



Questions

Study Procedure: Read the scripture references before answering questions. Unless otherwise instructed, use the Bible only in answering questions. Some questions may be more difficult than others but try to answer as many as you can. Pray for God's wisdom and understanding as you study and don't be discouraged if some answers are not obvious at first. Do not read the study notes for this lesson until AFTER you have completed your questions.

Day One: Vocabulary Review; Review of Romans 3

1. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word from the following list:

absolutes aside oracles propitiation redemption transaction variation

- (a) We cannot bring an appropriate and permanent offering for sin ourselves, so Jesus became the _____ for our sins.
 - (b) We were slaves to sin, self, and Satan, but Jesus died to pay for our _____ and set us free.
 - (c) The Jews had an advantage over the Gentiles. They had been given the _____ of God.
 - (d) With God there is no _____. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
 - (e) When a person speaks using words like always, never, and everyone, he is speaking in _____.
 - (f) We are helpless by ourselves to deal with our great sin; however, Jesus can handle this _____ for us as He offers Himself in our place.
 - (g) Paul used a dramatic tool called a(n) _____ to say in Romans 3:5, "I speak as a man."
2. In your own words, explain why God's gift of His Son is so wonderful.

Day Two: Read Romans 4:1-4 and Genesis 15:1-6



1. (a) Why does Paul call Abraham "our father"?

(b) Make a list of background information you can find on Abraham.

2. Abraham is one of the most honored men in history, yet Paul says that even Abraham could not boast before God about his good deeds. How did Abraham acquire righteousness? (verse 3)

3. Read Genesis 15:1-6. What exactly did Abraham believe just before God gave him credit (“*accounted it to him*”) for being righteous? _____

4. The rules have never changed. Old Testament people and New Testament people are all justified (made right with God) by believing the same thing. Old Testament people had to believe it would happen. New Testament people have to believe it has happened. What is it?

5. In Romans 4:4 Paul uses one word to describe payment earned for work done and another word for an undeserved gift. What are the two words? Which one did Abraham receive?

Day Three: Read Romans 4:5-12 and Genesis 17:1-12

1. According to Romans 4:5, how can an ungodly person be put right with God (justified)?

2. What other Old Testament person does Paul refer to as an example of one who knew righteousness could not be earned? _____
3. In the quotation from Psalm 32 (Romans 4: 7-8), what is the blessing or gift?

4. “*Impute*” is a term a bookkeeper might use. It means “to charge to one’s account.” If we go into a store and charge an item, we are responsible for paying later when the bill comes. In verse 6, what does God “charge” to the account of believers? In verse 8, what is *not* “charged” to the account of believers? _____

5. Circumcision was the sign of Abraham’s faith. Was Abraham circumcised before or after he believed? _____
6. How does Paul explain that Abraham can be called “father” of the Gentiles as well as the Jews? (verse 12) _____

Day Four: Read Romans 4:13-17 and Galatians 3:16-18



1. Paul has shown that Abraham did not earn righteousness by his good deeds or through his circumcision. Now, in verse 13, what does Paul say will not earn God’s favor?

2. Read the Galatians passage. Exactly when was God’s promise to Abraham’s family fulfilled?

3. Tell whether the words below relate to the LAW or to FAITH.

- (a) _____ heirs
- (b) _____ wrath
- (c) _____ transgression
- (d) _____ grace
- (e) _____ promise

4. What two seemingly impossible things are named in verse 17 as being possible for God to do?



Day Five: Read Romans 4:18-25

1. What two disturbing facts about himself and his wife did Abraham face as he believed God?

2. In your own words explain what verses 20 and 21 mean. _____

3. Paul uses many verses in Chapter 4 to prove that we can have the same righteousness imputed to our account that Abraham had. Verse 24 sums it up. Exactly what are we to believe?

