case that all are equally sinful and saved the same way

We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

Paul becomes methodical, Notice the question answer format the back and forth between Jew and Gentile

10 How then was it counted to him?

Was it before or after he had been circumcised?

It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

Basic same phrase in 4:13

The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,

Compare and contrast
 believing w/o circumcision
 circumcision with faith walk

12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Promise fulfilled not just by Jews

Basic same phrase in 4:11

14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

Still sin, but not law breaking. Transgression is worse than sin.

Thesis confirmed

16 That is why it depends on **faith**,
in order that the promise may rest on **grace**
and be guaranteed to all his offspring
—not only to the adherent of the law
but also to the one who shares the **faith** of Abraham,
who is the father of us all,
17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”
—in the presence of the God in whom he **believed**,
who gives life to the dead
and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Thesis applied

18 In hope he **believed** against hope,
that he should become the father of many nations,
as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”
19 He did not weaken in **faith**
when he considered his own body,
which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old),
or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.
20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God,
but he grew strong in his **faith** as he gave glory to God,
21 **fully convinced** that God was able to do what he had promised.
22 That is why his **faith** was “counted to him as **righteousness**.”

23 But the words “it was counted to him”
were not written for his sake alone,
24 but for ours also.

It will be counted to us
who **believe** in him

Notice who faith is to be placed in—God the Father

25 who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,
who was delivered up for our trespasses
and raised for our justification. (ESV)

Forgiveness
Declaration of righteousness

Romans 4:24-25 serve as a wonderful summary of the gospel

We can be considered in a right relationship with God, by belief in what He said and did through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus death paid for our sins and was raised to provide a right standing with God.

Working Idea (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Paul uses Abraham as a test case of the main point of 3:27-31

—a right relationship with God—a righteous God—is only made possible by the substitutionary death of Christ which is obtained through faith

Abraham, in spite of his lofty status has nothing to boast about for he was justified by faith alone (4:1-8) not circumcision (4:9-12) nor the law (4:13-17)

Abraham's faith was firm, despite circumstantial evidence, allowing him to enjoy God's promises (4:18-21)

Christians receive Christ's righteousness through that same faith (4:22-25)

Main idea:

By faith alone for all

God credits righteousness to all who believe

Teaching idea:

Do to the length of material in this chapter you may find it helpful to concentrate on the beginning (4:1-8) and the end (4:23-25). This section has a narrative feel—so you might want to tell the story of Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22).

Exposition: Show the historical illustration

What Abraham was not justified by?

What Abraham was justified by? Why?

Doctrine: Define

Justification

Declared righteous

Credited as righteous

Faith

Find the words that Paul uses for this concept

Identify the object

Application

How does Paul's explanation of faith help you share the gospel?

Object lesson

Pay check and Gift Compare and Contrast

“counted”

“one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due”

Contract “justification”

Legal term—but it is possible that Paul uses it as a covenantal term

Introduction

James Montgomery Boice comments on a Bible tract prepared by some atheists: “Quite a few years ago a society for the spread of atheism prepared a tract containing half a dozen sketches of Old Testament characters combined with a lurid description of their misdeeds. No efforts were spared in describing their sin. One figure was Abraham. The leaflet pointed out that he was willing to sacrifice his wife's honor to save his own life. Yet he was called “the friend of God.” The atheists asked what kind of God this is who would have a friend like Abraham. Another figure was Jacob. He was described as a cheat and a liar. Yet God called himself “the God of Jacob.” Moses was portrayed as a murderer and a fugitive from justice, which he was. David was shown to be an adulterer who compounded the crime of adultery with the murder of the woman's husband. Yet David was called a man after God's own heart.” The atheists asked what kind of God he must be who could be pleased with David.

