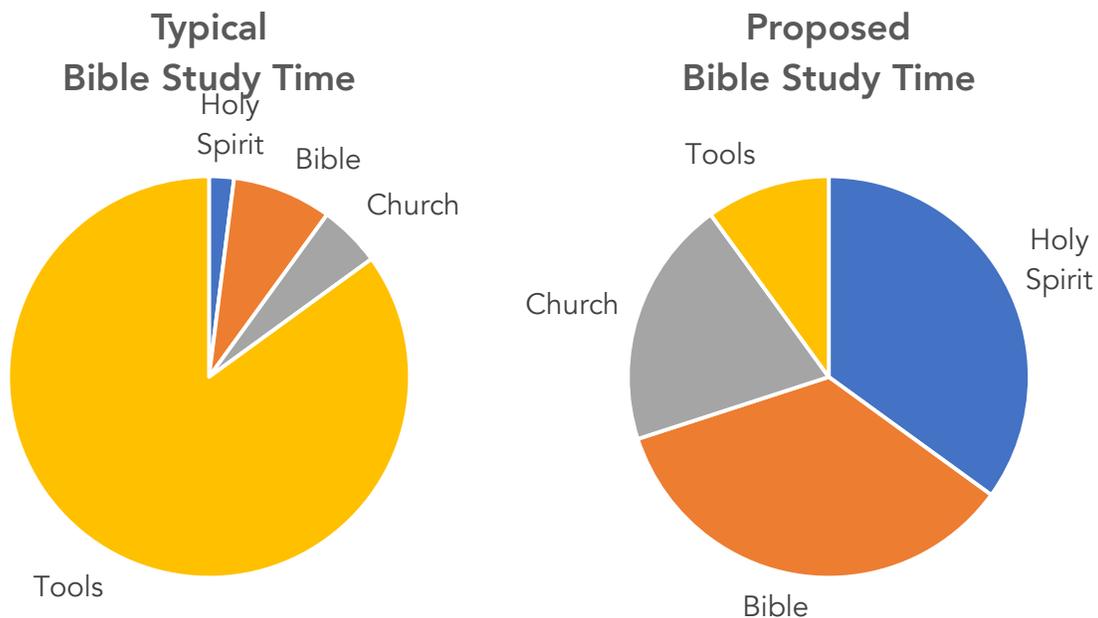


Romans

Abraham Justified by Faith ([Romans 4:1-12](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Before I read this week's text, I want to explain why I'm not starting at [Romans 1:1](#). I've already told you our past approach of stating at [Romans 1:1](#) and reading up to today's text isn't sustainable from a time perspective.

When I was reading last week's text, there was a big shift in both Paul's tone and Paul's goal between [Romans 3:20](#) and [Romans 3:21](#): "**But now.**" You heard it in my voice and you likely felt it as we were reading—almost a pop-off valve of pressure being released as Paul transitioned out of the wrath of God (where we had been for the better part of three chapters) and transitioned in to the solution—Jesus Christ.

What you felt was us moving from one major section of [Romans](#) to the next. I didn't want to talk about it last week because I wanted you to *feel* it before we *studied* it.

Not every book of the Bible will have clean transitions like this, but Paul's writings often do. Now that you've felt it, let's talk about why you felt it and how that helps us.

As we've seen many times so far, Paul is a lawyer and he's arguing a case in **Romans**.

If we combine the facts that **Romans** is a very long letter and the fact that Paul goes very deep into his arguments (confusingly deep at times), we find ourselves needing something to help us provide some structure for what is prior to what we're studying.

Are there any Bible study tools that help us understand a larger portion of text or an entire book? Yes! Outlines can help. Outlines help us boil down and break up longer portions of text into meaningful and manageable sections.

Outlining a book is one of my least favorite things to do—it takes me a very long time to come up with themes to portions of text, but it can also be incredibly helpful.

Before we get to the ESV's outline of the book of **Romans** (which we will use for our study—and which is not inspired, but is very clean and straightforward), let me take an aside to this aside and say that many of you have noticed (especially those of you studying with a resource) the resource I gave you does not align to the grouping of verses we are studying any given week. Your author may have grouped all of **Romans 4** together whereas the ESV breaks **Romans 4** into two parts.

This difference in grouping is usually ok. It is *possible* to mis-group text in a way that causes confusion, but it's far easier to mis-comment on the text. So, don't fret if the ESV's outline differs from your personal outline or from your resource's outline.

