

*Text*

4:1-8. What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. 6 Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, 7 saying,

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,  
And whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

## REALIZING ROMANS, 4:1-8

134. Why does Paul introduce Abraham?
135. "According to the flesh" in vs. 1 means what to you?
136. I thought James said Abraham was justified by works (Jas. 2:21-24). Here Paul says he was not. Reconcile the difference.
137. Both James and Paul refer to the Old Testament statement, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." What did he believe—i.e., about or from God? Give the circumstance of this statement.
138. How could a man be righteous if he did not keep the law of God?
139. What argument in favor of justification "by faith" is advanced in vs. 4?
140. In what sense are we to understand the phrase "worketh not" in vs. 5a?
141. Why call David in to testify on this subject?
142. Tell the meaning of the word "blessed" as in 7a. How would David be especially acquainted with such blessedness?

*Paraphrase*

4:1-8. Ye Jews think ritual services meritorious, because they are performed purely from piety. But what do we say Abraham our father obtained by works pertaining to the flesh? That he obtained justification meritoriously? No.

74. If man is justified by faith and not by law, to what conclusion does this lead us?
75. How does the gospel establish the law?

2 For if Abraham were justified meritoriously by works of any kind, he might boast that his justification is of no favor, but a debt due to him; But such a ground of boasting he hath not before God.

3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, when he promised that his seed should be as numerous as the stars, and his belief of that promise was counted to him for righteousness.

4 Now it is evident, that to one who, for a stipulated hire, worketh all that he binds himself to work, the reward is never counted as a favor, but is paid as a debt.

5 But to one who does not work all that he is bound to do, but implicitly believeth the promise of him who gratuitously justifies the sinner, his faith is counted to him for righteousness as a favor. (The words, "as a favor", are supplied from ver. 4.)

6 In like manner also, David (Psa. xxxiii. 1.) declareth that man blessed, as Abraham was, to whom God counteth righteousness without his having performed works of law perfectly:

7 Not saying, Blessed are they who obey the law of God perfectly: That he knew to be impossible: But saying, Blessed are they whose omissions are forgiven, and whose commissions are covered by an atonement.

8 And, deeply affected with the goodness of God in pardoning sin, he says a second time, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not count sin.

### *Summary*

Abraham was not justified by deeds. If so, he had ground to boast that he merited justification. On the contrary, his belief was counted to him for justification. Justification by deeds is like a debt, but justification by belief is matter of favor. David describes justification to be the same as the forgiveness of sins.

### *Comment*

Realizing the fact that this thought of justification through faith apart from meritorious works would be somewhat of a shock, the inspired writer now hastens to point out that the principle of justification by faith is not new, for the great father of the faithful was so justified. That Abraham was justified was admitted by all. Now the apostle poses the question: "How did this justification take place? You say by law; I say by faith. Let us look into the case. What did Abraham obtain through the works of the flesh?" If he had fulfilled to the letter all the demands of God he would have been justi-

76. Was there any question as to whether Abraham was justified or not? If not, why not?

fied by works and would then have had reason to glory. However he did not so perform his obedience. This being true, he has no reason for self glory. Do you remember what the Scripture says about this matter? It says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." So you can see that the faith Abraham exercised in God provided the ground for his justification, not his imperfect works. It is easy to see then that the justification granted Abraham was given because of the favor, or grace of God, through the belief of father Abraham. 4:1-3.

Just think a moment. When a man works and does all the employer asked him to do, his pay is not given because of the grace of the employer, but rather because of the merit of the employee. You have seen that Abraham was counted righteous only because of God's grace received by faith; so then your idea that he worked, and through his work, earned justification is out because it excludes the element of grace. Here is the thought:—to the man who has not fulfilled all the demands of law, but yet has a great faith in the one who can justify the ungodly, justification is made possible through his belief. It is even as David has said concerning that happy man to whom the Lord granted justification apart from works. Hear him: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." Ro. 4:4-8 cp. Ps. 32:1-2a

### *Text*

4:9-12. Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness. 10 How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision: 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; 12 and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision.

### REALIZING ROMANS, 4:9-12

143. Why mention circumcision?

144. Give the meaning of the word "reckoned" as in vs. 9.

145. Paul is going to prove something by showing that Abraham

77. How did the Jew think Abraham was justified?

78. Could Abraham have been justified by works?

- was declared righteous before he was circumcised; what is it?
146. Circumcision is here called a sign and a seal—what does this indicate as to its importance—or lack of importance?
147. Abraham became the father of all who believe at the time in which he was circumcised. Explain how.
148. Abraham can be the father of those in uncircumcision. This was a terrible thought to the Jew. Why?
149. What is the meaning of the expression, “Walk in the steps of that faith . . .”?