Remarkably this tract had hit on something which even God acknowledges. God calls himself just and holy. Yet for centuries he had been refusing to condemn and instead had actually been justifying men and women such as these. We might say that for these long centuries there had been a blot on God's name. As Paul says, he had indeed been passing over former sins. Is God unjust? No. In the death of Christ God's name and purposes are vindicated. It is now seen that on the basis of that death, God had justified and continues to justify the ungodly."¹

Boice has rightly noted that justification involves God's declaration of acquittal of the ungodly on the basis of Christ's death. At the core of justification is a new legal standing, wherein the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner's account and she/he has been permanently forgiven. This is, in miniature form, the theme of Romans 4:1-12.²

The Clash of the World Views	
The World	The Gospel
Anything worth having is worth working for Nobody gets something for nothing Don't trust anyone.	Trust Greatest gift—free Trust God completely



Talk about it

Do people value things they get for free or things they work for? Why?
Why do people have trouble with things that are free?

How about Christians—are we satisfied with God's gift or do we feel like we must still "please" or work for God?

Review

Now that Paul has established the need for righteousness for all people, he demonstrates its provision (3:21–5:11). First, it has been revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, being granted to all who put their trust in him (3:21-26). Second, the terms for bestowal of this righteousness (namely, faith) are the same for all, because God is One (3:27-31). Third, Paul backs up this astounding assertion with proof from the life of Abraham (4:1-25). In essence, Abraham is seen to be father both of the Jews and of the Greeks—that is, he is a type of those who are saved by faith. This is illustrated by evidence that Abraham was not justified by works (4:1-8), nor by circumcision (4:9-12), but exclusively by faith in the promises of God (4:18-25). So too his spiritual offspring are justified by faith rather than by law (4:13-17, 23-25). Thus Abraham is seen to be the universal forefather of all believers, whether Jew or Greek.

Paul transitions the faith of Abraham to our faith in Christ (4:23-25), then concludes the section on justification with the implications of this justification (5:1-11). But the "therefore" in 5:1 reaches back behind the illustration of Abraham. In many ways, 3:21–4:25 is an apologetic with 5:1-11 being the application. Since all are sinners and since there is no partiality with God (3:22-23), both Jews and Gentiles must obtain this righteousness in the same way and the same God must be God of all (3:27-31). This new revelation of God's righteousness is affirmed by the OT (3:21) and illustrated by Abraham's example (4:1-25). There is no getting around it: if a man has Christ, he has peace with God right now—and the Law adds nothing to his salvation (5:1-2). Consequently, he exults in the hope of the glory of God (5:1-5). This salvation is truly marvelous, for sinners *qua* sinners were completely unable to deal with their sin. But Christ came at the right time and died for such (5:6-8). The eschatological result of this will be escape from God's wrath (5:9-11).³

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Awakening to God*, Foundations for Christian Faith, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 76-77.

² Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Righteousness*, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002.

³ Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, © 1998 Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org.

Overview

“In this particular section, the “melody line” is the theme of boasting. The prideful boasting of the Jews is rebuked in chapter 2 and shown to be without biblical basis in chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 5 Paul gives the Christian three legitimate avenues of boasting, all boasting in the Lord—in His faithfulness, in His love, and in the assurance of entering into the blessings of justification by faith which He has promised.

While chapters 4 and 5 dovetail to form one message, they each also have a unique emphasis, so that the two chapters can be seen in distinction to each other. Consider the following distinct points of emphasis:⁴

⁵ Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Abraham and his children	Adam, Jesus Christ, and their children
Man’s required faith	God’s faithfulness
The basis of justification	The benefits of justification
Abraham’s resurrection faith	Our resurrection faith
Boasting denied	Boasting defined

Paul has two main concerns:

The inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan of salvation

The exclusion of works as a means of salvation

Or stated another way: Paul is explaining, defending and illustrating the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s plan of salvation and the basis of their faith.

Structure

The flow of thought in the chapter is as follows. In verses 1–8 Paul argues that Abraham was righteous by faith rather than by works. Since Abraham was justified by faith, not by his works, he has no ground for boasting. The testimony of David (vv. 6–8) confirms that righteousness is not by works. One should note that verses 1–8 explicate and substantiate the thesis of 3:27–28. The words “boasting,” “works,” “reckon,” “justify,” and “faith” are central in both sections.

