

Romans – A Survey

“The Gospel - Revealing The Righteousness of God”

I. Introductory Matters (1:1-17)

II. God’s Righteousness Revealed in Condemnation (Sin) (1:18-3:20)

III. God’s Righteousness Revealed in Justification (Salvation) (3:21-5:21)

A. Provided **righteousness explained (3:21-31)**

B. **Provided righteousness illustrated (chap. 4)** O.T. illustration of justification. The Apostle Paul had presented the case that God declares people righteous on the principle of faith instead of works. If his position is true, he should be able to illustrate it from the past. He uses Abraham as an example. The example he pitches on is that of Abraham, whom he chooses to mention because the Jews gloried much in their relation to Abraham, put it in the first rank of their external privileges that they were Abraham’s seed, and truly they had Abraham for their father. Therefore this instance was likely to be more taking and convincing to the Jews than any other. His argument stands thus: “All that are saved are justified in the same way as Abraham was; but Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works; therefore all that are saved are so justified”

1. **By faith not works (4:1-8)**

a. **The question about Abraham** (v.1) “pertaining to the flesh” is a reference to “works, human activity.”

b. **The means of his justification** (v.2-3) Abraham was **justified by believing God**. Abraham believed God, and God took Abraham's belief and counted his belief as righteousness. It was not Abraham's works, but his faith that God took and counted as righteousness. It was all an act of God; therefore, all glory belonged to God, not to Abraham.

c. **The comparison of two ways** (v.4-5) Works mean debt. When a man works, someone owes him something. If a man could work for righteousness, that is, work so that God would owe him righteousness, then God would owe man. But God, being God, is completely self-sufficient; therefore, He cannot be put in debt to any man. He cannot be made or forced to do anything.

d. **The confirmation from David** (v.6-8) A person can look at prophecy, at the man described by David and see clearly that justification is not by works but by faith (Psalm 32:1-2). Note who the blessed man is. The blessed man is the man who is counted righteous without works. Note the word "impute" (λογίζομαι). It means to reckon, to count, to put to one's account, to credit, to deposit. God debits our sins (Eph1:7; Mic 7:19; Psalm 103:12), and credits us R+. Think about an accounting “T” account. Please note: Abraham was counted R+ before the law was given (By faith), and David was counted R+ (by faith) long after the law was given.

Counted:
imputed,
credited

Accounting:
“T” account
Debits / Credits

2. **By faith not rites (4:9-12)**

a. Who receives the blessing of forgiveness (v.9)? The blessed man is the man who is justified by faith...

b. Abraham was counted righteous when he believed (v.9). Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness or credited as righteousness.

c. Abraham was counted righteous before circumcision, that is, before the ritual (v.10). Abraham made his decision to follow God at least fourteen years before he was circumcised. The story of Abraham believing the promises of God is a dramatic picture (Genesis 15:5-6). But the story of his circumcision is two chapters and fourteen years later (Genesis 17:9f).

d. Abraham received circumcision as a sign or symbol only (v.11a). Circumcision did not confer righteousness on him; it only confirmed that he was righteous. Circumcision did not convey righteousness on him; it only bore testimony that he was righteous. Circumcision was a seal in that it... • confirmed • strengthened • assured • substantiated • validated • authenticated • verified ...what God had done for Abraham. The Bible never says that rites, rituals, or ordinances bestow anything on anyone. They are merely signs of something that has already taken place. They are merely shadows, not the substance. That is not to minimize the importance of them. But Abraham was **immediately circumcised** after God established circumcision as the sign of "righteousness by faith."

e. Abraham was chosen by God for a twofold purpose (v.11b-12) Abraham is said to have a unique relationship to the world. He is seen not as a mere private individual, but as a public man, a representative man of the human race, a pivotal figure in human history. He is seen as the "father" of all who believe God, as the head of the household of faith. God chose Abraham for two specific purposes. 1. Abraham was chosen that he might be the "father" of the circumcised (the Jew), of the religious who "follow in the steps of Abraham's faith." 2. Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of faith to all—all the ungodly and heathen of the world—who repent and believe Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior. No matter how uncircumcised, unbaptized, irreligious, immoral and unclean a person is, he has a father in the faith, a father to follow. Notice, Abraham did not belong to a church in order to believe.

3. **By faith in the promise of the inheritance (not the law) (4:13-17)**

a. The unmistakable statement: the promise (Abrahamic Covenant) is not through the law, but through faith (v.13). Canaan was the promised land, a type of heaven and a type of the new heavens and earth God is to recreate for Abraham and his seed (the believer). Abraham was promised that he would be the "father" of many nations. He is said to be the father of all believers from all nations of the earth. Christ is to inherit the world and be exalted as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, ruling and reigning forever and ever. God does not give the promise through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. A man will not receive an inheritance in the new world because he... • tried to keep the law. • did some great works. • lived by good deeds. • was baptized and joined a church. • was moral and very religious. But only by faith!

b. The argument against the law (v.14-15). The promise of the inheritance does not come through the law. If the promise of God's inheritance is by law, then no man shall inherit the promise, for the promise is given only to the righteous; and no man is perfectly righteous. If the promise of God's inheritance is by law, then faith is voided and has absolutely nothing to do with securing the promise. Law shouts out at a man, "Break me and you become guilty, condemned, and are to be punished." Law works wrath in that it keeps a man tied up in knots, under pressure

and tension, and in a strain. Law works wrath in that it causes a man to focus his life upon the law and not upon God. His mind and attention and thoughts are...upon keeping the rules, not upon trusting God; upon watching where he steps, not upon drawing near God; upon avoiding errors, not upon learning the truth of God; upon observing certain rituals, not upon fellowshiping with God; upon practicing religion, not upon worshipping God.

c. The argument for faith (v.16). Faith brings grace. Grace (charis) means a gift, a free gift, a gift given without expecting anything in return. It means favor, approval, acceptance, goodwill, assistance, help, kindness—all freely given and given without expecting anything in return. Now, who is the Savior, the Deliverer, the Subject who deserves the praise and the honor and the glory? The answer is obvious: God. Faith makes the promise sure. This is seen in the above point. When God is honored and made the center and focus of one's life and trust, that person can rest assured God will accept him and give him the promise of the inheritance. Faith assures that the promise is for everyone, that it is available to all.

4. **By faith in God's promise for Abraham's posterity (4:18-25)**

a. He believed God (v.17) He believed in the God who give life to the “dead.” The Scriptures says “I have made thee...” Note the present tense.

b. Abraham believed against hope (v.18) Based on all human reason it was impossible for him and Sarah to reproduce.

c. Abraham believed in spite of circumstances (v.19) Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 90 years old when “The Angel” told them they would have a child the next year. (Ge. 18:10). The Scripture speaks about the deadness of their bodies. Cf v-17 “God quickeneth the dead!”

d. Abraham believed without staggering (v-20) The word stagger has the idea of divide. For example “divide” the mind, - double minded: “Yes, I believe, BUT...”

e. Being fully persuaded (v-21) God enable him and Sarah (quickeneth the dead)

f. God credited Abraham with righteousness for his faith (v.22)

g. Personal Application for us (v-23-25) Our belief (faith) that God raised Jesus from the dead will result in imputation of R+ to our account.

Bibliography

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