### *Paraphrase*

4:9-12. Cometh this blessedness, then, of the Lord's not punishing sin, on persons in the visible church [*assembly of Israel*] only? or on persons out of the visible church also? Certainly on them also. For we affirm, that faith was counted to Abraham for righteousness, in uncircumcision.

10 What state then was Abraham in, when it was so counted? When he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. For it happened long before he and his family were made the church of God by circumcision.

11 And instead of being justified by circumcision, he received the mark of circumcision on his body after his justification, as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he exercised in uncircumcision, in order to his being made the federal head of all them who believe out of the visible church, to assure us that the righteousness of faith shall be counted even to them, by virtue of God's promise to him:

12 Also the federal head of the circumcised, that is, of those who are in the visible church, to assure us that righteousness shall be counted to them who do not rest contented with being of the visible church only, but who also walk in the footsteps of that faith and obedience which our father Abraham exercised in uncircumcision; that is, while he was no member of God's visible church.

### *Summary*

The blessedness of justification by belief, is for Jews and Gentiles alike. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, his circumcision being a seal of that fact. Hence justification does not depend on circumcision. Abraham is father to all who believe in an uncircumcised state, as well as to all the circumcised who walk in his steps.

### *Comment*

Since the discussion has been concerned with Abraham, David also being mentioned, are we to conclude that only to the circum-

cised has the blessing or justification through faith been given? Or is it given to the uncircumcised also? This can be answered from the very illustration given, for we must realize *WHEN* Abraham was declared righteous. Was it when he was circumcised or before his circumcision? Ah, you know, it was before circumcision. If you will but consider for a moment you will remember that circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal or a sign of the fact that God had justified him. Then because of Abraham's submission to this rite as a token of God's covenant with him, he became the spiritual head of all in the world who have faith like his. cp. Gen. 17:11. He did become the father of all who, although not circumcised, had a belief like Abraham and through this faith were justified. And likewise he became the father of the Jew who was not only circumcised but also walked by faith, faith like that exercised by Abraham while he was yet in uncircumcision. 4:9-12

### *Text*

4:13-22. For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect: 15 for the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression. 16 For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may 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 17 (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. 18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

79. Why is the time of the justification of Abraham important?

80. What relation did circumcision hold to justification?

81. In what way is Abraham our father?

## REALIZING ROMANS, 4:13-22

150. Circumcision has been dealt with. We are now introduced to a new refuge of the Jew. What is it?
151. Did God promise Abraham that he would be "heir of the world"? Where? When? What does it mean?
152. How is faith made void by law? Is this bad?
153. What is "the promise" of vs. 14?
154. Does law always work wrath?
155. In what possible situation could there be "no law"? cf. vs. 15.
156. Faith produces grace. In what way?
157. If the promise is predicated on faith, all can enjoy it(?) How?
158. Is Christ "the promise" of vs. 16?
159. Is Abraham our father right now? Does it mean anything to you? It should—it should be a wonderful blessing. Discover how.
160. There are five or six characteristics of Abraham's faith given in vs. 17b-21. See if you can list them.
161. When and where did God give life from the dead?
162. Isn't it wonderful to worship and serve a God who "calleth things that are not as though they were"? Why is it wonderful to you?
163. Abraham held one hope against another. What were they?
164. Why were not the physical circumstances a source of discouragement to Abraham?
165. Abraham, instead of becoming weaker in faith, actually became stronger. How?
166. How shall we reconcile this account of Paul with the account of Moses in the birth of Ishmael from Hagar?
167. Name three promises God has made to you. Do you feel vs. 21 relates to these promises?
168. What is the "it" of vs. 22?
169. Define in one sentence the meaning of faith. "Faith is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ etc.

*Paraphrase*

4:13-22. Besides, from the scripture (ver. 3) it is evident, that not on account of a perfect obedience to any law whatever, the promise was made to Abraham, and to his seed, that he should inherit the world, but on account of a righteousness of faith. How then can the Jews expect to obtain the inheritance of heaven, on account of a righteousness of law?

14 For if they who are righteous by works of law are heirs of the world, their faith (ver. 11) is rendered useless, and the promise, by which they became heirs as a matter of favor, is made of no effect:— It does not, in reality, convey that blessing.

15 Farther, instead of conferring a title to the inheritance, the law worketh out punishment, even to the heirs who, by receiving the inheritance as a free gift, are declared to be transgressors of the law written on their hearts; because where law is not, there no transgression is, nor treatment of persons as transgressors.

16 For this reason, the inheritance is bestowed on account of a righteousness of faith, and not of law, that it might be a free gift, in order that the promise made to Abraham concerning it might be sure to all his seed, not to that only which is his seed by the law of circumcision, but to that also which is his seed by possessing the faith of Abraham, who is the federal head of us all who believe, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; that is, persons not in the visible church of God.

