

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON IX: THE PRIORITY OF FAITH ALONE IN SALVATION — CHAP 4 VERSES 1-25

INTRODUCTION

“In this chapter, Paul appeals to Abraham to support his insistence that righteousness can be attained only through faith. But, as in 3:27-31, Paul's purpose is not only to establish the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but also, indeed especially, to draw out the implications of this *sola fide*. To accomplish these purposes, Paul ‘exposits’ Gen 15:6: ‘*Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*’ This text is quoted in v. 3 after Paul sets up his problem in terms of Abraham's ‘right’ to boast (vv. 1-2). Thereafter, Paul quotes or alludes to this text in every paragraph of the chapter, using a series of antitheses to draw out its meaning and implications. In vv. 3-8, Paul shows that the ‘reckoning’ of Abraham's faith for righteousness is an entirely gracious act that by its nature excludes any appeal to works. The contrast between circumcision and uncircumcision dominates vv. 9-12. Here Paul shows that the ‘reckoning’ of Abraham's faith for righteousness took place before he was circumcised, thereby enabling him to become the ‘father’ of both Jewish and Gentile believers. This same concern with the inclusive importance of Abraham is stressed in vv. 13-22, where Paul focuses on the promise that Abraham would be the father of ‘many nations,’ or ‘all the seed.’ The ruling contrast — though not so clearly sustained as those in the previous two paragraphs — is between ‘faith’ and ‘law,’ with a minor contrast perhaps suggested in vv. 18-21 between faith and ‘sight.’ The quotation of Gen 15:6 at the end of v. 22 brings Paul's exposition back to where it began in v. 3; the final three verses of the chapter apply the lessons Paul has drawn from his text to his Christian readers.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 255f]

ABRAHAM HONORED AMONG THE JEWS — The question as to why Paul used Abraham as an example is an easy question to answer:

- “Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life.” (*Jub.* 23:10)
- Abraham “did not sin against thee” (*Pr. Man.* 8)
- “no one has been found like him in glory” (*Sir* 44:19)
- the rabbis had a doctrine of the merits of Abraham who had a superfluity of credits to pass on to the Jews

At the time of Paul, Abraham was held to have been the perfect model for obedience, some even stating that Abraham obeyed the law perfectly before it had been given (*m. Qidd.* 4:14; *Sir* 44:19-21). **Paul takes Abraham in this chapter away from the Jews who would idolize Abraham as the perfect example of the law-keeper, and shows scripturally that Abraham was rather the great example of faith for all who would believe. In addition to showing Abraham to be the “Father of the faithful,” Paul also intends to bring Abraham into his argument that justification is by faith and available to all, both Jew and Gentile.**

FAITH AND WORKS (4:1-8)

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Rom 4:1-8 KJV)

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God. What does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him. (Rom 4:1-8 NIV)

What, then, shall we say Abraham our father, to have found, according to flesh? for if Abraham by works was declared righteous, he hath to boast — but not before God; for what doth the writing say? And Abraham did believe God, and it was reckoned to him — to righteousness; and to him who is working, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt; and to him who is not working, and is believing upon Him who is declaring righteous the impious, his faith is reckoned — to righteousness: even as David also doth speak of the happiness of the man to whom God doth reckon righteousness apart from works: Happy they whose lawless acts were forgiven, and whose sins were covered; happy the man to whom the Lord may not reckon sin. (Rom 4:1-8 Young's Literal Translation)

This paragraph unfolds in four stages:

- Paul denies Abraham is an exception to the rule he just laid down in 3:28-31: justification by faith takes away any all grounds for boasting (vv. 1,2)
- Paul quotes OT scripture to support his claim of Abraham being justified by faith (v. 3)

