

Romans 3.27-4.17 Faith Alone, Abraham, Imputation, David, Abrahamic Covenant, Heir 055-060
Ray Mondragon

[Romans 11.27-31 Priority of Faith Alone in Justification 055]

We continue after that important passage of 3.21-26, which is at the heart of the revelation of all the Bible and the heart of the book of Romans, with the theme of Faith. Because of our nature we always want to *earn* God's favor. We have a hard time receiving something without any 'strings attached.' The emphasis is *trusting*. The Jew in the first century would question it. But if man *could* do something, God would not be glorified.

If Justification is NOT by faith?

1. Man could boast and God not glorified
2. Two ways of Justification and two Gods
3. Law left unfulfilled

Secondly, the Jew would ask if there are two ways—and two Gods. Of course there is only one God and one way to access Him.

Thirdly, what about the Law? Is it left unfulfilled if access to God is only by faith?

This is a simple paragraph with short sentences and easy to follow.

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Now we are in the part about justification, provided by God who makes it available and visible. The priority of justification is that we enter into it by faith, not by religious background or religious heritage or baptism—nothing adds to it.

In our culture 'Lordship Salvation' is very common and is on the edge of, if not actually adding works. They are saying that if you are saved, then you have to show it by your works/lifestyle. Otherwise it is questionable whether you are really saved. This could be called a misunderstanding of Scripture. With this view you never have assurance of salvation. This passage, though, *excludes* personal merit.

3.27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

Referring back to verses 21-26, he asks: Where then is boasting? The Jews had things to boast about: they were the elect, God's chosen; God gave them His Word, the covenants. They could think of all that He had done for them and boast in that. There is a fine line between that and thinking that "Well, now we can earn our salvation based on this position God has given us." The answer is based on what he has just said,

3.27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

No, 'It is excluded.' There is nothing we can boast of in terms of anything spiritual. Just because you were born a Jew doesn't mean you have a right standing before God. So what excludes it? Well, when we speak of faith, we look at Paul who, in the first century, had more he could boast of than anyone:

Faith

> Boasting - *Philippians 3.4-6 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.*

Paul was 'blameless' in every way, but later he says that all his fabulous credentials were dung—something you flush down the toilet.

James 4.16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

All boasting is evil, so there is no boasting in regard to a standing before God. It is received simply by what God can do, not what we can do.

3.27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

By what kind of 'law'? The word law is in lower case, not capitalized. It is the same word as the Law in the OT. But he is talking about a principal of law, a principle of *obedience, works*. It is a concept of it, like our referring to the 'law of nature'; it is something that governs something else.

3.27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

Of works? This is more specific: the many laws of the Jew's life, even dietary. Paul was blameless. The answer: No. So there was no boasting—it excludes all human effort, front-loaded or back-loaded. Outside of self, looking to God—that's why the cross is so important. No, but by a *law of faith*—a principle of faith, something outside myself. Christ had to die because all the animals sacrificed in the OT were a substitute and God was passing over sin until Christ came and died 'once for all' (Hebrews). Everything goes to God, He provided everything.

Faith

- > Boasting - Philippians 3.4-6, James 4.16
- > Rejects all human efforts
- > Looks outside of self
- > Looks to God

3.27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

A commentator says:

"Faith says first of all that man is so hopeless, helplessly a sinner, so guilty even with his law of works that God's grace alone can save.

—Stifler

Good statement. Only what God has provided.

3.28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

'For we maintain that a man is justified by faith'...he is repeating what he said in 21-26, centering in how we enter into that relationship and what brings us into a right standing which we call justification.

Faith

- > Boasting - Philippians 3.4-6, James 4.16
- > Rejects all human efforts
- > Looks outside of self
- > Looks to God
- > Faith in Christ - Ephesians 2.8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Galatians 2.16 *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*

He repeats it over and over: Not by works, but by faith in Christ.

3.22 *But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

> Glorifies God

This glorifies God: when we believe in what He has done, apart from anything that we can do.

And if that is not clear enough, he adds 'apart from the works of the law':

3.28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

What did he say in verse 21? He said 'apart from the law the righteousness of God is manifested'. Here he adds to it: 'apart from the *works* of the law. No works.

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3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

Now he argues: 'Is God the God of Jews only? Is there no salvation for gentiles? There is only one true God. Is He not the God of the Gentiles also?' Now if the Jews knew their OT, God had made a provision for Gentiles. Yes, the Jews are a chosen nation or race, and God had a particular plan (world history is Jewish for they are at the heart of everything God is doing), but He has made provision and the intent was that He would use Israel in order to glorify Himself amongst the nations. They were to be an example of godly people so that the

the Gentiles would see the nature and character of God. Unfortunately, because they are sinners they failed in doing that.

3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

So do the Gentiles not have access to Him? The answer is : Yes, Gentiles also.

3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

We can look at passages about gentile salvation:

Gentile Salvation

1. Scriptures - Genesis 12.3 *And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*"

Even before there was a nation God promised to Abraham and entered into covenant with him that they would bless the nations; they would be the means by which gentiles would come into a relationship. Galatians three expands that: in Christ gentiles have access to God.

Exodus 19.5 '*Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.*'

God called them to be a kingdom of priests—mediators between God and the gentiles.

This is immediately before the 10 Commandments. God is laying out the law.

Isaiah 42.6 "*I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,*"

God would take them by the hand to make them ‘a light to the nations.’

49.6 *He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”*

That His salvation reach to the end of the earth—the gentiles—this the design for Israel, God’s plan for them.

Examples - Ruth (Moabite), Rahab (Canaanite), Naaman (Syrian), Ninevites (Jonah).

Each of these were brought to God by a Jew. Then, after the Jews were on the verge of being exterminated and that OT holocaust was averted through Esther, what did the gentiles, or at least the Persian empire?

Esther 8.17 *In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.*

That was a testimony to the entire Persian empire.

3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

‘God is one’. What is the Jewish *shema*? A fundamental truth of Judaism. Clear in Deuteronomy 6.4.

God is One

> Fundamental truth of Judaism

> Shemá - Deuteronomy 6.4 "*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!* 5 *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

> Other - Isaiah 45.5 "*I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

Mark 12.32 *The scribe said to Him, “Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM;*

Interestingly, in Deuteronomy 6.4 where it says ‘God is one’, the Hebrew word ‘ecad’ is not a singularity; it means ‘one as a possible multitude of others.’ Like one cluster of grapes with many facets or individual grapes. So, even though God is *one*, it makes allowance for God to exist in three persons. Even the *shemá* makes allowance for the Trinity! Not explicit, but it makes an allowance for it, and is explicit in the NT.

3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

He repeats it again: will justify the circumcised by faith. He mentions ‘the circumcised’ because this was the sign of the covenant, not the essence of it, but it pointed to faith...

3.29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

...and the non-Jewish people through faith since God is one. One way of salvation.

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| c. Establishment of the Law | 3.31 |

3.31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Another question: ‘Do we then nullify the Law through faith?’ ‘So now the Law is not so important?’

3.31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Absolutely not! The strongest way you can negate in Greek, and we have a lot of ways of saying it in English:

μη γένοιτο (may géh-noi-to)

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| ✓ ‘away with the thought’ | ✓ ‘perish the idea’ |
| ✓ ‘banish the thought’ | ✓ ‘be it not so’ |
| ✓ ‘let not such a thing be considered’ | ✓ ‘impossible’ |
| ✓ ‘let it not be conceived of’ | ✓ ‘are you crazy’ |
| ✓ ‘absolutely not’ | ✓ ‘good heavens no’ |

3.31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

How can he say that ‘we establish the Law?’ Because Jesus fulfilled all the righteous demands of the Law; propitiation, He satisfied all the legal requirements and thus fulfilled the Law, all that the OT sacrifices anticipated.

