

Parson to Person

ROMANS 3 PART 5 with ROMANS 4 PART 2

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Romans 3:27–31 NKJV).

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin’ ” (Romans 4:1–8 NKJV).

It should be noted that by careful examination of Romans 3:30 the definite article in the latter portion of the verse where we read “through faith” should read, “through the faith.” This clarification helps us understand that the “Christian Faith” Paul was referring to was not something new, but was the coming to fruition of the faith delivered to the saints—throughout the whole of Scripture. This is of great confusion to many.

The *faith* of Abraham is *the* faith. It is faith in God, His word, and His work. As the Jews were never saved by the Law given to Moses, by any religious activity, by any measure of good works, human action, or good intentions, all men are saved by faith—the faith. Therefore, there is no distinction made between the faith of (current—proper—fully developed—Church Age) “Judaism” and that of the Gentile Christian.

The true Jew today is one who believes in and trusts Jesus as Messiah. The true Jew today knows that they are not being kept *by* the Law (see Galatians 3:19–25), nor are they kept *under* the law (see Galatians 4:21–31 and 5:18). In fact, Gentiles who believe the Gospel believe the same things, and live by the same *faith* as do the Jews who have moved on to perfection (maturity, completeness).

Paul illustrated this by contrasting what Abraham experienced after the flesh in contrast to what he learned in the promise—by faith. For this reason, Paul asked, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God” (vss. 1–2).

For this, we need to return to history in order to understand.

Abraham was called by God at the age of 75 (Genesis 12:1–4). At that time, God began to communicate His promise to him. Closely thereafter, Abraham and Sarah journeyed to Canaan for a brief period. Then, as the result of famine in the land of Canaan, they sojourned to Egypt for the space of about 10 years. Following their return, God once again confirmed His promise to Abraham (Genesis 13:14–16 and 15:1–7) by an unconditional, one-sided covenant. Shortly thereafter, Sarah encouraged Abraham to take her handmaiden (Hagar) in order to help fulfill the promises of God. This was a big mistake. The result was the birth of a son (by Hagar) named Ishmael. However, God had promised Abraham *and Sarah* a son—a son of promise. Nonetheless, Abraham (through the flesh) attempted to assist God in the fulfillment of that promise. This, among other things, was what Abraham learned “*according to the flesh*”—that God did not need his help and that the promises and blessings of God would come through faith—not by works.

Paul knew that his readers would understand the lessons learned and thus used it to illustrate the fact that faith in the promises of God was what God desired—not the work of the flesh.

Abraham’s human effort incurred “debt” toward God (not to mention the mess created and suffered to this day).

Abraham learned that he would be “*justified by faith*” and thus “*believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness.*”

Even though one might correctly suggest that Abraham (and Sarah) made many mistakes (as recorded in history), God nonetheless justified Abraham by faith alone—not holding his trespasses against him.

There is too much to say herein for the limited space provided. I trust the Lord will get our wheels turning and our hearts pumping as we continue to study His word.

I love you all, Pastor Paul