

Romans 4

- This is a rather deep and meditative passage in the letter
- One commentary has 26 pages on this chapter, and another has 125 pages
- The central question: Are we saved by works or by faith?

Romans 4.1-12

V1 – Did Abraham live under the Law of Moses? No, 400 years before the Old Law

-*Genesis 17* – The covenant between God and Abraham

-What were the two signs of the covenant?

- The circumcision of all males
- Sarah would have a child (she was 90 years old at this time)

V 2 – If Abraham had earned salvation, what would he have done? Bragged about it

V3 – But how did Abraham become justified in the eyes of God? *Genesis 15.6* – Abraham believed in God, and God accepted that belief as righteousness

V4 – A man who works deserves his wages (he earns his salary)

V5 – But do we earn our salvation? Absolutely not

-What then does God require of us in order to be saved? To believe in him

V6 – Who is quoted at this point? King David

V7-8 – A quote from David in *Psalms 32.1-2*

-Does this passage say anything about circumcision? Not at all

V9 – Was the blessing on Abraham based on his circumcision? No, it was his faith

V10 – In fact, when God blessed Abraham, had Abraham been circumcised yet? No

V11 – What is Paul's great point here? God will bless the circumcised and the uncircumcised

-It is faith that God is looking for in us

V12 – The Jews of Paul's day had badly misunderstood circumcision – it was a product of faith, not the act that saved people

Romans 4.13-15

V13 – What is the message of v 13? That the uncircumcised people (the Gentiles) can be saved

-This is the climax of *Romans 1-4* – that the Christians at Rome are saved because of their faith, which is not based on the acts of the Old Law

-The Jews made two mistakes:

- They considered themselves to be the sole heirs of God's house
- They considered themselves justified through obedience to the Law

V 14 – If the Jews thought that they could be saved by keeping the Law of Moses, they needed to study once again the life of Abraham (saved before the Law and by faith, not works that would have earned him salvation)

V 15 – **Why does the Law bring about wrath?** Because no-one could keep it perfectly

Romans 4.16-22

V 16 – What an amazing statement! People can be saved without keeping the Law of Moses
-What a great argument Paul has been making to encourage the Gentile Christians in Rome

V 17 – **Who is covered by this concept?** "Many nations" (not just the Jews)
-**How do we know that God has the power to save "many nations"?** Because he can create something out of nothing (as with the creation of the universe – see *Hebrews 11.3*), and because he has the power to raise the dead

V 18 – **Did Abraham have hope that he would have a child?** Not really – it was a hopeless situation in his eyes

V 19 – **Why was it hopeless?** Both Abraham and Sarah were too old for children

V 20 – **But how did Abraham view the situation?** God could bring about the unthinkable!

V 21 – Abraham believed in the promises of God

V 22 – Abraham's firm belief in God's promise brought about Abraham's salvation

Romans 4.23-25

V 23 – **What application did the events in Abraham's life have?** For to us today as Gentiles

V 24 – **What kind of faith do we need to have?** That God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead

V 25 – **Why did Jesus die on the cross?** For our transgressions
-**And what was the purpose of his resurrection?** To bring about our justification by faith

Great lessons from *Heb. 4*:

- Abraham was justified by his faith in the promises of God
- What about the sacrifice of Isaac?** It was evidence of his faith
- Would he have done it had God not stopped Him?** Yes, see *Hebrews 11.17-19*

-Same with us and baptism – no reason for baptism, but it is the proof of our obedience, and it is at that point that our sins are forgiven

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