Law Established

1. Reveals God’s nature

The Law is established in that it reveals God’s character as holy and just and righteous; and man, lacking that righteousness condemned. It also reveals sin.

2. Reveals sin - Galatians 3.24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

James 2.10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

It demands absolute perfection. So only a perfect sacrifice can satisfy the legal requirements of the Law and thus Christ fulfilled it:

3. Fulfilled by Christ - Matthew 5.17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

There are many ways and many aspects where Christ fulfilled it. He fulfilled it by obeying it perfectly. He did not stumble in one point. He was sinless. He also fulfilled it offering the ultimate and perfect sacrifice that satisfies all the legal requirements of God. He was a propitiation.

And, in this context, He fills it fuller and with more insight in that He gives explanation and interpretation of the Law. In this passage of Matthew 5, He goes to the heart of the Law which deals with the heart attitude, not just the external evidence of it. He talks about the origin of anger, also, from the heart, and adultery—not just the act but what comes out of the heart. So He fulfilled the Law restoring it to the original meaning of the Law that God intended.

Simple Gospel =

1. Bad news: we are sinful, depraved.
2. Good news: God has made provision for our sin, Christ dying for us.
3. Faith plus nothing: If we trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross and believe that, we need nothing else.

[Romans 4.1-3 Justification and Abraham 056]

The doctrines that we study are not detached from the real people, real places and real events in history. We remind ourselves of the setting of this book written to Christians in Rome in the first century.

And, all of the theological terms in the Bible come out of the culture of that day. We are in a long section on Justification—a word that a non-believer would not understand. But we have to know it well to explain the concept to the non-believer we share the gospel with.

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In the Old Testament justification was by faith, just as it is now. Paul's example is Abraham. The Abrahamic Covenant is a pattern for justification; it does not depend on anything one does, it is only by faith and by what God has provided. Then Paul continues with the Profit from Justification. This would be the place to explain what would happen if one could lose his salvation, but that does not exist. Instead, he lists the glorious benefits of Justification. Finally, in chapter six, he tells how to live out the Christian life: we will see that it is by the same principle as how we received it—by faith.

Now we start chapter four with Abraham.

4.1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

Is this radical? Is this an idea I invented? What can we say? Is there any support for this justification by faith—by grace and with no works at all? First the context. Paul has already noted that the OT contains the gospel.

Context

1. OT Promise of Gospel - *1.1-2 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,*

He starts the whole book with the point of soteriology—salvation. He was ‘an apostle, set part for the gospel of God’. Then he says that this gospel was ‘promised beforehand through His

prophets in the Holy Scriptures.’ What were the ‘Scriptures?’ The Old Testament. So, he has already introduced it in the first sentence of the letter.

2. Witnessed by OT *3.21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

It is apart from the Law, but not against it because the Law witnesses to it. Now in chapter four he is going to lay out part of that witness to the gospel. This is not anything new; it is OT theology.

Key Terms

1. Law - OT and Pentateuch

Context

1. OT Promise of Gospel - 1.1-2
 2. Witnessed by OT - 3.21
 3. Righteousness by grace - 3.21-26
- So the OT witnesses to the concept that we saw in 3.21-26: righteousness is by grace, not works.

Other related Key Terms include:

Key Terms

1. Law - OT & Pentateuch
2. Righteousness - right standing before God
3. Justify or Justification - forgiveness of sin and declaration of righteousness
4. Grace - undeserved favor, totally forgiven
5. Redemption - buying out of slavery
6. Propitiation - God's justice satisfied

Context

1. OT Promise of Gospel - 1.1-2
2. Witnessed by OT - 3.21
3. Righteousness by grace - 3.21-26
4. Excludes boasting - 3.27
5. Justification of Jew and Gentile - 3.30

4.1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

Biologically, genetically, humanly, in terms of material descent, the line of Abraham...

Abraham

1. Friend of God - Isaiah 41. 8 "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, James 2.23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

There is a personal relationship between Abraham and God.

2. God of Abraham - Exodus 3.16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.'
3. Believer's father - Gal 3.7 *Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.*

We are in the spiritual line of Abraham; he is our *spiritual* father as believers. And it extends to gentiles in the church age.

4. Great faith - Hebrews 11.8-19 *By faith Abraham, ...obeyed... lived as an alien...offered up Isaac...*
5. Father of Nation - Romans 4.1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?*
Greatest OT example of justification by faith.

- 4.1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?*

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| 2) Means of His Justification | 4.2-3 |

- 4.1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

'If Abraham was justified by works,' This is a first class conditional clause that, for the sake of argument, the idea is assumed to be true. If he was justified by works—as you assume, let's see if that holds up to Scripture.

What did Abraham find? Justification by faith. The same grace that is offered to gentiles. So salvation in the OT is the same—always has been—never changed. The experience, the provision and the means have not changed.

Jewish Assumption

"Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life."

—Jubilees 23.10, 2nd C. BC

- 4.1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

The Jews had put Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on a pedestal, so he had something to boast about. Is there a record of Abraham boasting? Yes, but not before God.

- 4.1 *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

He had nothing to boast about in terms of meeting the standard of God. Yes, he was admirable, to be looked up to by the Jewish people. Yes, he developed faith to the point of sacrificing the closest thing to him.

- 4.3 *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

So what exactly does the Scripture say about Abraham? There is a very clear passage.

- 4.3 *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

He 'believed God'; he did not *work* to please God. And It was 'credited to him as righteousness.' Faith, belief, the essence of the Genesis passage.

- 4.3 *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

And, here is an important word: ‘It was credited to him as righteousness. This word is used 11 times in this passage. It is a mathematical term.

4.3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT **WAS CREDITED** TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4Now to the one who works, his wage **is not credited** as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith **is credited** as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God **credits** righteousness apart from works:...8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD **WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT**.”

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “**FAITH WAS CREDITED** TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 10 How then **was it credited**? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness **might be credited** to them,

This is the *declaring* of righteousness. (verse 5). Then in verses 22-24 also:

4.22 Therefore IT **WAS ALSO CREDITED** TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it **was credited** to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it **will be credited**, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

24: ‘But for our sake’, i.e., it pertains to us as well, not just Abraham or Jew and gentile of the first century. We look at this Greek word:

λογίζομαι (lo-géed-zo-mah-i)

1. Term - logic (**λόγος**), mathematical, accounting, in the culture. We use this word in the different sciences to mean the study of, the idea of or the concept of: biology, geology, anthropology, etc. A term related to reasoning, thinking or considering—and also mathematical statements and in accounting with the idea of a ledger sheet, a banking term: puts a deposit into your account.
2. Illustration - Philemon 18 *But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;*

Paul was sending Onesimus back to the slave owner and, since he had led Onesimus to the Lord and he had had some spiritual

growth, he was crediting to his account—not the same word, but as similar one—so that if Onesimus owed Philemon anything the slave owner could put it to Paul’s account so he could pay it off.

Co-signing loan. The bank treats you as though the money is

there because your father has a good reputation and signs for you. So also God puts to your credit that same righteousness as Christ.

3. To consider, regard, or reason something as true - Acts 19.27 “*Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.*”

In a logical or thinking sense; to consider something to be true, or to reason out that something is true. Here, Paul is in Ephesus. They were concerned because if people gave up their idol, her temple and people’s trade in idolatry would be regarded as worthless. This is an everyday, cultural sense.

