

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part III: God's Righteousness Imputed To Man, Romans 3:21-5:21

B. God's Righteousness Graciously Provided In Justification By Faith For Abraham (Romans 4:1-25)

I. Introduction

- A. Having established that justification is by faith in Christ apart from the Law, Paul anticipated that his Hebrew readers might object, asserting that Old Testament saints before Christ like Abraham could not then be saved.
- B. Paul thus explained in Romans 4:1-25 that Old Testament saints were indeed justified by faith alone:

II. God's Righteousness Graciously Provided In Justification By Faith For Abraham, Romans 4:1-25.

- A. After claiming that justification was by faith in Christ apart from the Law in Romans 3:21-31, Paul voiced the question he anticipated from his Hebrew readers about the salvation of Abraham their forefather: Paul knew that many Hebrews might think that their ancestor Abraham was justified by works, Romans 4:1-2a.
- B. Were Abraham to have been justified by works, he would have grounds to boast in his works in the view of many Hebrews (Romans 4:2b).
- C. However, such is not the case before God (Romans 4:2c), and Paul clarified how Abraham was justified not only apart from works, but apart from circumcision, apart from the Law and by faith in God, Romans 4:3-25:
 - 1. Abraham, as well as other Old Testament saints, was justified apart from works, Romans 4:3-8:
 - a. Paul cited Genesis 15:6 that claimed that Israel's great forefather Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him by God for righteousness, Romans 4:3.
 - b. Had Abraham relied on works to be justified, his righteousness would have been earned as a wage (Rom. 4:4), but Abraham was reckoned to be justified by God because he believed, so his justification by God was a gift from the Lord by faith and not by works, Rom. 4:5; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 453.
 - c. Paul cited David who was under the jurisdiction of the Law where David claimed one was blessed to whom God counts righteousness for him apart from works: Paul cited Psalm 32:1-2 on this truth, showing God graciously reckoned forgiveness of sin to one under the Law without works, Romans 4:6-8.
 - 2. Abraham was justified apart from circumcision, Romans 4:9-12:
 - a. Paul anticipated the question from his Hebrew readers that God's gracious reckoning of righteousness by faith apart from works perhaps was available only to those who had been circumcised, Romans 4:9-10a.
 - b. However, Abraham was justified by faith without works while he was yet uncircumcised, Rom. 4:10b. Genesis 15:6 where God is said to have justified Abraham by faith occurs before Abraham was circumcised in Genesis 17:1-27.
 - c. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith that Abraham obtained before being circumcised, setting the precedent for Abraham to be the spiritual father of all men who believe whether they have been circumcised or whether they have not been circumcised, Romans 4:11-12.
 - 3. Abraham was justified apart from the Mosaic Law, Romans 4:13-15:
 - a. When Abraham received the promise that he would be the heir of the whole world in Genesis 12:1-3, he obtained it independent of the Law that came long after that promise, Romans 4:13; Exodus 2:23-25.
 - b. Had only those under the Law been heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant promise, that promise would have been of none effect, for the Law only works wrath as it condemns man for sin, Romans 4:14-15.
 - 4. Abraham was justified by faith in God, Romans 4:16-25:
 - a. Paul claimed that Abraham became the father of all who believe in God for justification, Rom. 4:16-18.
 - b. Dwelling on that exercise of Abraham's faith, Paul observed that Abraham believed God's claim that he and Sarah in their old age would produce a son as He promised, and his faith was imputed to him for righteousness, Romans 4:19-22.
 - c. The Genesis 15:6 claim that Abraham was justified by faith in God was written not only for Abraham's sake, but for our sake in the dispensation of the Church, that we like Abraham might have hope of being justified by faith for trusting in Christ who died for us, was buried and rose again, Romans 4:23-25.

Lesson: *Abraham and the other Old Testament saints were justified by faith apart from works, apart from circumcision, apart from the Mosaic Law and by faith in God as grounds for US to believe in justification by faith alone in Christ Jesus alone in our dispensation of the Church.*

Application: *May we hold justification to be by faith alone in Christ alone without works, circumcision or the Law.*