- This ‘reckoning’ (imputing, crediting) of Abraham’s faith for righteousness is an act of grace and not works (vv. 4,5)
- Paul adds additional support that this ‘reckoning’ is by grace alone by bringing in a statement written by King David in Psalm 32:1,2 (vv. 6-8)

v1 — Paul begins this chapter with a rhetorical question regarding Abraham. “*What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*” The connection of this verse with the preceding train of reasoning is obvious. Paul had taught that we are justified by faith; as well in confirmation of this doctrine, as to anticipate an objection from the Jew, he refers to the case of Abraham: ‘How was it then with Abraham? How did he obtain justification?’ The point in dispute was, how justification is to be attained. **Paul proposes to decide the question by reference to a case about which no one could doubt. All admitted that Abraham was justified. The only question was, How?**” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 104]

according to the flesh — If we connect ‘*according to the flesh*’ with ‘*father*,’ the stress of this chapter would be the expansion of Abraham’s ‘*fatherhood*’ to include not only the physical heirs but the spiritual heirs as well (vv. 12, 16-18). ‘*According to the flesh*’ therefore could be understood to mean ‘*our forefather*’ which would refer directly to Abraham’s physical lineage but would also include Abraham’s spiritual lineage. Abraham would then be the Father of all who believe. Another manner in which this might be understood is to connect ‘*according to the flesh*’ with ‘*hath found, hath obtained.*’ “In [Phil 3:3,4] Paul includes, under *the flesh*, not only his Hebrew descent, his circumcision, his being a Pharisee, his blameless adherence to the Jewish law, but everything comprehended under his ‘*own righteousness*,’ as distinguished from ‘*the righteousness which is of God on the condition of faith.*’ This is clearly its sense here. It includes everything meant by ‘*works*’ and ‘*works*’ includes all forms of personal righteousness.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 105]

v2 — Taking this verse with the preceding, we might paraphrase the thought (including 3:27-31) to be this: “*What shall we say about Abraham? For if we say he was justified by works, he has reason to boast, and my claim in 3:27-28 that all boasting is excluded is called into question.*” This was no idle question because the Jews at that time did believe Abraham was the essence of piety and his works were the basis of his relationship with God.

he had something to boast about — Paul draws the natural conclusion of his rhetorical question: if Abraham was justified by his works, then he did indeed have grounds for boasting.

but not before God — as Paul ends his illustration, he makes this point: all boasting in the context of salvation must be ruled out, whether before God or before man. When God’s viewpoint is considered, Abraham has no right to boast at all. By doing this, Paul was disproving his rhetorical question: point 1: if Abraham was saved by works, he had a right to boast; point 2: Abraham has no right to boast; conclusion: Abraham was not saved by works.

v3 — Paul supports his argument by quoting Genesis 15:6 LXX. This text becomes the focal point for the entire chapter. Not only did the Jews at Paul’s time consider this an important verse (although they were not open to what the verse was actually saying, of which Paul was about to expound), but the verse is also important because it uses the word “believe” for the first time in scripture. Additionally, this “believing” is also directly connected with attaining righteousness — one of the very few times this occurs in the OT according to Moo. Since this verse concerns Abraham, the “father” of Israel and recipient of God’s promise, Paul had good reason to use this verse both here and in Galatians 3.

Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness — of considerable importance to Paul’s immediate argument is the use of “*it was credited to him as righteousness.*” **This ‘reckoning’ or ‘crediting’ means “to account to him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.”** “But the essential point, that Abraham’s relationship with God is established as an act of God’s grace in response to Abraham’s faith, is the same in both Genesis and Romans. Here Paul distances himself emphatically from the typical interpretation. For Jewish interpreters often viewed Gen. 15:6 through the lens of Gen. 22, so that Abraham’s ‘faith’ became his obedience to God and was regarded as a ‘work’ for which God owed Abraham a reward. Paul’s interpretation stands squarely against this tradition and is also a more faithful interpretation of the original.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 262]

“If the greatest and best men of the old dispensation had to renounce entirely dependence upon their works, and to accept of the favor of God as a gratuity, justification by works must, for all men, be impossible.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg]