God regards us as righteous as Christ; his righteousness is credited to us.

4. To be included or numbered with something - Luke 22.37 “*For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.*”

(Isaiah 53.12 *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.*)

5. Theologically = to credit something spiritually - Romans 4. Galatians 3.6 *Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

This is how it is used in Romans four. It deals with the idea of imputing or crediting, or, from God’s perspective, He considers us to be righteous. Like Abraham who was credited to be righteous.

We will see that Imputation is a wonderful gift of God’s unfathomable grace.

[Romans 4.1-5 Doctrine of Imputation 057]

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| 3. Pattern for Justification | 4 |
| 4. Profit from Justification | 5 |

We look at the concept of ‘boasting’ which is done in various contexts—though not in anything related to works for justification. A lot of it was what God has done—and we can boast about that.

Boasting

1. Paul’s ministry - 1Corinthians 9.15 *But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one. 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.*

It is commendable to note what God has done for Paul in his ministry.

2. Believers - 1Corinthians 1.14 *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,*
2Corinthians 9.3 *But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared;*

He boasts of what God has done amongst fellow believers.

3. Corinthians in Paul - 2Corinthians 5.12 *We are not again commanding ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.*

The Corinthians boasted in Paul and his ministry. This is all after we have that right relationship with God.

4. God - Romans 5.2 *through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

11 *And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

We can boast in what God has done for us. Abraham obeyed God—a good work? He also helped rescue Lot when he was taken by an enemy—good work? The Jews would say that such things would bring good merit to Abraham. Then God asked him to sacrifice his son. The greatest work one can be ready to do. Meritorious?

Paul says: Yes, but not in terms of standing before God—salvation. All these works are like filthy rags. God said: he believed, not achieved. Abraham believed, trusted the promise that God had made about a future seed who would die on the cross for his sin. He was believing in a future work, by Christ, that God would accept as payment for sin.

5. Tribulation - Romans 5.3 *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;*

We even can boast in the tribulation that we experience. Paul is in fact in the battle, suffering because he is a believer and experiencing persecution. It is evidence that he is justified and that God has given him work to do—for which he is resisted.

4.1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

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We are studying the word for ‘credit’; it occurs 41 times in the NT and Paul uses it 35 of the 41, and a fourth of them occur here.

λογίζομαι (lo-géed-zo-mah-i)

1. Term - logic ($\lambda\circ\gamma\circ\sigma$), mathematical, accounting,
2. Illustration - Filemon 18 co-signing a loan
3. To consider, regard, or reason something as true - Acts 19.27,
1Corinthians 13.11 *When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.*

The word ‘reason’ is the same one. He reasoned and thought like a child. Used in its everyday sense.

Romans 8.18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

This is in a spiritual sense. In your thinking *consider...* maybe your life isn’t turning out right, many things may be going wrong, but, Paul says, the *sufferings* of this present time cannot be compared to the *glory* that will be revealed. The reason for that is that we know the outcome—we know what God is going to accomplish. Even the physical realm will be reversed because God will have the last word. We look forward to the resurrection, to

what God is going to accomplish, so anything we experience now we can consider it as light, as of little significance in comparison.

Hebrews 11.19 *He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*

In this passage, the writer, in chapter 11, is speaking of OT believers who lived by faith and one of the individuals he uses is Abraham himself. The context of verse 19 is the sacrificing of Isaac. Again, ‘logídzomai’, he ‘considered’ that God is able to raise people even from the dead. As he contemplated sacrificing that son that he had waited years and years for, he thought and reasoned that the only way that this could make any sense was that God could raise him from the dead. And that is why he is listed as one of the heroes of faith.

These are examples of how we can consider something to be true perhaps because of what He has said, and even though you might not see how that would work our in present time we can consider this true because God has promised it.

Paul also says ‘I do not *regard* myself as having laid hold of it yet’; he is talking about maturity, i.e., growing to the ultimate in this life. So he does not *regard* himself as ‘there’ yet and strives to mature. This is considering something to be reality in this case, and as a motive to further growth.

Also we have this word in the chapter just before: 3.28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.* And the reason he can consider it or conclude this or reason this way is because of what God, or Christ, has done on our behalf on the cross.

4. To be included or numbered with something - Luke 22.37 (quoting Isaiah 53.12): ‘*For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED [logídzomai] WITH TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.*’

He refers to the crucifixion where He was crucified between the two criminals and shared the shame. He was considered the same as they were, therefore ‘numbered’ with them.

5. Theologically = to credit something spiritually - Romans 4: God is crediting *righteousness* to our bankrupt account that shows a balance of filthy rags. God now is removing those filthy rags and putting to our credit Christ’s very own righteousness—as if we were as righteous as Christ. Now yet we are not because we still have sinful bodies and we are simply in the process of growing to be more and more righteous. But theologically **imputation** is this idea

of considering or regarding something as true, and in this case, God considers it as *true* that we are declared righteous because of the work of Christ on the cross.

Galatians 3.6 is another example using Abraham: *Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.* (quoting Genesis 15.6)

We can think of other things that are **imputed**:

- > Sin imputed on man- Romans 5.12 *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

In this passage Paul is speaking of *sin* being imputed to man as a result of the sin of Adam (the ‘one man’) in Genesis three. Death and suffering are a result of that first sin of Adam and all of humanity has suffered the consequences since then.

Then verse 13: although sin existed then, it was not **imputed** until the Law. We are sinners because of Adam’s sin but also because we sin.

And there is a passage where the actual word is not used, but it indicates the *concept* of imputation:

- > Sin imputed on Christ - 2Corinthians 5.21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Christ is not a sinner, but God put upon Him *our* sin in order to bear the consequences of sin. So the sinless One was *considered* to be sin in order make the ultimate payment for sin—so that we might become the *righteousness* of God in Him. On the basis of sin being taken on by Christ, i.e., **imputed** to Him, now we can receive righteousness by imputation as well.

- > Righteousness imputed - 3.21-26 This is the whole concept of 3.21-26, considering us to have the righteousness of Christ, by grace, all by means of faith, through simply believing what God did on the cross was adequate—satisfied God. God was *propitiated* or satisfied with the sacrifice that Christ made on our behalf.

Key Terms

7. Imputation - to credit to one’s account, in this case to credit righteous to our account. On a general ledger page, in the debit column we have *forgiveness of sin*, removing the debt of sin. And, in the credit column we are credited (or reckoned with, or considered to have) *righteousness*. The balance, then, is the concept of justification. So justification is the forgiveness of sins plus the imputing or declaring of righteousness.

In Genesis 15, the passage deals with the Abrahamic Covenant, years after he had already left Ur of the Chaldeans, but I believe that he was justified before he left. His leaving was a response to that justification; in other words, he obeyed God because he was already justified. I think Moses is reminding us of that justification which precedes the covenant.

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Now to bring it home and illustrate it using first century imagery again, the work environment with employers and employees:

4.4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

The one who works would be a slave probably, like an employee today. He is not paid just because the boss likes him...but because he did some work. It is not credited or considered as a favor. The point he is making here is Abraham did not *earn* righteousness, like an employee would earn a paycheck. It is a grace situation in terms of faith.

4.4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Then in verse five he says it another way: the one who does not work but *believes* on Him, his faith is credited as righteousness. This is the concept of faith plus the **imputation** of righteousness.

4.4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, it was not because of any effort or godliness in him.

Note that he adds here 'Him who justifies the ungodly' implying that Abraham was not godly; it was not an effort on his part, nor was he godly.