Here's the ESV's outline of the book of **Romans**:

- I. **The Gospel as the Revelation of God's Righteousness (1:1-17)**
(Paul's introduction & righteousness introduced)
- II. **God's Righteousness in His Wrath against Sinners (1:18-3:20)**
(righteous wrath)
- III. **The Saving Righteousness of God (3:21-4:25)**
(saving righteousness)
- IV. **Hope as a Result of Righteousness by Faith (5:1-8:39)**
(righteous freedom)
- V. **God's Righteousness to Israel and to the Gentiles (9:1-11:36)**
(righteousness → Jews)
- VI. **God's Righteousness in Everyday Life (12:1-15:13)**
(righteous living)
- VII. **The Extension of God's Righteousness through Paul's Mission (15:14-16:23)**
(Paul's closing)
- VIII. **Final Summary of the Gospel of God's Righteousness (16:25-27)**
(righteousness summarized)

So, with all of that said, each week (from here on out), we will start with a brief summary of prior major sections, then read from the beginning of each section up to and including the text for that week. Let's practice this.

Here's the ESV's outline of the book of [Romans](#), leading into this week's text of [Romans 4:1-12](#).

- I. [The Gospel as the Revelation of God's Righteousness \(1:1-17\)](#)
(Paul's introduction & righteousness introduced)
- II. [God's Righteousness in His Wrath against Sinners \(1:18-3:20\)](#)
(righteous wrath)
- III. [The Saving Righteousness of God \(3:21-4:25\)](#)
(saving righteousness)

Let's read from the start of this major section, starting in [Romans 3:21](#).

[The Righteousness of God Through Faith \(3:21-31\)](#)

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **22** the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. **26** It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. **28** For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. **29** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, **30** since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. **31** Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

[Read: Abraham Justified by Faith \(4:1-12\)](#)

1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? **2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **3** For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." **4** Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. **5** And to the one who does not work but believes in

him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Explain: Abraham Justified by Faith (4:1-12)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Today's text is the first part of the evidence Paul puts forward to back up last week's text (next week we finish this piece of evidence). Paul does this many times in [Romans](#), and [Romans 4](#) is actually not the longest example of an example. In today's text, Paul uses Abraham (through his life) and David (through his writing in [Psalm 32:1-2a](#)) as examples to the Jews of justification by faith and not works. **Barclay: The wise teacher knows that every idea must become a person, for the only way in which an ordinary person can grasp an abstract idea is to see it in action, embodied in a person.**

One Bible principle that Paul affirms (and uses as significant evidence in his argument) is the order of events in the Bible. Paul talks about how order matters in the Bible—and how we can draw theological conclusions from the order of events. So pay attention to the order.

Are there any other literary/structural observations? Yes, Paul quotes [Genesis 15:6](#) and [Psalm 32:1-2a](#).

What do the words mean?

1 **What then shall we say** [future active indicative; utter, speak, say] **was gained by Abraham** ["father of a multitude"], **our** [Paul is a Jew, so he can use "our"] **forefather** [father] **according to the flesh?** 2 **For if Abraham was justified** [aorist middle indicative;

render just, render innocent] **by works** [works, toils, effort, occupation, act, doing, labor; same word as in [Romans 3:20, 27, 28](#)], **he has** [present active indicative] **something to boast** [boast, glory, rejoice] **about, but not before God.** **3 For what does the Scripture** [document, scripture] **say** [present active indicative]? **“Abraham believed** [aorist active indicative; had faith, credited, entrusted, believed, committed, put trust with] **God, and it was counted** [*logizomai*; aorist middle indicative; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, **imputed**, numbered, reasoned, **reckoned**] **to him as righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word used in [Romans 1:17; 3:5](#)].” **4 Now to the one who works** [present middle participle; toils, effects, is engaged in, is engaged with], **his wages** [pay, reward, wages] **are not counted** [present middle indicative; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in [Romans 4:3](#)] **as a gift** [*charis*; acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, grace, pleasure] **but as his due** [something owed, due, fault, debt]. **5 And to the one who does not work** [present middle participle; toil, effect, engage in, engage with] **but believes** [present active participle; has faith in, credits, entrusts, believes, commits, puts in trust with] **in him who justifies** [present active participle; renders just, renders innocent, justifies] **the ungodly** [irreverent, impious, wicked, ungodly], **his faith** [persuasion, credence, moral conviction, reliance, constancy in profession, assurance, belief, faith; same word as in [Romans 1:8](#)] **is counted** [present middle indicative; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in [Romans 4:3, 4](#)] **as righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word as in [Romans 3:5; 4:3](#)], **6 just as David** [“beloved”] **also speaks** [present active indicative; *lego*] **of the blessing** [beatification, attribution of good fortune, blessedness] **of the one to whom God counts** [present middle indicative; estimates, concludes, esteems, imputes, numbers, reasons, reckons; same word as in [Romans 4:3, 4, 5](#)] **righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word as in [Romans 3:5; 4:3, 5](#)] **apart** [at a space, separately, apart, beside, by itself, without; same word used in [Romans 3:21, 28](#)] **from works** [works, toils, effort, occupation, act, doing, labor; same word as in [Romans 3:20, 27, 28; 4:2](#)]:

7 “Blessed [fortunate, well off, happy] **are those whose lawless deeds** [illegality, violation of the law, wickedness, iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness] **are forgiven** [aorist middle indicative; sent, gone, sent forth, forgiven, forsaken, laid aside, left alone, omitted, put away, remitted; The mental image I get from looking at this word is the Father speaking to the violation to flee and not come back: “Go!”] **And where did those sins go?** They went on **Christ**. They were poured out completely on Him, never to return to us—the forgiven—and subsequently, happy],

and whose sins [sin, offenses] **are covered** [aorist middle indicative; concealed, forgiven, covered; this is similar to what pagans tried to do with God’s truth—conceal (how wonderful that God does with our sin what we tried to do with His truth)];

8 blessed [fortunate, well off, happy; same word used in **Romans 4:7**] **is the man against whom the Lord will not count** [aorist active subjunctive and a **double** negative (which in Greek makes the idea more intense); taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in **Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6**] **his sin** [sin, offense].”

9 Is this blessing [beatification, attribution of good fortune, blessedness; same word used in **Romans 4:6**] **then only for the circumcised** [Jews], **or also for the uncircumcised** [Gentiles]? **For we say** [present active indicative] **that faith** [persuasion, credence, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, truth itself, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity; same word used in **Romans 1:5, 12, 17; 3:22, 25, 26, 28, 30** (twice), **31**] **was counted** [aorist middle indicative; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in **Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8**] **to Abraham as righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word as in **Romans 3:5; 4:3, 5, 6**]. **10 How then was it counted** [aorist middle indicative; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in **Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9**] **to him? Was it before or after he had been** [present middle participle] **circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.** [**Genesis 15** is when Abraham’s faith is counted for righteousness. **Genesis 17** is when Abraham is circumcised.] **11 He received** [second aorist active indicative; took, got a hold of] **the sign** [indication, miracle, sign, token, wonder] **of circumcision as a seal** [signet, stamp, seal; outward sign that can be seen] **of the righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word as in **Romans 3:5; 4:3, 5, 6, 9**] **that he had by faith** [persuasion, credence, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, truth itself, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity; same word used in **Romans 1:5, 12, 17; 3:22, 25, 26, 28, 30** (twice), **31; 4:9**] **while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make** [present middle infinitive; exist] **him the father of all who believe** [present active participle; have faith in, credit, entrust, believe] **without being circumcised** [Paul just said Abraham was the father of believing Gentiles—this is BIG (and we will explore it more next week in a lesson that could be entitled, “Who’s your daddy?”)], **so that righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; same word as in **Romans 3:5; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11** (twice)] **would be counted** [aorist middle infinitive; taken inventory, estimated, concluded, esteemed, imputed, numbered, reasoned, reckoned; same word as in **Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10**] **to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk** [present active participle; **Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: a military term, to walk in file**] **in the footsteps** [track, steps] **of the faith** [have faith in, credit, entrust, believe] **that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.**

Are there any repeated words?

Account, righteousness, faith, circumcised, uncircumcised, belief

Are there any repeated topics?

Grace/faith & works (Guzik: Grace has to do with *receiving* the freely given gift of God, works has to do with *earning* our merit before God)

What are some observations of the text?