IMPUTE — λογίζομαι (*logizomai*) = primary meaning *to count to, to impute, to reason, then to reckon, to number.* It is used (a) of numerical calculation, e.g. Lk 22:37; (b) metaphorically, by a reckoning of characteristics or reasons, to take into account. ‘*Now Abraham believed God, and it was put to his account, resulting in righteousness.*’ (Rom 4:3; Wuest’s Expanded Translation)

AN ACCOUNTING WORD — “The word counted in Romans 4:3 is a Greek word that means ‘to put to one’s account.’ **It is a banking term.** This same word is used eleven times in this chapter, translated ‘reckoned’ (Rom 4:4, 9-10) and ‘imputed’ (Rom 4:6,8,11,21-24), as well as ‘counted.’ **When a man works, he earns a salary and this money is put to his account. But Abraham did not work for his salvation; he simply trusted God’s Word. It was Jesus Christ who did the work on the cross, and His righteousness was put on Abraham’s account.**” [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 524] “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 faith, but by His divine grace and mercy, He reckoned it to Abraham’s spiritual account as

righteousness. That gracious reckoning reflects the heart of God's redemptive revelation and is the focus of both the Old and New Testaments. God has never provided any means of justification except through faith in Him." [MacArthur, Romans 1-8, pg 237] "*logizomai*, old and common verb to set down accounts (literally or metaphorically). It was set down on the credit side of the ledger 'for' righteousness." [Robertson, *Word Pictures*]

v4 — Paul makes clear his reasoning for using Abraham as an example of justification by faith when in vv. 4,5 he draws two theological consequences from what was said: (1) works have no part in justification, and (2) this is true because God's justifying action is not earned but freely given. In doing so, Paul illustrates the hermeneutical principle he states in vv. 23,24: "*The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness.*"

a man's wages — Paul uses the common workforce as an illustration. A person will work for the employer in exchange for the agreed-upon wage. After accomplishing a given task or after working a set number of hours, the employer now owes that employee a wage. Using this illustration Paul places the emphasis upon the fact that this wage is not given freely nor is it a gift; rather, it is a matter of agreement and obligation. "This contrast, which is found in secular commercial language as well as in the religious discussions of Judaism, is never given its theological application in this context. But the implicit 'theo-logic' of Paul is clear: since work means the reward is given by obligation, the reward of the righteous must not be dependent upon work — for God is never obliged by his creatures; justification is a gift, freely bestowed, not a wage, justly earned. That God acts toward his creatures graciously — without compulsion or necessity — is one of Paul's nonnegotiable theological axioms. He uses it here to show that the faith that gained righteousness for Abraham was a faith that excluded works. For many of us, accustomed by four centuries of Protestant theology to the Pauline 'faith vs. works' contrast, this point might appear mundane. But it flew in the face of the dominant Jewish theology of the day, which joined faith and works closely together, resulting in a kind of synergism with respect to salvation." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 263]

v5 — Paul now brings forth the other side of the contrast: the one who does not work for his salvation.

WORKS ARE IMPORTANT BUT NOT THE BASIS FOR JUSTIFICATION — "With this last clause Paul is not 'canonizing laziness'; nor does he mean that a Christian need never produce 'good works.' As Calvin rightly emphasizes, Paul is the last theologian who would countenance a complacent Christian, unconcerned with the active putting into practice of one's faith. Rather, what Paul has in mind, in light of the contrast with '[the one who] believes on the one who justifies the ungodly,' is the person who does not depend on her works for her standing before God." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 264]

GOD JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY — In an era of unjust judges who commonly allow the criminal to go unpunished, perhaps this statement does not have the impact which it should. But the Lord is no unjust Judge, and no sin will go unpunished. That being true, this is one of the most grand statements in all of scripture, '*God justifies the ungodly.*' "As Jonathan Edwards puts it, *the point of the verse is, 'that God, in the act of justification, has no regard to anything in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to this justification as to be the ground of it.'*" [Jonathan Edwards, 'Justification by Works Alone,' *Works* 1.622; q.v. Moo, *Romans*, pg 265]