4.4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Note this last part: his faith is credited (*logidzomai*) as righteousness. In other words, God considers his faith to be what He calls on us to do: to believe that what Christ accomplished was adequate for our justification and now that is credited to us; our bankrupt account is now filled with the righteousness of Christ.

Theology - Imputation

1. Work of God's Justice - either condemnation or blessing credited
2. Work of God's Grace - righteousness credited us
3. Judicial - crediting something not due; we are declared righteous
4. Not impartation - not making righteous but declaring righteous
We look forward to the day when we will be imparted full righteousness when we go to be with the Lord; this is called *glorification*, the removal of a sin nature and the full impartation or infusion of the new nature. Now we are not imparted righteousness which is the making of us righteous, but we are *declared* to be righteous which is a judicial decision made by God.

Imputation is a wonderful gift of God's unfathomable grace!!! We have been declared righteous and we have been considered, from God's perspective, to have and to be the righteousness of Christ Himself.

[Romans 4.3 & 4.6-12 Justification Confirmed by David 058]

Any ideas we have about doctrine, if they are not found in Scripture, probably need to be abandoned. Doctrine is in the Bible and that is our authority. Paul sets forth doctrine. He deals primarily with the theological concept of justification.

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4.3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Genesis 15 is the main chapter dealing with a very important concept: The Abrahamic Covenant which sets the parameters for all the rest of world history. This passage, quoted in Romans 4.3, comes from Genesis 15.1-6.

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” 2 Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.” 4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” 5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

In the English text of verse six it seems to follow the previous verses. However, in the Hebrew text there is a common construction which makes it seem more like a parenthesis. Genesis is a historical narrative. In Hebrew there is what is called a ‘vav consecutive’: the word ‘and’ (vav) is connected with a main verb and the main verb is in the (past time) *imperfect* tense. This is a sequence, one after another. For example, in Genesis one: ‘And God said.’ ‘And God made.’ ‘And God....’ It is a series throughout the chapter.

If you have in the middle a break in that, like we have here in Genesis 15, ‘After these things...’ starts a new mini narrative within a broader narrative. Then in verse two, literally ‘And said Abram..’ Then in verse three again, ‘And Abram said’—‘vav’ consecutive again and again. Verse 5: ‘And took him...’ Now, in verse six there is a break in the narrative. It begins with ‘And’, but the verb is in the *perfect* tense, which means it is something detached from the sequence. This, then, pertains to someone who has been justified.

If you follow the chronology in Genesis by the age when people were born, you can trace a very complete and tight chronology of the book. So there is a time frame; you just need a date to correlate with outside of Genesis and then you have a date for virtually every event in Genesis—and there are many. So, in the chronology of Abram, we start with 11.26:

Abram Chronology

1. Abram born (2135) - Genesis 11.26 Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

According to Hoehner’s chronology the birth of Abram would be about 2135. I believe that Genesis 11 comes before chapter 10 which has the Table of Nations. After this list of nations, Moses explains where these nations come from: it is a result of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11. This change in the chronology is not unusual in Hebrew narrative.

2. Background of idolatry - Joshua 24.2 Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River; namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.

Joshua is reviewing the history of Israel. ‘And they served other gods’; they were idolatrous, no different from anyone in the area in Mesopotamia, Ur of the Chaldeans.

3. Call at Ur and promise - Genesis 12.1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Then, in 12.1-3, Moses goes back to the time when He calls Abram and the promise is made in, I believe, in Ur of the Chaldees. This is the promise that will become a covenant in chapter 15. Actually there are aspects of it that will not be fulfilled until the Millennial Kingdom.

4. Leaves Ur to Haran - Genesis 11.31 Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

5. Arrives Shechem at 75 - Genesis 12.4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

In chapter 12.4-6 they arrive at Shechem and it tells us that Abram is 75 years there—it is 75 years from 11.26. We can see the very spot, in modern-day Shechem, where Abram arrived in the promised land.

6. Promise restated - Genesis 13.14 *The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."*

The promise is re-iterated in chapter 13. It's not a covenant yet until the 15th chapter.

7. Covenant at ~85 - Genesis 15.1 *After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear; Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." 4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.*

This, then, is the passage we just looked at with the covenant. So I take it that the covenant is later, but verse 6 in chapter 15 is kind of parenthetical, looking back at the time when Abram trusted God when he was probably in Ur, and then in obedience he follows the sequence. So I think it is a reference to the initial justification of Abram which is what Paul is emphasizing in 4.3. Abram believed and it was 'credited to him as righteousness.'

- 4.3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." [probably back when he trusted Christ in Ur of the Chaldeans.]

We focused on that 'credited to him', and the use of the word 'credit' in a normal, everyday sense in accounting and in the theological sense. The word for 'credit' isn't used to *make* Christ a sinner, rather it is *imputed* to Him, to be the sin bearer in order to pay the penalty for sin. Also we are not *made* righteous, but we are *declared* righteous, for we still have a sin nature until we are taken to heaven and glorified—*made* righteousness.

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 - (1) Summary of Paul 4.6

Deuteronomy tells us that they had to have two witnesses. We had the witness of Abraham and now we have David, the second witness. It is within the passage about Abraham.

4.5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

First we look at the grammar. In this version, the NAS, there is a comma at the end of verse 5. This is one way to punctuate it, but it is not clear in Greek. There could be a new sentence started with 6 and its independent clause. In the Greek text it could be either way. I think it is better to put a break there putting a period at the end of verse 5. The Greek word 'just as' often does begin a new sentence.

4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:...

In verse 6 Paul makes a summary and David is used to reinforce what he has said about Abraham. David 'speaks' quoting Psalm 32. In Psalm 51 David is mourning his sin and is under conviction and a heavy burden. But in Psalm 32 he is experiencing the release of that burden with forgiveness of sin. David is quoted from this:

4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

He uses the word 'blessing' four times in this context. David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God *credits* righteousness.

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

And in verse nine he reinforces what he has said. The idea is that justification is a blessing, something outside of us; it comes from God and we cannot generate it or produce it. So David has a ‘blessing’:

David

1. μακάριος (mah-káh-ree-os) - spiritually prosperous, wealthy

4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ...

In Abraham the crediting of righteousness is emphasized—declaring us righteous, but with David it is the other aspect: *forgiveness of sin*:

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4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

David says: ‘blessed...lawless deeds have been *forgiven*’.

4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

There are two aspects of *forgiveness*: the broad overall forgiveness at the moment of salvation or the moment of justification. That is what Paul is talking about, but he is using David to illustrate the forgiveness of sin throughout our Christian life. This is the second aspect: we can break fellowship with God, and this is what David did with that sin with

Bathsheba and the coverup, but he received forgiveness of sin as a believer, like 1John 1.9. So, as believers we are forgiven once and for all for everything, only once covering all sin, past, present and future, but when we break fellowship we confess that sin and restore the relationship.

David

- 1. μακάριος (mah-káh-ree-os) - spiritually prosperous, wealthy
- 2. After David Justified
- 3. Psalm 32.1 *How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!* LXX (Septuagint)

- 4. After sin with Bathsheba

David is experiencing restoration of fellowship with God but he is basing it on the broader idea ‘blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven’—past tense. And now he is experiencing the temporal benefits of that.

4.6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

In the OT the sins were *covered* with animal sacrifices, anticipating the ultimate removal. In chapter three: He passed over sin. Sin is covered—an OT concept. This is after David has been justified. The Psalm is not talking about justification; Paul is using it in its broadest sense, the once-for-all past tense forgiveness.