1 **What then shall we say was gained by Abraham** [trump card #1], **our forefather according to the flesh?** 2 **For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God** [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Abraham deserved all the respect from men that came to him, but his relation to God was a different matter. He had there no ground of boasting at all.]. 3 **For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."** [Guzik: The Apostle Paul does not say that Abraham was *made* righteous in all of his doings, but God **accounted** Abraham as righteous. Our justification is not God **making** us perfectly righteous, but **counting** us as perfectly righteous. After we are **counted** righteous, then God begins making us truly righteous, culminating in our resurrection. . . . It was used in early secular documents; 'put down to one's account, let my revenues be placed on deposit at the storehouse.' Wuest: Abraham possessed righteousness in the same manner as a person would possess a sum of money placed in his account in a bank. MacArthur: His faith was acceptable to God only because God graciously reckoned, or counted it as righteousness. It was not the greatness of Abraham's faith that saved him but the greatness of the gracious Lord in whom he placed his faith.] 4 **Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.** 5 **And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,** 6 **just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:**

7 **"Blessed** [Happiness is connected to forgiveness, not materiality] **are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,**

and whose sins are covered;

8 **blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."**

9 **Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.** 10 **How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.** 11 **He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness** [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: The circumcision did not convey the righteousness, but only gave outward confirmation. Ironside: People ever exalt the

visible at the expense of the invisible.] that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Justification is by **faith**
2. God's accounting is the only accounting that matters
3. Order matters (faith → **righteousness** → **evidence**)

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Stop **working** and believe the gospel
2. Stop keeping **score** and believe the gospel
3. Stop **displaying** and believe the gospel

Recommended resource: The lyrics to Flame's *Start Over*

Next week: The Promise Realized Through Faith (4:13-25)

13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours

also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read (**Romans**)
- Talk (about **Romans**—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com) by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

Modern man is, as a matter of fact, deeply hostile to the concept of justification by faith alone through God's grace. He is much more comfortable with the motto we get our salvation the good ole fashioned way . . . we earn it.

While I do agree with the statement above I also think that for man it is easier to believe that doing good will lead to justification than it is believing that the Creator of the world loved them so much that He died a horrible death to save them. He is justification. I pray that I never stop being baffled by the fact that He choose me and that He loves and saved me.

By faith alone . . . *sola fide*. *Sola fide* is for everyone.

The word counted, appears 11 times in Romans 4 and has the idea of crediting to one's account. This is evident despite the various ways different translations render it: counted, reckoned, considered, imputed, computed. These all mean that righteous was credited to Abrahams account because of faith, not because or works!

Sola fide, the doctrine of faith alone, offends our natural sensibilities. We naturally think that justification ought to go to the good, those who are trying to do their best...Again, grace has power that the Law never had.

By faith alone.

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

Barclay contrasts the conventional wisdom of the day (Specifically the idea that Abraham was so special that, as his descendants, the Jewish people are also residually special and therefore –extra spiritually attuned to the will of God). I provide the following as proof of the basis for what Barclay is talking about.

Paul moves on to speak of Abraham for three reasons.

(i) The Jews regarded Abraham as the great founder of the race and the pattern of all that a man should be. Very naturally they ask, "If all that you say is true, what was the special thing that was given to Abraham when God picked him out to be the ancestor of his special people? What makes him different from other people?" That is the question which Paul is going on to answer.

(ii) Paul has just been seeking to prove that what makes a man right with God is not the performance of the works that the law lays down, but the simple trust of complete

yieldedness which takes God at his word and believes that he still loves us even when we have done nothing to deserve that love. The immediate reaction of the Jews was, "This is something entirely new and a contradiction of all that we have been taught to believe. This doctrine is completely incredible." Paul's answer is, "So far from being new, this doctrine is as old as the Jewish faith. So far from being an heretical novelty, it is the very basis of Jewish religion." That is what he is going on to prove.

(iii) Paul begins to speak about Abraham because he was a wise teacher who knew the human mind and the way it works. He has been talking about faith. Now faith is an abstract idea. The ordinary human mind finds abstract ideas very hard to grasp. The wise teacher knows that every idea must become a person, for the only way in which an ordinary person can grasp an abstract idea is to see it in action, embodied in a person. So Paul, in effect, says, "I have been talking about faith. If you want to see what faith is, look at Abraham."

So the Jewish people appear to be taking the general position that since Abraham was special in the eyes of God, then by association, so are they. It seems that where the waters get muddiest is that there are some several years, and multiple "traditional" practices that seem to have been attached to this relationship, much in the same way that legislation is hidden within other legislation. So, in effect you have the personal relationship between Abraham and God being appropriated, and added to, and then being used as a standard upon which to judge others.

Barclay states that "the great majority of the Rabbis turned the Abraham story to suit their own beliefs."

Barclay points out that this is because of the Jewish tradition of placing the emphasis upon deeds, and actions, instead of faith and trust in the redemption of Christ. They are completely missing that, as Barclay says, "The basic thought of Christianity is that all a man can do is to take God at his word and stake everything on the faith that his promises are true."