Verses 9–16 pick up the theme of 3:29–30, that righteousness by faith applies equally to both Jews and Gentiles. Thus in 4:9–12 Paul explains that Abraham was right with God before his circumcision. He received circumcision as a sign and seal of righteousness by faith in order to become the father of the Jewish people. Nonetheless, circumcision is dispensable to be a child of Abraham. Those who are circumcised are not necessarily true children of Abraham. Uncircumcised Gentiles who have faith are also the children of Abraham, for Abraham was always intended to be the father of all peoples. Verses 13–16 explain further (note the γάρ, *gar*, for, in v. 13) why righteousness must be by faith for all peoples. Only on this basis is grace preserved and the certainty of the promise guaranteed. If the promise were based on law, then people would experience wrath rather than blessing. We must not wrench apart the two themes Paul joins together here. Abraham’s righteousness by faith and not by works is forged together with the theme that Abraham is the father of believers throughout the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 17 glides from the universal fatherhood of Abraham to the nature of his faith. If righteousness is by faith, then a clear understanding of the nature of faith is crucial. Paul explains in verses 17–22 the kind of faith exhibited in the life of Abraham. Finally, in verses 23–25 Paul applies the lessons from Abraham’s experience to his readers. The necessity of faith for righteousness is not a historical curiosity applicable only to Abraham; it is indispensable for all who want to be right with God. Paul explains that faith involves belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.⁶

⁴ Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>.

⁵ Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>.

⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 210. Schreiner also observes “For a similar analysis of the structure of the text see Tobin 1995: 442–43.”

Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

By faith alone

Outline

Justification apart from works 4:1-8
 Justification apart from circumcision 4:9-12
 Justification apart from the Law 4:13-16
 Justification by faith for all who believe 4:17-25

Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be aware of



Old Testament Exposition

This chapter is an exposition of Genesis 15 and in some ways sounds like a narrative.

Notice all the quotes and allusions

Romans 4:3	Genesis 15:6		Galatians 3:6 James 2:23
Romans 4:7-8		Psalms 32:1-2	
Romans 4:9	Genesis 15:6		Galatians 3:6 James 2:23
Romans 4:11	Genesis 17:10-11		
Romans 4:13	Genesis 18:18	Genesis 22:17-18	Acts 3:25 Galatians 3:8
Romans 4:17	Genesis 17:5	Isaiah 48:13	
Romans 4:18	Genesis 15:5		
Romans 4:19	Genesis 17:17		
Romans 4:22	Genesis 15:6		
Romans 4:25		Isaiah 53:4-5	

Justification Illustration 4:1-25

“man is incurably addicted to doing something for his own salvation, and, therefore, it is most difficult for him to accept the doctrine of pure grace.”⁷

“The fact that in the gospel a righteousness from God is *revealed* (1:17) could suggest that justification is a new thing, peculiar to the Christian era. To discover that it was already present in the OT serves to engender confidence in an ongoing purpose of God and in the basic unity of the Bible.”⁸

Question

By what three things was Abraham **not** justified?
Works, Circumcision, Law

By what was Abraham Justified? And why?
Grace–Faith (4:3-8, 16)
 Removes boasting, prevents actions from nullifying the promise

Observation (reminiscent of previous section on condemnation)

(1) works	4:1-8	2:28-29 (2:1-16 Judgment according to works)
(2) circumcision	4:9-12	2:25-27
(3) law	4:13-15	2:17-24

But belief in
 (4) Promises 4:16-25

4:1-3 The Question of Abraham’s Justification
 Abraham—The perfect test case

⁷Donald Gray Barnhouse, *Romans: God’s Remedy*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954, vol. 3, p. 293, as quoted by Charles R. Swindoll, *Classic Truths for Triumphant Living*, Insight for Living Study Guide.

⁸*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, (Zondervan, Pradis) Harrison, 4.0.2 p. 47.

Foundational Question 4:1

Why Abraham? 4:1

Father of the Jewish people—venerated

“The NT writers seem to turn to Abraham almost instinctively when discussing faith (Heb 11; James 2). If Paul can establish as true that the father of the nation of Israel was justified by faith rather than by works, he will have scored heavily, especially with his Jewish readers.”⁹

“learned” is in the perfect tense, indicating (hinting) that what Abraham learned has value for future generations

Has already dealt with Moses through references to the Law.

