

Romans 4

This chapter looks back to Abraham for whom the Jewish people had great respect as the original Patriarch of the nation. The one to whom God had given great promises regarding the future, and to whom He had given the sign of circumcision.

1-3 Abraham was accepted as righteous by God not on account of his own achievements but because of his faith in God's promise.

4,5 There are two principles.

Works for due wages which are his by right, a debt owed.

Faith, with no reliance upon works, which receives God's righteousness as a free gift. This recognises that the first principle of my own good work is hopeless because I am ungodly, a sinner.

6-8 Paul supports this with a quote from David in the Old Testament Psalms showing that faith has always been God's method for counting a person forgiven, his sin debt cancelled.

9-12 This salvation was not only for the Jews, God's Old Testament people, but also for uncircumcised Gentiles, because Abraham was accepted by God before the sign of circumcision, so Abraham is not only the father of the Jewish people, but of all believers who have the same faith in God's promise.

13-15 Paul again stresses that it was not because Abraham obeyed the law that the promise was realized, but through faith. Abraham had been promised that through his seed- offspring, blessing would come to the whole world not just Israel. Law – works, for salvation would mean faith was worthless, but law-works, actually results in wrath and judgment because no one keeps the law completely.

16,17 Salvation is and always has been by the grace of God through faith, so all who believe God as Abraham did can look to Abraham as our faith father. Thus God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled. He is in fact the father of many nations- people from all over the world who believe. Abraham believed God could do anything He promised including giving life to the dead.

18-21 This is illustrated in Abraham's faith that God would give him and Sarah a son though it was impossible by nature. God reassured and strengthened his faith until it came about.

22-25 Righteousness was given to him as a free gift. Even so to everyone who believes in The Lord Jesus whom God raised to life. Our sins made it necessary for Jesus to die for them. He was raised to life to show that His perfect sacrifice had been accepted on our behalf.