

JUSTIFIED WITHOUT THE LAW **(Romans 4:1-25)**

I. The examples of justification (vs. 1-8).

- A. The example of Abraham.
 - 1. Abraham was the greatest of men to the Jews.
 - 2. He was the man to whom they looked in all things.
 - 3. Being the man with whom the covenant was first caused him to be idolized by the Jews.
- B. Abraham gained something in his relationship with God after the promises were made to him.
 - 1. The idea of what Abraham found is the idea of gaining something.
 - 2. What he gained was justification but the question then arises as to how it was gained.
- C. If he were justified by the works of the law he could boast and say that God owed it to him to justify him.
 - 1. He would be due it as verse four teaches.
 - 2. Instead, through his faithful belief, God credited righteousness to his spiritual account verse 3.
- D. Paul is not saying there is no reason to work or else he and James would be contradicting one another.
 - 1. He is saying that Abraham was not justified by the Law, but by faith in God and God's grace.
 - 2. What Abraham received because of his faith was a legal verdict of exoneration of all his sins looking forward to Christ on the cross.
- E. Paul then says that strict law keeping does not account one righteous, but belief in God and acting on that belief in an acceptable manner does make one righteous and allows for justification.
 - 1. One would have to keep the Law perfectly to be saved by it.
 - 2. Trusting in law keeping to save is foolhardy, even the Law of Christ because we can't keep it perfectly.
- F. Paul then gives the example of David.
 - 1. David described how blessed a man is when God imputes righteousness to a person.
 - 2. The word "imputeth" means to put to one's account as mentioned earlier.
 - 3. It is God's act of justifying a man based on that man's faith in God not the works of the law.
- G. Paul then quotes Psalm 32:1-2.
 - 1. One is blessed when his sins are forgiven.
 - 2. One is blessed when he has no sins to his account.
 - 3. This could not have happened under the Old Law because their sins were always remembered.
 - 4. David was looking forward to the time when the Messiah would die for mankind.
 - 5. Law keeping didn't make it possible, only faithful obedience to God did.

II. The exclusions in justification (vs. 9-16).

- A. Paul now addresses the problems of circumcision and the law in regards to be justified; they could not separate these from being justified in Christ under the gospel.
- B. Circumcision is excluded.
 - 1. Paul asks if justification comes with or without circumcision; the judaizers screamed it came with.
 - 2. Paul then points out that Abraham was justified before the sign of circumcision was given by God, nearly 30 years before the sign was given to be accurate.
 - 3. He was justified before circumcision so that he could be the father of all that believe, circumcised or not.
- C. The law is excluded as well.
 - 1. The Law of Moses was not given till 400 years after the promise was given to Abraham.
 - 2. Faith would be voided if salvation came by the Law.
 - 3. The Law could not justify a person in sin as Paul had previously pointed out in chapter 3.
 - 4. All the Law did was point out sin.
 - 5. Incidentally, verse 15 points out that we are still under law today because we can sin even today.
 - 6. If there was no law to keep we couldn't be charged with any sins.
 - 7. Instead of the Law of Moses, we can be saved by faith through grace so that all can be saved, not just those to whom the Law was given.

III. The elaboration of justification (vs. 17-25).

- A. Paul now elaborates on how Abraham was justified and what that means for us today.
- B. God had promised not only a son to Abraham, but for Abraham to be the father of many nations.
 - 1. Abraham had a deep faith in a God who could raise the dead.
 - 2. Not only that, God said things were that had not even happened as yet, looking at them as already having taken place.
- C. God had promised Abraham to be the father of many nations and he believed God and acted accordingly.
 - 1. He didn't care that his body was dead when it came to fathering a child.
 - 2. He didn't care that his wife had been barren all her life.
- D. Instead, Paul said Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God and fully believing that God was able to perform that which He had promised.
- E. Because of that faith, God justified Abraham (vs.20).
 - 1. His faith led him to believe in God.
 - 2. Not only that, it led him to obey God, which is what we find in Hebrews 11.
- F. Verses 23-25 hold the key for us.
 - 1. It was not written that it was imputed to Abraham just for Abraham's

benefit.

2. It was written for us to know that we can be justified as well.
- G. We will be justified if we have the type of faith that Abraham did that moved him to obey God.
 - H. What allows us to be justified is the Son of God coming to this earth, dying for us, being raised from the dead, having died because of our sins and raised so that we could be justified.

The main points of this sermon came from John Butler's book "Analytical Bible Expositor, Vol. 12."