And then verse eight: ‘Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account’. There is the idea of imputation of sin again: imputation of righteousness and *non-imputation* of sin. God regards the sin as removed—that’s forgiveness. And then He imputes in its place right standing or righteousness. So Paul is using David for the confirming of the idea of imputation of righteousness. A tie-in of λογίζομαι.

David

- 1. μακάριος (mah-káh-ri-ee-os) - spiritually prosperous, wealthy
- 2. After David Justified
- 3. Psalm 32.1 *How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!* LXX

4. After sin with Bathsheba
5. Tie-in - λογίζομαι

Conclusions

1. Justification = forgiveness of sin (7-8)
 - + imputation of righteousness (3, 6)
2. OT justification before Law is by grace thru faith apart from *works*

So to conclude: verses 7 and 8 emphasize forgiveness and we have already looked at the imputation of righteousness in verses 3 and 6. That's justification: removal of the negative, sin, and the imputing or crediting to our account of righteousness. It does not include the removal of the sin nature yet; that comes later when we go to be with the Lord. But right now we are forgiven of sin, past, present and future. And, we stand with God looking at us, with the same righteousness of Christ, right now—even though we still have the crummy, smelly old nature still plaguing us. In chapter 6 we will see how to deal with that flesh.

Secondly, as in Abraham, OT justification, before the Law, is by grace through faith apart from *works*. Now he is illustrating what was presented in chapter 3.

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| a) Issue of Circumcision | 4.9-10 |

This brings us to verses 9-10, the issue of circumcision:

4.9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The 'circumcised' are the Jewish people. He asks, 'Is this blessing on the Jewish people, or on the non-Jewish also? He is going to argue, from Abraham, that it is both. Abraham was a gentile but he was circumcised—later.

4.9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The Jews believed that circumcision was the justifying *act*—that justification was by works and the initial work was circumcision. They had a very high view; this is from one of their writings:

Jewish View

Uncircumcised - "belongs not to the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, for he belongs to the children of destruction; nor is there moreover any sign on him that he is the Lord's, but (he is destined) to be destroyed and slain from the earth, and rooted out of the earth..."
 (Book of Jubilees)

They believed that if you were circumcised, there was no way you could lose your salvation. They were putting the whole weight on a physical, outward act, not unlike what people do today with baptism.

4.9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

He answers that '*faith*' was credited to Abraham as righteousness. When did that happen? Circumcision doesn't come until the second announcement or giving of the covenant.

4.10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

How was it credited? While he was *uncircumcised*! In Genesis 15 when there was no circumcision.

4.10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

Abram Chronology

1. Abram born (2135) - Genesis 11.26
2. Background of idolatry - Joshua 24.2
3. Call at Ur and promise - Genesis 12.1
4. Leaves Ur to Haran - Genesis 11.31
5. Arrives Shechem at 75 - Genesis 12.4
6. Promise restated - Genesis 13.14
7. Covenant at ~85 - Genesis 15.1-6
8. Ishmael born at 86 - Genesis 16.16 *Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.*
9. Covenant renewed at 99 - Genesis 17.1-8 *Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 "I*

will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.” ...

10. Isaac born at 100 - Genesis 21.1-5... 5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

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 a) Issue of Circumcision 4.9-10

 b) Explanation of Circumcision 4.11-12

Then, in verses 11 and 12, there is the *explanation* of circumcision:

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

He explains the place of circumcision. It is after Abraham is justified, long before (in Ur of Chaldeans), in chapter 17, more than 25 years later.

Two things here: What does a *sign* do? What were the signs of Jesus? The miracles pointed to Christ as God Himself. That is what a sign does. Circumcision is a sign pointing to something other than itself. Like baptism, circumcision was an indicator of something that should have taken place inwardly. It has national significance as well; in other words it tied people to the nation of Israel, but in terms of justification it should have indicated an inward reality.

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

It was a seal: A seal says that ‘this document, to the best of my knowledge is accurate and represents reality.’ It validates the validity and accuracy of that document. So it’s a validation that this is a reality; it is true. It was a seal of the faith that he had while *uncircumcised*, an act of obedience.

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he

might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

‘So that’, the purpose, ‘he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised’. He is the spiritual father of the gentiles; he is *our* spiritual father: we are justified by faith and we follow that pattern of Abraham.

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

Again, so that righteousness might be *credited* to them.

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

He is a two-fold father—of the nations as well. And circumcision is the validation or the seal of it. It is not the reality; it is the sign that points to something else.

4.11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

So we have the fatherhood of the circumcised, a token or sign of headship of Israel over the nations. And then thirdly, he is also the father of all who are justified by faith.

Fatherhood of Abraham

1. Father of nation Israel - physical, literal circumcision
2. Pledge of nationality - token of headship of Israel over nations
3. Father of all justified by faith

Conclusions

1. Justification = *forgiveness* of sin (7-8)
+ *imputation* of righteousness (3,6)
2. OT justification before Law is by grace through faith apart from *works*
3. OT justification under the Law is by grace thru faith apart from *ordinances*
OT justification under the Law also by grace through faith apart from *ordinances*, that is, apart from circumcision or baptism today.

Three witness of justification by grace through faith—Abraham, David, and the New Testament.

[Romans 4.13-17 Justification and Abrahamic Covenant 059]

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He continues laying out his case, starting with ‘For…’

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

What is the subject of the sentence? promise. And what is the verb? ‘Was’, but it is not there in the Greek. Often in Greek the verb is not stated but it is implied. Also, in Greek the word order is not as structured as it is in English (subject + verb). It is the forms (usually the endings) that tell you whether it is a verb or a noun and whether it is nominative (subject), accusative (object), etc.

In Greek if you put something at the beginning you are calling attention to it at least, if not emphasizing it. What Paul is emphasizing here, in the Greek is, literally, ‘For not through the law.’ It is at the very beginning of the verse in the Greek text. And this is the theme that he has developed throughout the book up to this point: Justification cannot come through the Law.

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Also, we notice that he uses Key Terms that we have seen before:

Key Terms

1. Law - OT, Pentateuch, Mosaic. ‘Law’ occurs in Romans 73 times! This is about the 34th time that it has occurred. It is in verse 14 and in 15. Total of 4 times in the passage.
Just a little humor: Technically, Moses was the first person with a tablet downloading data from the cloud. With all our technology even we cannot diminish Moses in any way.
2. Righteousness - right standing before God
This is the major term in the whole book. I use ‘righteousness’ in all the divisions, in broad outline. It occurs 55 times in the book. Both Law and Righteousness occur more times in Romans than anywhere else in the NT. This case is the 13th occurrence of the 55.
3. Faith - This occurs 14 times from 3.22 to this passage 4.13, 14, 15, then the verb form in verse 17 ‘whom he believed, even God’. Then 18,19 & 24.
4. Justify or Justification - forgiveness of sin and declaration of righteousness
5. Grace - undeserved favor, totally forgiven
Also key term that we have looked at.
6. Redemption - buying out of slavery
7. Propitiation - God’s justice satisfied

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Now ‘promise’. Why does Paul use the word here? I think what he is referring to in this passage and all the way to verse 25, is the Abrahamic Covenant. This is extremely significant. I have said frequently: The Abrahamic Covenant sets all the parameters for all the rest of world history. We will see this now.

Why does he say ‘promise’ instead of ‘covenant’? The reason that comes to mind is that he did not want us to mix up the ‘sign’ of the Covenant for circumcision, thinking that is is by works. He *believed* God with regard to the Covenant; he didn’t do anything and nothing was required of Abraham. It is an unconditional Covenant.

Paul, by using the word ‘promise’ goes all the way back and he is talking about justification. I believe that the first three verses of Genesis

12 is the promise. Later it is made into a covenant which will have a sign later. So I believe he is referring to the initial promise in Ur of the Chaldeans. But he is really referring, and as we see this little phrase that he ‘would be heir of the world’ to a comprehensive view of the Abrahamic Covenant.

So we look again at this important issue.

Abrahamic Covenant

> Parties - God, Abraham and descendants

All covenants have parties. The believers in the church age are not parties to this Covenant, although we do benefit from it along with Abraham’s descendants. So the Covenant is between God and Israel, essentially non believers.

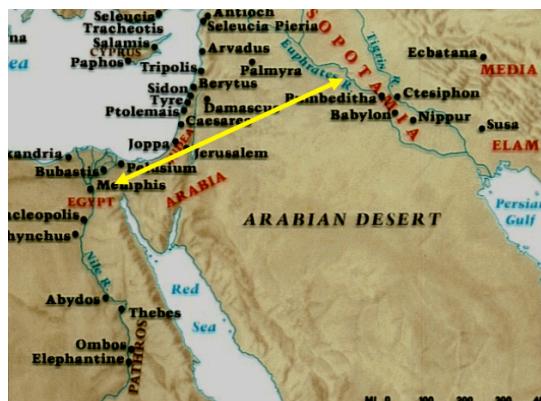
> Stipulations All covenants are contracts and therefore have stipulations. It is a legally binding document; God binds Himself legally to perform the stipulations of the Covenant. There are basically three stipulations:

Covenant stipulations

> Seed Descendants from Abraham that will be a great multitude and that he cannot even count; it will include the nation of Israel, but we will see that it involves other nations as well.

> Land It also includes the land, and there are literally hundreds of passages in the OT that spell out the land, but more specifically, because this is a contract, it has legal language with a specific description of the land. On the map, in Genesis 15.18 we have the details, but in broad strokes, it stretches from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt which is probably not the Nile, but a large portion of land that Israel has never completely occupied in all of its history.

That in itself implies that there is a future fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.



So it includes seed, land and...blessing.

Covenant stipulations

> Seed

> Land

> Blessing God intended that the nation of Israel bless all other nations. In some measure they have failed, but also God has used the nation of Israel as an instrument to bless the nations in at least two ways: to produce the Scriptures, all of the OT, and NT also written by Jewish people.

Secondly, we will look at Galatians 3 where Paul specifies the Abrahamic Covenant and, in fact, he sees a fulfillment in Christ Himself. He calls attention to the ‘seed’ as being singular, referring to Christ. And it is through Christ that the nations are blessed—all nations. And we experience that benefit or that blessing when we receive Jesus Christ, the gift of eternal life and all that comes with it.

Abrahamic Covenant

> Parties - God, Abraham and descendants

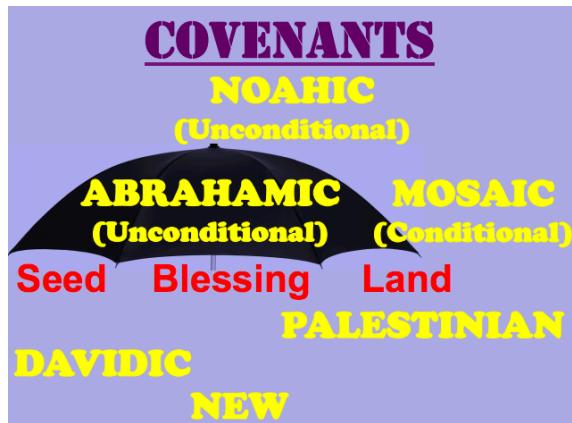
> Stipulations

> Signing - unconditional. Also there was a ceremony in Genesis 15 that describes the ratification or the entering in of the Covenant and it involves the parties. Sacrificed animals were cut in half but in this case only one of the parties walked between the parts—that was God Himself. God caused a sleep to fall on Abraham, so he does not walk through, indicating that this is an *unconditional* Covenant; only God walked between the parts making it unconditional.

> Sign - circumcision. There is also a ‘sign’. This comes later when the Covenant is re-iterated in Genesis 17. The sign is circumcision. That is why the chronology is important because Paul has already talked about circumcision, and justification is *apart* from circumcision, contrary to the current thinking of Jewish people, and not only in the NT time but even before that.

As a quick reminder of covenants in general we have another *unconditional* covenant, the Noahic which precedes the Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 9. The Abrahamic is a broad, far-reaching covenant—that is why the diagram has an umbrella. The three others are subsets or expansions of the Abrahamic Covenant. In time God works out the Abrahamic issuing others to reinforce it. The three aspects of seed, blessing and land which are the stipulations of the Abrahamic Covenant will be followed by three other covenants.

As a counterpart of the Abrahamic Covenant is the Mosaic Covenant which is temporary and very conditional—on the obedience of the children of Israel.



And the Palestinian, or some call it the Land Covenant, expands the land aspect and assures the nation of Israel that they will occupy the land and are possessors of it forever.

The seed aspect of the Abraham Covenant is expanded in the Davidic Covenant because the seed will involve kings.

Then, the last one, is the expansion of the Blessing aspect of the Abrahamic, and is the New Covenant which is ratified at the death of Christ but not instituted until Israel is converted. So it is future from the church age. We are not parties to the New Covenant; it is very clear in Jeremiah and it is reiterated in Hebrews that is with the house of Judah and the house of Israel.

So that is the 'promise' that is in view, beginning in Romans 4.13 to the end of the chapter.

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Here is 'the promise to Abraham or to his descendants', the recipients, that 'he would be heir of the world.' We need to emphasize that this Covenant is far-reaching, and it is re-emphasized over and over. These are the verses with the different mentions of it.

History of Covenant (Genesis:)

> Promised - 12.1-3, 13.14-17 It is in 'promise form' in 12.1-3 and this seems to be where Paul is picking it up, and, in the

chronology of Genesis I believe that this took place in Ur of the Chaldeans at the call of Abraham: he believed, then he leaves and journeys in the direction of Canaan and eventually is in the land.

It is promised again, in chapter 13, in the incident of Lot, and Lot choosing the best of the land. Abraham is assured that God is going to take care of him by re-promising to him the Covenant, 13.14-17.

- > Instituted - 15.1-21. Here it is actually instituted.
- > Confirmed- 17.1-21, 22.15-18 It is confirmed, in 17.1-21, and again, to Abraham in 22.15-18. This is after the ultimate test of the faith of Abraham in chapter 21 when God asked him to sacrifice Isaac. So God reassures him and confirms it in 22.15-18.
- > Re-instituted - 26.3-4, 24. It was so important that it is re-instituted to Isaac in 26.34 and 24.
- > Re-instituted - 28.13-15, 35.9-12. And to the third generation: it is re-instituted to Jacob—two times. In 28.13-15 and later in 35.9-12.
- > Remembered - Exodus 2.24, 2Kings 17.15. Then in the book of Exodus, in chapter 2 we have a kind of background of the Exodus, the raising up of Moses and the story that leads up to the Exodus. In the text it says God *remembered* the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the three are referenced because the Covenant is re-instituted with each of the three patriarchs.

It is not that God 'forgot'—it's an anthropomorphism, something we would do, we would remember something, but God remembers in the sense that now He is going to act. Nothing has been fulfilled, they are not in the land. The only thing that has started are the descendants, and not very many. So God is now going to intervene to act to bring out the nation of Israel. At the Exodus we essentially have the birth of the nation. They will enter the land and much later, in 2Kings 17.15 we have probably another reference to the Covenant. But at the very end of their possession of the land, end of the kingdom age, there is a reference to them *rejecting* the Covenant. But throughout their history there are references here and there concerning this Abrahamic Covenant. So it is very, very important.

- > Fulfilled - Galatians 3, Acts 3.25-26. There is a partial fulfillment in Galatians 3 and also perhaps a reference to it in Acts 3.25-26. We will return to these.

Now we have an interesting phrase in 4.13:

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Where does that phrase ‘heir of the world’ come from? There is probably not a specific passage in the OT with that identical phrase. But I think Paul is kind of giving a summation of the end product of the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham will be heir, not just of the Covenant, not just the nations, not just, as this passage indicates, ‘believers’ in Messiah, but actually possession and heirship of the whole world.

Heir of World

1. Concept - OT possession of land: to be heirs is different from our concept today where you have a will and you are stated in the will and when the owner dies, then the inheritance is passed on, but you have to have the death of the original owner before you inherit. It is a little bit different in the OT. Inheritance was a reference to the *possession*, the actual and real, in time, possession of the land, not waiting for somebody to die. But it refers to the distribution to the 12 tribes; and that was inheritance, the portion of the land that God allotted to them.

And I think we have the same concept here in Romans 4.13. Abraham is going to be possessor of the entire earth. The only place that would find its fulfillment, as I have said, is the Abrahamic Covenant which has fulfillment that is future even from out of time. So, I take it as the end product that is fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

2. Includes -

Land - Genesis 15.7 *And He said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” ... 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”*

So it includes the land, Genesis 15. But it also includes this heirship which includes the nation itself.

Nation - Genesis 12.2 *And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;*

We have seen that Abraham is the father of the nation,

18.18 *since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?*

Descendants- 15.5 *And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able*

to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

His descendants will be multitudes. And this is repeated:

22.17 *Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

Nations - 17.4 *As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.*

And it goes beyond the nation of Israel. Notice that it predicts that from Abraham will come *nations*. And I think that Abraham would in the end be viewed as the father of many and finally all nations in the Millennial Kingdom. Verse 5: I think that these kings are not just the several kings of Israel, but, in this context it seems to refer to kings of other nations as well. So, this is a very broad based, far-reaching Covenant of which only a portion of it has been fulfilled. But there are still aspects of the Covenant that look to the future: the land aspect and also this heirship.

35.11 *God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.*

Messiah - Galatians 3.16 *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.*

In the passage in Galatians 3, Paul is specially tying the Abrahamic Covenant to the Messiah. So it is finally fulfilled in the Messiah and again in the return of the Messiah when He establishes the Kingdom. Look at verse 3.6: *Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Spiritual Seed - Galatians 3.8 *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer....29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.*

‘God would justify the Gentiles by faith’ In other words, the Abrahamic Covenant has Gentiles in view as recipients—they are the nations—of blessings that come through Abraham and then

through his descendants. Then he quotes Genesis 12.2, the promise, the Abrahamic Covenant.

And Galatians 3.9: ‘those of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer’. So God in the Abrahamic Covenant made provision for gentiles—way down the road in the future—when the Messiah came.

Verse 15 he says about the covenant, ... *when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it*. Then verse 16, *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.*

In other words, what is ultimately in the mind of God is that there is going to be a specific descendant—singular—that is going to be fulfilled in Christ Himself.

There is a sidelight with reference to inspiration. When we speak of inspiration and also the authority of Scripture and accuracy of interpretation—notice grammar is involved, and interpretation involves the specifics of details like the details of the difference between singular and plural—this is the point that Paul is making here—and drawing application to the Messiah. So when we study Scripture we want to pay attention to every little detail of the text itself as Paul does here.

So it's ultimately fulfilled in Messiah and, reading on, 3.17 *What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.*

The Law, 430 years later, does not invalidate a (the Abrahamic) Covenant previously ratified. For if the inheritance is based on Law it is no longer based on *promise*. This is parallel to what we are noting. But God has granted it to Abraham by means of a *promise*.

Also look at verse 28: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

He still talks about the Abrahamic Covenant, calling it a *promise*. But the interesting thing here: we are co-heirs with Abraham, Abraham being the heir of the world and its fulfillment of the Covenant.

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Again he is saying: it is not through Law, not through obedience, not through Mosaic ordinances and standards, but through the righteousness of faith. It is a righteousness that comes as a result of faith in what God has *promised*. It has to be either by promise or by Law, so he is going to give the alternative and show why it cannot be by Law, 4.14-15.

We share in Abraham's great inheritance. WOW!!! In the Millennial Kingdom, we will be heirs of the world along with resurrected Abraham!

[Romans 4.13-17 Abraham as Heir of World 060]

When we look at the world, the thought of *owning* the world might not be as attractive as we might think. But we are looking at a passage that says that Abraham is heir of the world. So he is going to inherit everything around us...it will be transformed, that is the positive, into something very different than it is today. But as Paul says in Ephesians, we have been ‘blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places’. One of those blessings is that we are co-heirs with Abraham. So we can apply what has been given to Abraham directly to us, based on other Scriptures as well.

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4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

This promise is the Covenant which of course God did not need to make, because everything is by grace. In that promise to Abraham, actually given before the Covenant, it says that he and his descendants would be heir of the world. It is not specific in the OT, but it is kind of a summation or ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The ultimate fulfillment is during the Millennial Kingdom and during that time Abraham is heir of all the world, or at least he is given all things.

This is part of the great plan of God that is applicable to those in the first century that are justified as well. He doesn't emphasize *our* co-heirship, but there are other passages that certainly do.

Co-Heirs

1. Abraham Romans 4.13: Abraham is heir of the world.
2. Christ - Hebrews 1.1-2 speaks of Jesus Christ as heir also.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Through prophets in the past but now, adding that Jesus Christ is heir of all things. Obviously Christ is above Abraham in terms of heirship, so the whole world belongs to Him and in Revelation there is more about the process.

3. 12 Disciples - Matthew 19.28 The disciples who will eventually be apostles, except for one. *And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

This does not speak specifically of heirship, but it does speak of them ruling with Christ as co-rulers which includes co-ownership or co-heirship, you might say, as well. The 12 disciples, sitting on 12 thrones judging 12 tribes—even the nation of Israel.

That is one of the reasons that I feel there had to be a replacement for Judas in Acts 1, there had to be someone that had to sit on that vacant throne.

4. Believers Daniel 7.27 *'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'*

Daniel is listing the various empires and then there is an ultimate final kingdom that will rule the world. Not yet fulfilled. So it anticipates a return of the Messiah (the coming Messiah, from Daniel's perspective). Who owns that Kingdom? The saints. Specifically it includes the believers of the nation of Israel, but it would be broad enough to ultimately, if it is the Millennial Kingdom, include church age believers as well.

Romans 8.17 Even more specific: *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

We will be heirs in the Kingdom in glorified bodies, resurrected bodies. Co-heirs with Christ. And if Christ is given all things, Hebrews 1.2, we are co-heirs with Him as well. And we are co-

heirs with Abraham because he is given the world, the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

1Corinthians 3.21 *So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.*

'All things belong to you.' The United States is yours; you own it. We don't want it right now, we want it transformed, but when it is transformed we will be owners of the whole world. This is future, ultimately in the Millennial Kingdom. So, we are co-heirs with Abraham who is heir of the world.

So Romans 4.13 has an application very directly to us as well. There are other passages. We will judge angels even. Only believers. Several passages relate to reigning with Him. The crowns are probably related to positions in the Kingdom, blessings in the Kingdom, ownership, rulership, etc. Right now we are sojourners and strangers in a land, legal aliens; we do not have possessions. Like Abraham who never owned any portion of the land except what he purchased for Sarah and eventually he was buried there himself. We await full ownership until the Millennial Kingdom.

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(in the OT)

4.13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Then he is making a kind of contrast between *promise* and *Law*. Or justification gained by works, or by grace. So there is a close connection between *grace* and *promise* as opposed to *Law* and *works*. It has to be by *promise*; it cannot be by works, the basis of man's efforts.

4.14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

The alternative is Law, but if that is the case, what is the result? If those of the Law were heirs, [first class conditional clause, assumed to be true for the sake of arguing the case] so if this is true, what follows, ‘faith’ is made void. That is, if it is done by effort then it does away with *faith*.

Alternative

1. 1st class condition

4.14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

The word ‘void’, remember, is in the passage about Christ ‘emptying Himself’, becoming a servant, becoming a man. It is the same Greek word. ‘Emptied Himself’, not of deity but of the access to those divine attributes, such as omniscience. There are occasions when He said that He didn’t know, such as when would be the second coming, Mateo 24. He also limited Himself or emptied Himself of access to His omnipotence: didn’t turn stones into bread, didn’t heal everyone.

Alternative

1. 1st class condition
2. Void - to empty (Philippians 2.7)

So, not only is ‘faith made void’, but the the ‘promise is nullified’. See the connection: ‘faith’ and ‘promise’. All we do is believe in what God has promised. That is what the OT saints believed; they believed that ultimately God would deal with sin. That is what Abraham believed, that there would be a provision that man could have a relationship with God. God made that promise, starting in Genesis 3.15 but there are others after that.

So if faith is made void, it undermines the promise.

4.14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

Here are some of the ways ‘nullified’ is translated in the NT:

Alternative

1. 1st class condition
2. Void - to empty (Philippians 2.7)

3. Nullify - to invalidate, to abolish, to do away, to remove, to sever, to bring to an end, render powerless (3.3,31)

So that is the alternative: nullifying grace.

4.14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

Then verse 15: this is what the Law brings. If people were to be justified by the Law, then no one would be justified because ‘the Law brings about wrath’ because no one meets the Law, the standard. And if we fail to meet the Law, the only thing that is left is wrath, or God’s judgment.

I think that in the book of Romans he is saying that there is the ongoing meaning of God intervening to judge. In Romans chapter one it is allowing people to live out their sin in such a way that it destroys them. Here it may be broader in the sense that there is ultimate wrath as well. But at least it is about God intervening in a culture or an individual. If you violate the law, there are consequences, the wrath of the State, the government of Israel. That is what it brings because no one lives up to it. That’s why it makes the promise nullified, because if it is on that basis, nobody makes it.

4.14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

And, he goes on, ‘but where there is no law, there also no violation.’ Some translations make it ‘no transgression’. That is, there is no ‘violation of the law’; that does *not* mean there is no sin—there *is* sin, but you have to have law that has a specific standard or stipulation and there is violation because you cannot live up to it. He is arguing for the inadequacy of the law to bring justification because the law only brings wrath. And, even if there were no law, there would be no transgression; there would still be sin because nobody meets God’s standard of perfection or holiness.

Alternative

1. 1st class condition
2. Void - to empty (Philippians 2.7)
3. Nullify - to invalidate, to abolish, to do away, to remove, to sever, to bring to an end, render powerless (3.3,31)
4. No violation - NOT no sin

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(in the OT)

This is the Assuring Purpose of the Covenant:

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are 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 YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Verses 16 and 17 are one sentence.

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

‘For this reason’—that the Law cannot bring justification because the Law brings wrath instead, that the Law has to be based on grace—it is by faith,... He is contrasting faith with Law. Faith and grace go together; Law and obedience (or the lack of) go together. The two are incompatible. He has just argued that in verses 14 and 15.

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

...*in order that*: it has a purpose, and everything else in the sentence will elaborate that purpose. ‘that it may be in accordance with grace.’

The Law demands obedience that no one can comply with, with the result of wrath, not only temporal but ultimate. It has to be by grace. He has already made the case: all fall short, all stand condemned. The only way to Christ is on the basis of underserved favor. You only believe it.

Grace

1. Law & Works antithetical to Grace and Faith. In any way that you mix the two, you have diluted the gospel.
2. Based on God’s character - Justice, Righteousness, Love. God’s gracious character. His justice requires that a standard be met. His righteousness and love are the basis.
3. Completely eliminates human effort

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

... ‘so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants’. He has already classified two different categories of descendants: The uncircumcised and the circumcised. There are physical descendants by lineage or DNA, and also there are spiritual descendants by faith... Some descendants do not accept it, but it is guaranteed.

Guaranteed

1. Term - βέβαιος (bébrios) adjective
2. Verb - to confirm, establish. To establish the promise.
3. Adjective - certain, firm, unalterable, sure, guaranteed. When God promises something, it is certain because God has verbalized it. Like when God said ‘Let there be light.’ Was there any uncertainty that there be light? No. God spoke it into existence. So when Abraham was given a promise, God had already guaranteed that you would be justified by faith.

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

He spells it out again. The ‘all’ are ‘not only those of the Law,’ the Jewish people who were God’s primary example that no one can keep the Law...but also to those who are ‘of the faith of Abraham’, any believer of any time. He has already explained this: trusting in what God has promised before the Law existed: justification by faith.

4.16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

Then he also had talked about the fatherhood of Abraham, and reminds us that Abraham is the father of us all—all who have come by faith. Justification by faith is the whole point of this section.

4.17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Then he has a parenthetical line, a basis, to remind his readers, quoting Genesis again, of the Abrahamic Covenant, but in this case, instead of Genesis 15, it is chapter 17 where it talks about this expansion of heirship that we just discussed. ‘A father of many nations’; he had no children at the time this was promised (except one through Agar). Now he says, not ‘descendants’, but ‘many nations’, broadening it.

Whom did he believe? ‘Him...even God.’

Genesis 17

1. Ishmael - chapter 16, In the context of the sin of Abraham having Ishmael with Agar, not the son of promise.
2. Covenant re-instituted 17.1-4 *1 Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 “I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.” 3 Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.*
3. Name changed - 17.5-6 *“No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations....*
4. Sign - 17.9-14 ...10 *“This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised....*
5. Through Sarah - 17.15-21 ...16 *“I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”...*

God changes his name from ‘father of a multitude’ to father of a ‘multitude of nations.’ And this at age 99.

This is going to be supernatural, not by human means. This is the promise.

6. ‘have made’ - perfect tense, Romans 4.17

4.17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Whom did he believe? ‘Him...even God,’ then describing His work...

4.17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

...Abraham believes in the God that raises the dead. He believes that God is able to give life to that which is dead—like Sarah having a baby at 90. And he believes in the resurrection.

4.17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Not only that, He is the God who called into being that which does not exist—the Creator. God can call into being a multitude of nations that does not exist—because God can create all things out of nothing. This is a good verse for creation *ex nihilo*.

Abraham believed in our God who gives resurrection life and Creates out of Nothing. We are co-heirs with Abraham in the Kingdom because we follow after the same faith; we believe in the God that raised the dead and that rose from the dead—and we also believe that God is the Creator of all things out of nothing.