17 (Agreeably to what is written, Gen. xvii. 5. Surely a father of many nations I have constituted thee); which honor of being the father of all believers, Abraham obtained when he stood in the presence of him whom he believed; even of God, who maketh alive the dead, and speaketh of things in the remotest futurity, which exist not, with as much certainty as if they existed.

18 Abraham, contrary to all the ordinary grounds on which men build their hope of offspring, believed with a strong hope, founded on the promise of God, that he should be the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, So shall thy seed be; namely, as the stars of heaven for multitude.

19 And not being weak, either in his conceptions or in his belief of the power and veracity of God, he did not consider his own body now dead, in respect of procreating children, being about a hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb, as obstacles to his having a numerous progeny by her, though she was ninety years old.

20 Therefore against the promise of God he did not dispute through unbelief, by alleging that the thing was impossible; but having the firmest persuasion of the veracity of God, he gave the glory of that perfection to God, by waiting patiently for the performance of his promise.

21 And was fully persuaded, that what was promised, God was able even to perform; although the longer he waited, the accomplishment of the promise must have appeared, to an ordinary faith, the more difficult.

22 This strong faith, exercised by Abraham for so long a time, being highly pleasing to God, Therefore also it was counted to him for righteousness.

### *Summary*

God promised to Abraham and his offspring that they should inherit the world. But the promise was in virtue of justification by belief, and not in virtue of law. If the inheritance depended on law, none could attain it. Therefore it is by belief that all may attain it. The power and influence of Abraham's belief is shown.

### *Comment*

It might be well to put before us those historic events so precious to the Jew which are being discussed in these verses.

- a. God promised Abraham a son in his old age. Abraham, in spite of his age, believed God, and through this belief God constituted him just. cp. Ge. 15:1-6.
- b. God then made the promise to Abraham because of his faith that He would make him the father of many nations if he would continue in his faith and circumcise all the males. This Abraham did and thus received an inheritance of many peoples. cp. Gen. ch. 17.

The subject of justification and circumcision has already been settled. There yet remains the promise of God to Abraham as to his inheriting of the world. This Paul discusses beginning with vs. 13.

The plain statement is that the promise given to Abraham and his seed (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc.) concerning the inheritance of the world was not given because these fathers were perfectly obedient to any law, but rather because of their faith, faith which prompted God to call them righteous. Reason is then given for the thought expressed. If the only persons who will enter into this promise are those who are obedient to law, of what use is the belief spoken of when both Moses and Paul by the Holy Spirit said, "Abraham *believed* God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness"? What object would there be in extending to man grace and accepting him as righteous through his faith and imperfect obedience if it were possible for him to keep the law of God? Furthermore, the fulfillment of the promise could never have been realized on a basis of perfect obedience to law since all have sinned, and the only possible result is wrath. The law was not given so that man could receive the

82. State the two historic events upon which this event is based.

83. What new thought is introduced at verse 13?

84. Why couldn't the promise have been through law?



promise by fulfilling it. Yet if man had kept the law he would have inherited the world. Since, however, man did not keep the law we can see that the promise would have utterly failed on such a basis. 4:13-15a

If perchance there should be some Jew audacious enough to suggest that he could inherit by law because he had never broken it, Paul places the following principle before him: When there is no law, there is no transgression. In other words, only when no law is present can there be freedom from sin. Since no one has ever lived in this state (either Jew or Gentile) no one can claim freedom from transgression. No one can inherit through the law, for all have law and all have transgressed it; thus all have sinned. 4:15b

This promise to Abraham was given on the basis of faith for the purpose of showing God's favor. If the promise had been on the basis of law, God would have owed man the promise. Then too, the promise would not have been sure, for if it had been of law it would have failed all. But being of faith it is obtainable by all. It could thus be obtained not only by the Jews under the law but also by those Gentiles who exercised the same kind of faith in God as Abraham, who was and is father of us all. cp. 4:11b ". . . as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee." 4:16-17a

The faith of Abraham is mentioned in verse 16b in connection with the type of faith man must have to please God. Abraham's faith in all its beauty and strength is then described from verses 17b through 22. Abraham is spoken of as standing, not only before the Jews and all men but even before God, in whom he believes, in the position of the father of many nations. Then the power of Abraham's God is illustrated in the circumstances of Jehovah's dealing with Abraham. He gave life to the dead and called the things that are not as though they were. There follow then the details of this general statement of God's power and Abraham's faith. 4:17b

"Who in hope believed against hope" are the apostle's words which further describe the faith of Abraham. In Abraham's case there was absolutely no natural ground for hope. In spite of this fact, Abraham believed in hope. Furthermore, he exercised his hope through belief, against the adverse circumstances. He held this hope for the one purpose that he might indeed be a father of many nations, that the promise of making his seed as innumerable as the stars of the heaven might be fulfilled. The end in view and his faith actuated his hope. Paul then speaks of the discouraging prospects of the fulfillment of the

85. Why would the promise have failed through law?

86. What is the meaning of 15b? What two reasons are given for the promise being "of faith"?

87. What is described in vs. 17b-22?

88. What two thoughts are discussed in connection with each other in vs. 18-21?

promise, namely, the agedness of Abraham and his wife, which made it humanly impossible to carry out the promise. Then notice the great faith of Abraham: a. He considered his own body at the age of one hundred, yet in spite of this he lost no faith in Jehovah. b. Likewise, he realized the deadness of the womb of Sarah. c. He looked to the promise of God and did not waver through unbelief; he rather became strong. d. He gave God the glory. This bespeaks his humility for he, under the circumstances, could easily have gloried in his faith (even as Job). e. His faith is again described as "full assurance" in the ability of God to perform what he promised. (cp. Heb. 11:1) 4:18-21

Let us sum up the matter. Have you seen the faith of Abraham? Have you beheld its beauty and strength? Have you noticed its separation from the law? Paul could then fittingly say: "Well, my Jewish friend, *THAT* faith was reckoned unto our father Abraham for righteousness." vs. 22

### *Text*

4:23-25. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

### REALIZING ROMANS, 4:23-25

170. The purpose of the Old Testament scriptures is here revealed. What is it?
171. How shall we know that we have a faith like Abraham's?
172. Is our faith to be centered in God, or in Jesus?
173. Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses. In what sense is this true?
174. In what manner does the resurrection provide for our justification?

### *Paraphrase*

4:23-25. Now it was not recorded by Moses for Abraham's honor only, that his faith was thus counted to him in his uncircumcised state; (see ver. 3.)

24 But it was recorded for our benefit also, to whom, as Abraham's children, the like faith will be counted for righteousness, even to those in every age and nation who believe on him (believe whatever he declares and promises) who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead:

89. What is the meaning of "in hope believed against hope"?
90. Give from memory three of the five points of Abraham's faith.

25 Who, being the seed of Abraham, in which all nations are to be blessed, was delivered to death by God for our offences, and was raised again from the dead, and made universal Lord, for our deliverance from ignorance and wickedness.

### *Summary*

The fact that Abraham's belief was counted to him for justification was written for our sake as well as his. Whom we must believe on, and what in, why Christ was given up to death, and the object for which he rose, are dealt with in this section.

### *Comment*

We must not forget that the promise of righteousness by faith was not only written for the benefit of Abraham alone, but for our sake also. For to us God will impute this same justification if we believe in Him even as Abraham did. He, who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, is the object of our faith. In the last verse of this chapter we find the rock upon which the whole structure of salvation by faith rests: "Who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification." This is why God can declare us righteous through our faith. "He bare in his body" the sins we committed, both when we were in rebellion as a sinner, and now those committed in spite of our conscientious faithfulness as a Christian. Yes, he was raised and thus consummated our justification. The Jew who knew the true purpose of the Messiah could see in these remarks about Jesus the method by which Abraham and Christians are justified. 4:23-25

### *Rethinking in Outline Form*

#### 2. Justification Through the Gospel Illustrated and Applied. 4:1-25

##### a. Abraham, the illustration. The principle of justification through faith finds a wonderful application in his life. Note:

- (1) His state of justification was obtained only through his faith, not by works. vs. 1-8
- (2) His justification had no dependence upon circumcision, for he was declared just before his circumcision. This was done in order that he could indeed be the father of the circumcised and the uncircumcised. 9-12

91. How can the faith of Abraham benefit you and me?

92. What is the rock foundation of this doctrine of salvation by faith?

93. What is the meaning of 25a?

- (3) The promise made to Abraham of inheriting the world was a promise of faith, not of works.
- (a) This was true in order to include "all the nations" in the promise.
  - (b) The inheritance of the world was to come through Abraham's seed. Abraham, knowing this, believed in the power of God in spite of the discouraging circumstances.
  - (c) This faith of father Abraham was what God considered in declaring Abraham righteous, and it is a type of the faith that will secure justification for us today.
  - (d) It must be in God through Christ and his death.

*Text*

5:1-11. Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; 2 through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; 4 and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: 5 and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us. 6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteousness man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; 11 and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

REALIZING ROMANS, 5:1-11

175. The "therefore" of vs. 1 seems to suggest past action—in what way and with whom?
176. Have we "made our peace" with God or has someone else done this for us? Explain.
177. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, please notice He holds another vital relationship to us, "our *Lord Jesus Christ*."