Deals with David in 4:7-8

Hypothetical Outcome—boasting 4:2

“Justification” – δικαιοϋν– declare righteous, show to be righteous
be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous (BAGD)

Justification: Pronounce innocent, clean, and pure

δικαιοϋν (*dikaioyne*), righteousness, uprightness; **δικαιοϋ** (*dikaio*), upright, just, righteous; **δικαιοϋν** (*dikaioo*), justify, vindicate, treat as just, acquit, pronounce or treat as righteous, make or set free from; **δικαιομα** (*dikaioima*), regulation, requirement, commandment, righteous deed; **δικαιοϋ** (*dikaio*), justly, in a just manner, uprightly; **δικαιοϋσι** (*dikaioisis*), justification, vindication, acquittal. For **αδικια** (*adikia*), unrighteousness, and cognates Sin.¹⁰

Paul thus makes the most frequent use of this whole word-group, and gives it its widest range of meanings. Of all NT writers, he is who establishes the closest connexion with the OT, when speaking of God’s righteousness and God’s justification of sinners. God’s righteousness is essentially his covenant dealings with his people, who are thereby constituted a new humanity, a new **Israel** comprising both Jews and Gentiles. This divine righteousness is revealed by the fact that God’s purposes are not foiled by man’s sin; rather he remains almighty both as Lord and **Saviour** in spite of man’s rebellion. Since man’s sin has been so radically dealt with, the demarcation between Israel and the Gentiles can be swept away so that the new people of God may come into being. The transgression and unbelief of the one man (**Adam**; **Gen. 3**) brought unbelief into the world, with the result that all men fell under God’s condemnation. But now the righteous act (*dikaioima*) of the one man (Christ), his absolute trust in him who justifies the ungodly, has defied the curse of **sin** by bringing into the world the possibility of a similarly implicit trust in God. The result, at the appearing of Christ, will be the acquittal (*dikaioisis*), the declaring righteous of all who are members of the new humanity (*dikaioi katastathesontai hoi polloi*, “many will be made righteous”; **Rom. 5:16-19**).¹¹

Scriptural (Historical) Support 4:3

Genesis 15:5-6 4:3

Counted–λογιϋζομαι (logizomai) – credited, reckon, regard, account, numbered, impute

Bookkeeping term: the spiritual ledger shows no debt, because it has been paid for

Paul uses *logizomai* and *logismos* in relating the foundation of faith to the **righteousness** of God. Since he associated it with the facts of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, he never separated the concept of *logizomai* from the personal

⁹The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, (Zondervan, Pradis) Harrison, 4.0.2 p. 47.

¹⁰New International Dict of NT Theology. Pradis CD-ROM:Articles/Righteousness, Justification/ δικαιοϋν.

¹¹New International Dict of NT Theology. Pradis CD-ROM:Articles/Righteousness, Justification/ δικαιοϋν.

activity of God in Jesus Christ. For him, faith was not an objective observing from a neutral vantage point, but being conquered by the crucified and risen Lord.¹²

In order to capture Abraham for his own teaching about the righteousness of faith, Paul seizes on the crucial text of [Genesis 15:6](#) (see also [Gal. 3:6](#)). In the Genesis story, Abraham's faith is specifically his conviction that God would send him a natural descendant ([Gen. 15:4-5](#)). But this promise of a son born to him and Sarah represents the whole promise of God to Abraham. Critical to Paul's citation of the passage is the idea of "crediting" (Gk. *logizomai + eis*). **The Hebrew construction does not indicate that Abraham's faith was itself a righteous deed (as some Jews interpreted the text), but that his faith was the means by which God graciously gave Abraham the status of righteousness.** Paul seizes on this notion and plays on it throughout [Romans 4](#). This "crediting" was on the basis of faith, not works—a matter of pure grace on God's part ([4:4-8](#)). The "crediting" was, moreover, not based on circumcision ([4:9-12](#)) or the law ([4:13-17](#)). This recurring reference to [Genesis 15:6](#) is somewhat similar to the Jewish interpretational technique called *midrash*, in which a Scripture text becomes the basis for an extended discussion.¹³

Clarification of Abraham's justification 4:3-4

It is interesting to note that in one of the apocryphal books Abraham is stated as having been justified by works (see James 2 use of Genesis 22).

1 Maccabees 2:51-52 Call to remembrance what acts our fathers did in their time; so shall ye receive great honour and an everlasting name. 52 Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness?

The text is clear that nothing is added to Abraham's faith.

Key words in this chapter	
dikaioww—justify, declare righteous	logivzomai—credit, count, reckon
dikaiosuvnh—righteousness, uprightness, equity.	

4:4-25 The exposition of Genesis 15:6—Justification

Negatively: How Abraham was not justified 4:4-16

Justification is apart from the Works 4:4-8

Proof from logic 4:4-5

Definition of "wages" and "gifts" 4:4

–wages: payment for work done, reward

–gifts: χάρις—graciousness, as a favor, out of goodwill (related to *cavrisma* 1:11)

–credited/reckoned—same as in 4:3

–obligation—as apposed to grace and mercy. God is not required to give salvation to anyone, because none deserve it.

Contrast with God's means of justification 4:5

–Previous declarations 3:24, 28

Proof from illustration 4:6-8

David 4:6

The use of David, is not accidental. Paul is making reference to the most celebrate "righteous" men in Israel's history. David a "man after God's own heart."

¹² *New International Dict of NT Theology*. Pradis CD-ROM: Articles/Think, Mean, Consider, Reckon/ *logivzomai*.

¹³ Douglas Moo, (Clinton Arnold, Ed.) *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume 3, Romans to Philemon*. 26. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2002)

The reference to Psalm 32 is also significant, in that it was the Psalm David wrote after having been forgiven for his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah (the confession is found in Psalm 51). Psalm 51 reveals that David had no recourse but to ask forgiveness and trust in God's mercy. David is the supports case (under law and sinner). The same thing Paul is telling the Romans.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. (ESV)

Justification is apart from Circumcision 4:9-12

Observation—notice how Paul continues again with Abraham. The word “blessed” is the link word.

Because of its time 4:9-10

This is the key point of the section. Abraham's faith resulting in justification was prior to circumcision.

The previous example, David, was circumcised.

Because of its intent 4:11a

Seal

Because of its divine purpose 4:11b-12

Abraham became the father of the believing uncircumcised 4:11b

Abraham became the father of the believing circumcised 4:12

Notice the two classes of people. Circumcised and either believing or not. This follows with 2:28-29.

Justification is apart from the Mosaic Law 4:13-16

Statement: inheritance of promises acquired by faith 4:13

Although a singular noun, *the promise* is collective and does not refer only to Gen 12:7, but as D. Moo (*Romans 1–8* [WEC], 279) points out, refers to multiple aspects of the promise to Abraham: multiplied descendants (Gen 12:2), possession of the land (Gen 13:15–17), and his becoming the vehicle of blessing to all people (Gen 12:13).¹⁴

Reason: inheritance acquired by law nullifies faith and promises 4:14-15

In 3:20, Paul has stated that the Law brings consciousness of sin

the point is made that if inheritance of the promise comes to those "who live by law," then faith is emptied of value and the promise has effectively been put out of operation. As soon as a promise is hedged about with conditional elements, it loses its value.¹⁵

“where there is no law there is no transgression”

A few commentators think Paul is formulating a general statement about law here: Only where God has revealed his will to people can he accuse them of committing sins. But this interpretation does not do justice to the meaning of a key word that Paul uses here: “transgression” (*parabasis*). Paul only uses this word to depict the disobedience to a law or a commandment that a person has directly been made responsible for (see also 2:23; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:14). Transgression, therefore, is a sin. But not all sin is transgression. Anytime we fall short of conformity to God's image, we sin; but only when we directly violate a commandment God has given us do we commit a transgression. For this reason, then, transgression is also a more serious form of sin, meriting greater judgment.

If my teenage children stay out later than they generally are supposed to, they will be punished. But if they stay out past the time that I have clearly established with them before they leave home, the punishment will probably be more severe. So it is that God's law, paradoxically, can “bring wrath.” By setting down in detail his expectations of Israel,

¹⁴ *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006; 2006). Ro 4:13.