4. Why was Jesus “delivered up” and why was He “raised up”? _____

5. Now take a few minutes to read the notes for this lesson.

Notes

ROMANS 4

Father Abraham Romans 4:1

Paul will use Abraham as an example of a man who received God's righteousness as a gift by faith. There is a good reason that Paul chose Abraham. To Paul's readers as well as to millions in our present time, Abraham is one of the most honored men in all history. Jews, Christians, and Muslims count him as a **patriarch** of their faiths.

patriarch - the male tribal or family leader

Who was he? Beginning in Genesis 12, the history of Abram (his name was later changed to Abraham) is given. He was an ordinary man living in the advanced culture of Babylon. God spoke to him and called him out of that country, culture, and even from his family roots to follow Him. To Abram he gave seven grand and gracious promises. Abram did not ask for them or work for them. Abram merely received them. They were as follows from Genesis 12:2-3:

1. *I will make you a great nation;*
2. *I will bless you*
3. *And make your name great;*
4. *And you shall be a blessing.*
5. *I will bless those who bless you,*
6. *And I will curse him who curses you;*
7. *And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

God spoke to Abram and called him out of that country, culture, and even from his family roots to follow Him.

Later, in Genesis 15 God was more specific in detailing how Abram would be involved in blessing the whole earth. God promised Abram a son through whom a multitude of others would come, and out of them a "seed" would be born to bless the world. Such a seed had been promised in Genesis 3:15 to be the champion of the human race and reverse the curse caused by the sin of the first people, Adam and Eve. Through Abram, God was setting up the family and later the nation that would bring this promise to pass. A few years later, in Genesis 17, God specifically said that the son of Abram would come miraculously through his married union with Sarai, (later changed to Sarah), even though Abram was already ninety-nine and Sarai was nearly ninety! This son would be a miracle child; Creator-God would bring life from their seemingly "dead" bodies.

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In Genesis 22 God called on Abraham to offer back to Him the miracle son Isaac, who was then at least a teenager. The writer of Hebrews describes it: "By faith

Abraham proved he believed God could raise Isaac even from the dead, since through Isaac God had promised many more descendants.

Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense" (Hebrews 11:17-19). It was a test of Abraham's faith, but he passed! God stopped the test before Isaac was killed. Abraham had proved that he believed that God could raise Isaac even from the dead, since through Isaac God had promised many more descendants.

At that time, God announced to Abraham that the blessings to the world would come through his family line, specifically through a single seed of that line: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:16-18).

Paul explained that Jesus was being spoken of here when in his letter to the Galatians he says: "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

**What Did Abraham Believe?
Romans 4:1-3**

Abraham believed that God would keep His promise through a real offspring of his own to bless the world. It was that faith that God blessed by proclaiming Abraham to be righteous in His sight.

When Paul quotes Genesis 15 to show that Abraham had God's righteousness put down to his account because Abraham believed God, he is making a very important and interesting point. When the original passage in Genesis 15 is examined, it reveals exactly what Abraham believed. Up to this point in Abraham's life he had believed many things. He believed in the faithfulness and power of God enough to leave everything familiar and follow Him to a place he had never been (Genesis 12). He believed God would help him fight several kings to rescue his nephew Lot (Genesis 14). But the specific faith that brought this gift of righteousness was a belief that God would give him a son from his own body and would bring through that son the promised blessing and salvation to the whole world. Abraham believed that God would keep His promise through a real offspring of his own to bless the world. It was that faith that God blessed by proclaiming Abraham to be righteous in His sight.

God is Righteous. He Does Not Change the Rules.

Abraham was made righteous or received God's salvation by believing that God would bring a Savior for the world. Old Testament saints shared that belief from the time the promise was first given in Genesis 3:15 when God spoke to Satan: "And I will put **enmity** between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Satan was being told that one day God would set things right again by bringing a specific human offspring or Seed forward to bruise Satan's head. Head injuries are far more serious than heel injuries. Satan would do some damage to the Savior—Jesus was crucified—but the victory was Christ's as He rose from the dead, having paid the full penalty for sin, having borne the full weight of the curse, and having fully ended the power of Satan over all who would come to Christ in faith.

We are **imputed**, **reckoned**, or **accounted** righteous the same way. In the Old Testament, people were saved by believing Messiah/Savior would come. On this side of the cross, we are saved by believing the Savior has come. There is only one way to God—God's righteousness would never allow another—and it is by way of faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul has gone back to the Old Testament to prove his point about the righteousness of Abraham because his Jewish and Christian readers would have to have scriptural proof to believe Paul's teaching. In verses 4 and 5 he makes another point about Abraham's righteousness. It was given to him by God as a gift. Abraham did not work for it. Abraham simply believed the truth God offered and then received the gift of being counted righteous.