This is what Abraham did. Abraham simply placed his faith in God and this was counted to him as Righteousness.

What a glorious thing that when we place our faith in Jesus that we don't need to worry with doing things to become worthy of God's love. In [verses 7 and 8](#):

**7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;**

8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

This tells me that by placing our faith in Jesus, our unworthiness is negated. We are worthy of the gift because the gift is given to us. The giver of Life has determined in our sin we are deserving of better. And, because HE said so, it is true.

Just ...WOW.

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

For James that faith was confirmed when Abraham offered his son on the altar. Paul was concerned with the basis for justification; James, with its practical expression in conduct.

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

George Jackson (Murray)

Jessica Miller (Stott)

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

My biggest takeaway and observation this week is: faith and circumcision (then)=faith and baptism (now.)

Author notes: Paul uses both Abraham and David to get his point across. He does this because it meets the Jewish law regarding two witnesses and David gave witness that the same principal of justification was operative even for those living under the Mosaic law.

Abraham was 85 when righteousness was imputed to him. Ishmael was 13 years old when both he and Abraham were circumcised. This shows that circumcision had nothing to do with the imputation of righteousness to Abraham.

Circumcision, like baptism, is an outward sign declaring salvation as being baptized.

Less than 1% of the world's population is Jewish. So does "seed" as referred to Abraham mean that only 1% is blessed? No. Seed refers to the seed of Jesus not Abraham of inheriting the world.

Justin Harness (Wiersbe)

Jim Fleming (Moo)

Julia Gregg (Schreiner)

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

The major premise is true: If a man could be justified by works, he would indeed have something to boast about, because he would have merited his own salvation. But, as Paul goes on to demonstrate, the minor premise is not true. Consequently, the conclusion is untrue. Abraham did not have anything in himself to boast about before God.

Was reckoned is from *logizomai*, which carried the economic and legal meaning of crediting something to another's account. The only thing God received from Abraham was his imperfect faith but by His divine grace and mercy, He reckoned it to Abraham's spiritual account as righteousness.

His faith was acceptable to God only because God graciously reckoned, or counted it as righteousness. It was not the greatness of Abraham's faith that saved him but the greatness of the gracious Lord in whom he placed his faith.

If man would able to save himself by his own works, then salvation would be apart from God's grace, and Christ's sacrifice on the cross would have been in vain. If such righteous works were attainable by men, then salvation would not be a gift of God's grace but would be a wage that is due.

By God's standard, every person's work falls far short of earning the redemption He provides. On the divine scale of perfect righteousness, even the most devoted and long-serving Christian is not a hair's breadth closer to earning his salvation than the most vile criminal who accepts Christ on his deathbed.

F - Facts - Faith is not based on a blind leap into the unknown and unknowable, as many liberal and neoorthodox theologians would have us believe. It is based on the facts of God's redeeming work through His Son Jesus Christ.

A - Agreement - It is one thing to know the truth of the gospel; it is quite another to agree with it. The believing heart affirms the truth it receives from God's word.

I - Internalization - The inner desire of a believer to accept and apply the truth of the gospel to his own life.

T - Trust - In some ways and in some contexts, trust is a synonym for faith. But trust also carries the idea of having unreserved confidence in God, of trusting Him to keep His promises to never forsake us as His children and to provide all our needs.

H - Hope - Every believer is saved in the hope of going to live eternally with God in heaven, although he has never seen heaven or seen the Lord in whom he believes.

Racially, Abraham is the father of all Jews; spiritually, he is the father of both believing Gentiles, who believe without being circumcised, and of believing Jews, who... are of the circumcision. Both groups of believers are reckoned righteous because of their faith in God through Jesus Christ, and they also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness when he was on Gentile ground before the covenant sign of circumcision was placed upon his flesh. It was really a seal of what was already true, as in the case of Christian baptism. Because he was justified he was commanded to be circumcised. In the centuries since the Jews had come to regard the sign as of more importance than the faith. People ever exalt the visible at the expense of the invisible. (p. 37)

Stephen Mays (Stott)

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

My book doesn't go into much detail or discussion on this passage.

What stuck out to me was in [verses 11-12](#). The scripture says that Abraham was counted righteous before his circumcision. He was then circumcised as a seal for the faith he'd had prior to his circumcision. Why is this important? I think it sent a strong message to the Jews to show them that you were not circumcised just to follow the law and also it helped show the inclusion of Gentiles.

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren)