

I. Introduction and Review: Justification has always been by faith alone. 3:21 Hab. 2:4

II. Abraham was justified by faith. 4:1-5

- A. What was the experience of our Father Abraham? v. 1-2**
1. Abraham is the paradigm of the righteous man. v. 1 Isa. 41:8 Heb. 11:8-9,17-18
 2. If anyone has grounds to boast in his works it would be Abraham. v. 2a
 3. Abraham has no grounds for boasting before God. v. 2b 3:10-12,23 Josh. 24:2
- B. The Scripture declares that Abraham was justified by faith. v. 3 Gen. 15:6**
1. The Bible decisively settles questions of theology. *The supreme court of truth.*
 2. What was the object of Abraham's faith?
 - a. Abraham believed God's promise. Gen. 15:1-5 12:3
 - b. Abraham believed the gospel, looking ahead to the redemption which would be brought through his Seed, Jesus. 4:22-25 Jo. 8:56 Gal. 3:16 Heb. 11:10,19
 - c. We share the same faith with Abraham. 4:23-24,12,16 Gal. 3:6-9, 13-14
 3. What is the nature of saving faith? *knowledge, assent, and trust.*
- C. Justification is by grace. v. 4-5**
1. When a man works, he has earned the wages due him. v. 4
 2. Most people think God deals with people according to the principle of wages.
 3. Justification is given as a gracious gift to those who have not earned it. v. 5
 - a. If Abraham had been justified by works, God would have owed him a debt.
 - b. Because he simply put his trust in God, justification is a favor, an entirely gracious act which excludes any appeal to works.
 4. God justifies the ungodly! v. 5b Lu. 5:32
 5. How can God do what He forbids human judges to do? 3:25-26 Ex. 23:7 Pr. 17:15
- D. On what grounds was righteousness imputed (accounted) to Abraham?**
1. It was not on the grounds of Abraham's works or ceremonies. v. 4-5
 - a. The Jews taught Abraham merited justification based upon his faithfulness.
 - b. Roman Catholicism teaches justification takes place by the means of the sacrament of baptism and is maintained through penance
 2. Nor did God accept Abraham's faith in the place of righteousness.
 - a. Faith is not an equivalent substitute when righteousness is lacking
 - b. This view makes justification the wage of faith. Titus 3:5
 - c. If faith were the meritorious grounds of justification, then Christ died in vain.
 3. Nor does God infuse righteousness, making Abraham worthy.
 4. Nor did God merely regard Abraham *as if* he was righteous.
- E. Christ's Righteousness was imputed to Abraham.**
1. Imputation involves laying something to one's account and treating him accordingly. v. 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11
 2. Imputation may take place, regardless of whether what is imputed rightfully belongs to the recipient. Phm. 1:18
 - a. Our sin is imputed to Christ even though he did not do the acts for which his account was charged. II Co. 5:19-21 Isa. 53:4-6
 - b. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, though we don't deserve it.
 3. Imputation produces no change in the individual, making him inherently righteous or worthy. It simply alters his relation to the law, treating him as such.
 4. We possess an *alien righteousness*. Philippians 3:8-9

- F. What is the relationship of Abraham's faith and works?**
1. Many people object to justification by faith alone.
 2. Does James' view of Abraham's experience contradict Paul's? James 2:21,24
They are addressing two different concerns.
 3. It is essential to distinguish between justification and sanctification.
 - a. Justification is the process by which God counts us righteous.
 - b. Sanctification is the process, after justification, by which God makes us righteous. Phil. 1:6
 4. Paul's point is that we are justified by faith alone, apart from works.
 - a. Paul is not encouraging laziness or denying that Christians do good deeds.
 - b. Paul is not against good works, except as a ground of merit by which we would seek to justify ourselves and boast before God.
 - c. Later Paul teaches that those united with Christ will live changed lives. 6:1f
 5. James' point is that saving faith is always followed by works (sanctification).
 - a. One is not saved by a mere profession of faith or intellectual agreement with the facts of the gospel. James 1:18-19
 - b. Calvin: *It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith with justifies is not alone.* James 2:20-22
 - c. James recognizes Abraham was declared righteous/justified (Gen. 15:6) years before his faith was proven in the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22). Js. 2:23

III. King David was also justified by faith. v. 6-8

- A. Abraham is not an isolated instance of this principle of justification by faith. v. 6**
David's relationship with God was not based on works, but imputed righteousness.
- B. God pardons sin: the negative side of justification. v. 7-8 Ps. 32:1-2**
1. David was clearly guilty.
 2. David was made righteous by God's grace. Ps. 103:12 130:3 Je. 31:34
 3. David was justified by the work of Christ. II Co. 5:19-21 He. 9:28 I Pe. 2:24
 4. David's case further proves that justification is a declaration of righteousness, apart from any human moral transformation or merit (infused or otherwise).
 5. David's record did not change, but his guilt did.

IV. Concluding Applications:

Discussion questions for family worship

1. Where in the Bible is the first clear reference to justification by faith?
2. Why does Abraham have no ground for boasting before God?
3. What did Abraham believe in order to be justified?
4. How does the content his faith compare to ours?
5. What is the difference between faith and mere intellectual agreement?
6. On what basis can God justify the ungodly?
7. What is wrong with each of the following statements:
 - A. Abraham was justified because he faithfully obeyed God.
 - B. God accepted Abraham's faith in the place of the righteousness demanded by the law.
 - C. God made Abraham a righteous man, acceptable to Himself.
 - D. God merely treated Abraham as if he was righteous, even though he had no real righteousness.
8. What does the Roman Catholic Church teach is the instrumental cause of justification?
9. What is the relationship between Abraham's faith and his works?
Does James contradict Paul?
10. How does King David further establish that justification is by faith?