In verses 7 and 8, King David was also used as an example of a well-known Jewish figure who knew that God gave forgiveness and covered sins as a blessing to people, not as something they deserved or earned. This is really a wonderful truth. If we had to earn God's favor, how could we ever rest? How could we ever be sure that we had done enough? King David said that God's gift of forgiveness was a blessing; we know it still is.

**For Jews Only?
Romans 4:9-12**

Paul began this section with another question he assumed his readers would ask: "Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also?" In other words, are only Jews able to receive God's favor?

enmity - deep hatred, hostility

There is only one way to God—God's righteousness would never allow another—and it is by way of faith in Jesus Christ.

imputed - put down to the account of another; charged

reckoned - calculated, computed, figured

accounted - set down the record of debits and credits

Abraham simply believed the truth God offered and then received the gift of being counted righteous.

Paul goes back to the Old Testament Scripture again as his authority and simply states that Abraham was counted righteous (Genesis 15) well before circumcision was even given as a covenant sign (Genesis 17). Therefore, everyone can believe and receive through faith alone as Abraham did. The Gentiles can claim his example because he was counted righteous while still uncircumcised and without the sign of the Jewish covenant with God. Jews can claim his example because he was their ancestor by bloodline and shared their culture and covenant promises.

What About Keeping of the Law?
Romans 4:13-16

For the third time Paul emphasizes the fact that faith in God’s promise for a Seed to bless the world was the cause of Abraham’s being counted as righteous by God. Paul points out that it was not even through the keeping of the law held dear to the Jews in their Scriptures. Abraham was called righteous 430 years before the law was even given (Galatians 3:16-18). Paul says that the law does not save us; instead, it causes our judgment since it makes clear our **transgression**. Abraham is the spiritual “*father of us all*” as we come to God in faith as he did.

transgression - the act of going beyond established boundaries; sin

God Does What Is Impossible for Us
Romans 4:17-22

In verse 17 Paul makes two powerful claims about the power of God. God is able to cause **resurrection**, bringing “*life to the dead*” and God is able to cause creation by calling “*those things which do not exist as though they did.*” There are no challenges more difficult to overcome than those! Abraham believed those powers belonged to God, and although he was well aware that at his age (almost 100) and at his wife Sarah’s age (almost 90) that they were dead to the possibility of producing children, he still believed God could do what He promised. Abraham believed that the God who creates and resurrects could use His power in their lives, too.

resurrection - life out of death

Abraham believed that the God who creates and resurrects could use His power in their lives, too.

John Stott, a British theologian, made these comments on faith as it is **exemplified** in this part of the life of Abraham:

Faith is not burying our heads in the sand, or screwing ourselves up to believe what we know is not true, or even whistling in the dark to keep our spirits up. On the contrary, faith is a reasoning trust. There can be no believing without thinking. On the one hand we have to think about the problems which face us. Faith is not closing our eyes to them. Abraham ‘considered his own body, which was as good as dead...and

exemplified - was an example of

the deadness of Sarah's womb' (19). Better, he faced the fact that he and Sarah were both **infertile**. But on the other hand Abraham reflected on the promises of God, and on the character of the God who made them, especially that He is the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were (17). And as his mind played on the promises, the problems shrank accordingly, for he was fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised (21). (From *Romans* by John Stott, p. 136.)

infertile - incapable of reproducing

How is your faith when facing very difficult situations? Paul reminds us that Abraham *"did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness'"* (Romans 4:20-22). The key to having such faith is *"being fully convinced"* that what God promises, He is fully able to do. Are you convinced that the God of the Bible is real, righteous, and ready to help you? God always rewards such faith. So, hold on, believe and wait, even in your most impossible situations! God is still able to create from nothing and bring life where before there has been only death!

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Imputed to Us Romans 4:23-25

This whole chapter has been written not just to lift up Abraham as our spiritual "father" or leader in the faith, but to convince us that we, too, can have God's righteousness imputed or put down to our own accounts. On this side of the cross we have much fuller information about our Savior than Abraham did. We have the complete Old and New Testaments. We know the Savior's name and how and why He came to offer Himself in our place. We are offered the gift of new life, real life, resurrection life as we accept for ourselves the victory brought through Jesus who was *"delivered up"* in our place and *"raised up"* that we might be justified in God's sight. Have you received this marvelous offering?