¹⁵ *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Zondervan, Pradis) Harrison, 4.0.2

God has heightened the degree of accountability. Then when Israel sinned, the punishment was greater than it would have been otherwise.¹⁶

In summary, to introduce law keeping as a condition for receiving the promise would have two disastrous effects. It would put a question mark over the character of God for adding a condition {to what He promised to provide} and it would make the realization of the promise impossible for men, since no one has been able fully to keep the law (see vv. 14, 15).¹⁷

Conclusion: inheritance by faith makes the promise certain 4:16

Grace

4:16. Paul then drew his conclusion. **Therefore** (lit., “On account of this”) **the promise comes by** (*ek*, “out of”) **faith so that it may be by** (*kata*, “according to the standard of”) **grace**. Responding in faith to God’s promise is not meritorious, since the promise springs from His grace, His disposition of favor toward those who deserve His wrath. The human exercise of faith is simply the prerequisite response of trust in God and His promise. Since faith and grace go together, and since the promise is by grace, the promise can be received only by faith, not by the Law.¹⁸

Guaranteed

Positively: How Abraham was Justified 4:17-22

Justification is available to all

Object of Abraham’s Faith 4:17

God the giver of life

God, who has power

Quote of Genesis 17:5

Identifying God in this way obviously refers to God’s promise in Genesis 17 following the statement quoted above that Abraham and Sarah would have a son of promise when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:17, 19; 18:10; 21:5; cf. Rom. 4:19). That he would be the ancestor of many nations seemed impossible in his and Sarah’s childless old age.¹⁹

See 4:19

Obstacles to Abraham’s faith overcome 4:18-22

Negatively: Abraham believed despite human disabilities 4:18-19

Does this mean that, Abraham’s “perseverance” was what saved him?

From 4:3 unto 4:17 or Genesis 15 to 17 there is a about a 25 year span. God called Abraham, Abraham responded in faith, and then to demonstrate that God was doing something (not men) He waited until it was impossible (humanly) for Abraham and Sarah to have children. Then God provided the firstborn of the promise.

So it was not Abraham’s perseverance that saved it. His perseverance (Hope) demonstrated his faith.

Positively: Abraham believe in God’s Ability 4:20-21

“without wavering” –Abraham was circumcised prior to God fulfilling the promise, demonstrating his faith.

¹⁶ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000) 158.

¹⁷ *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Zondervan, Pradis) Harrison, 4.0.2

¹⁸ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). John Witmer, 2:454.

¹⁹ *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). John Witmer 2:454.

Interesting statement: “Strengthened in his faith” —he was empowered by means of his faith 4:20

Outcome of Abraham’s faith 4:22

Again, was it Abraham’s “perseverance” that justified him?

4:22. Paul concluded his illustration about Abraham by saying, **This is why** (*dio kai*, “wherefore also”) **it was credited to him as righteousness.** Abraham’s response of faith to God and God’s promise to him was the human requirement for God’s justifying Abraham, for God’s declaring that Abraham stood righteous before Him. No wonder God credited such faith with righteousness!²⁰

Abraham was justified because he had true faith
—complete faith

This material is from a study in James 2

Meaning/ Application: Show relationship to God (faith) by relationship with others (works)

Faith without works is useless—Works without faith are useless
Saving faith will produce works, but the works are not what save

Examine yourself: Is your faith evident? Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?

Two things to define:

1. What is Salvation: Pardon and Life

Forgiveness of sin through justification (declaration of righteousness of Christ to us) which provides a Relationship with God (a relationship which includes spending eternity with God).

It is not fire insurance.

2. What is saving Faith: It answers the question, “what am I trusting for?”

Is not merely understanding the fact that Christ as the Son of God (God-Man) died on the cross to purchase a place in eternity for us, but volitionally surrendering to Christ. For salvation is through Christ, dependence (trust) in Christ alone. This surrendering dependence means appropriating Christ as the source of pardon and spiritual life, i.e. entering into a relationship with him. This involves the regeneration process including reception of the Holy Spirit who moves us to growth and action.

Not an issue of quantity of works, but the presence of works. Fruit (works/deeds) is the “natural” product of faith. If there is no fruit, the question must be asked “Is there faith?”

“Faith Alone Saves, But The Faith That Saves Is Never Alone” (Calvin)

“The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment, the manufacture of a saint if the task of a lifetime.” Alan Redpath

Faith is not believing in spite of evidence, but rather obeying in spite of the consequences. It is confidence that God’s Word is true, and the conviction that acting upon that Word is right and ultimately will bring His blessing.

4:23-25

Application of Abraham’s justification to believers

Abraham’s means of justification not exclusive 4:23

Justification for all who believe 4:24-25

Faith alone saves because it has as its sole object Christ.²¹

Justification is provided for by Christ’s cross-work 4:24-25

²⁰ *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). John Witmer 2:455.

²¹ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 500.

4:25. Mentioning the Lord Jesus led Paul to state again the Savior’s central place in God’s program of providing righteousness for sinful people by grace through faith. Both Christ’s death and His resurrection are essential to that work of justification. **He was delivered over** (by God the Father; cf. 8:32) **to death for our sins** (lit., “on account of or because of” [*dia* with the accusative] “our trespasses” [paravptwma “false steps”; cf. 5:15, 17, 20; Eph. 2:1]). Though not a direct quotation, these words in substance are taken from Isaiah 53:12 (cf. Isa. 53:4-6). Also **He was raised to life for** (“on account of” or “because of” [*dia* with the accusative]) **our justification**. Christ’s death as God’s sacrificial Lamb (cf. John 1:29) was to pay the redemptive price for the sins of all people (Rom. 3:24) so that God might be free to forgive those who respond by faith to that provision. Christ’s resurrection was the proof (or demonstration and vindication) of God’s acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice (cf. 1:4). Thus because He lives, God can credit His provided righteousness to the account of every person who responds by faith to that offer.”²²

Summary

God credits righteousness to those all who believe

“In chapter 4, Paul presented several irrefutable reasons why justification is by faith: (1) Since justification is a gift, it cannot be earned by works (vv. 1-8). (2) Since Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, circumcision has no relationship to justification (vv. 9-12). (3) Since Abraham was justified centuries before the Law, justification is not based on the Law (vv. 13-17). (4) Abraham was justified because of his faith in God, not because of his works (vv. 18-25).”²³

Additional Notes on Faith

Definition of Faith

See the three words used to define the concept

believed	4:3, 24
trusted	4:5
faith	4:9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20

Faith in God’s

Promises	4:16-17, 18-20
Power	4:21 (20 strengthened)
Faithfulness	4:21

The fact that He promised and works to keep His promise

Aspects

Unseen	4:18	(Hebrews 11:1)
Continuing in face of opposition	(4:19-20)	
Fully persuaded	(4:21)	
	This points to the reality of faith	

Notice

The Object of faith—God	4:24	(See John 5:24; 12:44)
The Basis of Salvation—Jesus	4:25	
The Requirement for Salvation—Faith	4:24	
The Content of our Faith—the cross work of Christ (death and resurrection)	4:25	
The Promise of Blessing of Salvation—Justification	4:25	

It is interesting to note, that for Abraham, the focus was on what was yet to be done (fulfillment of promises). For other OT saints it was looking forward to: receiving the land, the coming of the Great Messiah, and the New Covenant. With the New Testament believer, while we look forward to the culmination of our salvation. We look back to

²² *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). John Witmer

²³ *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). John Witmer

what was accomplished for us on the cross. (This would parallel in the Old Testament looking back at crossing the Red Sea which is so prominent.)

Saving Faith		
Basis of Salvation	Always	Death of Christ
Requirement for Salvation	Always	Faith
Object of Faith	Always	God
Content of Faith	Always	Promise of God
Promise of God	Different: progressive age to age	

Key Point

Salvation is completely the work of God in Jesus Christ on behalf of all mankind
It is obtained by all in the same manor—by faith

A.B. Simpson is reported to have said that the gospel “tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner canceled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone.”²⁴ As Paul himself preaches: “he was given over because of our transgressions and was raised for the sake of our justification.”²⁵



What do we learn
About God

Amazingly gracious



Act on it

How did your appreciation of the gospel increase?

Work on summarizing the gospel accurately, with correct emphasize and clarity.

Look for opportunities to share the gospel—this week!

²⁴ G. Michael Cocoris, *A Biblical Approach Evangelism*, (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 29.

²⁵ Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God’s Righteousness*, (Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002).

Appendix:

Saving Faith

Question #1

What does saving faith include?

Answer #1

The content of the saving faith includes elements of knowledge, desire, trust, volition, commitment, repentance, and obedience. The fundamental common denominator within this conception is entrance upon a relationship and embarking upon a pilgrimage of faith. A significant element in saving faith also should be the knowledge of the person and work of Christ as well as man's sinful condition and need of a Savior. This should include knowledge of Christ's deity (Jn. 1:1-14; 10:33-38; Col. 2:9), His humanity (Matt. 1:25; 2:1; Jn. 1:1-14), His death and its sufficiency as an atoning sacrifice (substitutionary sacrifice, Rom. 3:24-25; 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:17), His bodily resurrection (Matt. 16:21; 20:18-19; 1 Cor. 15). It further includes an awareness of man's utmost depravity and sinfulness (Rom. 3:23). The fact of one's inability to save oneself and enter the right relationship with God by works, that the penalty for sin is death/separation from the presence of God (Rom. 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:8-9) and that only faith in Jesus Christ can result in one's eternal salvation in fellowship and communion with God (Jn. 14:6; Eph. 2:8-9).

Problem #1

This seems to make it necessary for one to fully understand everything mentioned above in order to be saved. Clearly there are examples in the Scripture in which the message of the gospel did not include all these details listed above (i.e. Acts 16:25-34).

Response #1

Clearly no one fully understands all the truths contained in the content of saving faith as stated above at the moment of salvation (Jn. 4, 9). The spiritual life is not a momentary matter but rather one that spans the entire life of a believer. Thus the understanding of the truth of God's word concerning the condition of man and the authority of Christ as Savior is not a momentary issue either. But rather one that may require considerable time. The crucial issue however is that anyone who deliberately wants to exclude or deny any of the above truths cannot be saved.

Problem #2

If one has to fully cover all these points in a gospel presentation, not only may this require considerable time but also it may confuse the hearer of the message all together. Furthermore this may make the task of presenting the gospel laborious and complicated matter and it will no longer be a simple gospel presentation.

Response #2

It is not necessary for the evangelist to cover all these issues at the time of presenting the gospel to confuse and overwhelm the hearer. However it is important that the hearer would become or be made aware of these truths depending upon his/her initial response to the initial message.

Question #2

What is the Modus Operandi of Saving Faith?

Answer #2

The entire modus operandi of saving faith is the work of the sovereign grace of God. The method by which God brings us to salvation and eternal fellowship with His blessed person is the method also by which He sanctifies us (Phil. 1:6) namely His grace (Eph. 2:8). Therefore it seems the comprehension and absorption of all the truths pertaining to saving faith, as well as the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 6:44, 63; 1 Cor. 2:10-12), conscious decision to turn from one's sin to Christ the Savior, reception of God's declaration of righteousness all in all are the work of God in the human heart.

Problem

Since all of this is the work of God in us then it seems to imply that we have no responsibility whatsoever.

Response

No it does not. The grace of God as well as the recognition of His sovereign work in the human heart never grants or promotes the false conclusion that God has granted license for irresponsibility or licentious living (Rom. 6:1-2). What this recognition of the sovereign grace of God in the entire modus operandi of the saving

faith does promote is the assurance and confident rest that He who has begun this work in us will perform/perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6).

Question #3

What is the distinction between faith and the product of faith (fruit)?

Answer #3

The Scripture recognizes the presence of certain characteristics in the life of a believer. Though Scripture encourage fruit, it also assumes fruit in the life of the regenerate man. Thus it is difficult to determine any distinction between the two. The Scripture recognizes however that fruit naturally will accompany faith (Matt. 8:10, Mk. 2:5; Acts 2:38; Jam. 2:17).

Problem

This encourages the notion of looking for fruit in others and thus becoming the judge of other's fruitfulness (i.e. belief vs. unbelief; believer vs. unbeliever).

Response

The Scripture forbids believers from becoming judges of other believers' fruitfulness (Matt. 7:1-5; Jn. 7:24; Rom. 14:10). Therefore such a conclusion that believers have been granted permission to judge one another is not warranted since fruitfulness accompanies faith.