GOD IMPUTES RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH ALONE — "Paul's purpose in vv. 4-5, then, is to show that the faith that justifies is 'faith alone,' faith 'apart from works.' And, as Chrysostom remarks, it is significant that this point is made with reference to Abraham: '*For a person who had no works, to be justified by faith was nothing unlikely. But for a person richly adorned with good deeds, not to be made just from these, but from faith, is the thing to cause to wonder, and to set the power of faith in a strong light.*'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 265]

GOD SAVES INDIVIDUALS — "It is to be remarked, that Paul speaks of God as justifying the *ungodly*. The word is in the singular, τὸν ἀσεβῆ (ton asebe), *the ungodly man*, not with any special reference to Abraham, as though he was the ungodly person whom God justified, but because the singular, *to him that worketh, to him that believeth*, is used in the context, and because *every man must believe for himself. God does not justify communities.*" [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 114] "*That justifieth the ungodly* – The impious, irreverent man.... The man is taken as he is and pardoned. 'The whole Pauline gospel could be summed up in this one word — God who justifies the ungodly' (Denney)." [Robertson, *Word Pictures*]

FAITH DEFINED — "*The faith which justifies is not mere assent, it is an act of trust. The believer confides upon God for justification. He believes that God will justify him, although ungodly; for the object of the faith or confidence here expressed is 'he who justifies the ungodly.'* Faith therefore is appropriating; it is an act of confidence in reference to our own acceptance with God. To him who thus believes, faith is counted for righteousness, i.e. it is imputed in order to his becoming righteous. It lies in the nature of the faith of which Paul speaks, that he who exercises it should feel and acknowledge that he is ungodly, and consequently undeserving of the favor of God. He, of course, in relying on the mercy of God, must acknowledge that his acceptance is a matter of grace, and not of debt." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 113]

v6 — Paul adds the comments of David to his previous comments, the two verses connected by the emphasis upon the righteousness which is imputed apart from works. Paul may have been imitating Jewish homiletical practices by taking one example from the law and one from the 'prophets and writings.' "*As this is dealing with men, not according to merit, but in a*

gracious manner, the passage cited from Psalms 32:1, 2, is precisely in point: 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.' That is, blessed is the man who, although a sinner, is regarded and treated as righteous." [Hodge, Romans, pg 115]

v7,8 — Paul here quotes from Psalm 32:1-2a LXX. One of the reasons for quoting these verses is David's use of the word 'reckon, impute' which ties David's statement in with Paul's entire argument. Note the sense of the quote: it is not that our good works is 'credited' to our account that gains us favor with God; rather, it is that God does not 'credit' our sins to us that constitutes forgiveness. Good works has no place in this transaction. "Two other implications follow from the association of these Psalm verses with Paul's exposition. First, it is clear that the forgiveness of sins is a basic component of justification. Second, Paul reveals again his strongly forensic understanding of justification. For he uses this quotation to compare justification to the non-accrediting or not 'imputing' of sins to a person. This is an act that has nothing to do with moral transformation, but 'changes' people only in the sense that their relationship to God is changed — they are 'acquitted' rather than condemned." [Moo, Romans, pg 266]

FREEDOM IN THE LOVE OF GOD — These verses answer the question as to why the Lord loves us. Is it because of ourselves? Did the Lord look down from heaven and see merit within us and therefore loved us? No, God saw no merit within us yet sent Christ to die for the ungodly. *Why does the Lord love us? God loves us because he chooses to love us!* That takes great pressure away from us, especially those who feel they must perform in order to deserve the love of God. That attitude points us inward and destroys any peace we might have in our hearts. But as we take our eyes off of ourselves and place them on the Lord, we may be filled with peace and joy. We are free to love God with no ulterior motive.

FAITH AND CIRCUMCISION (4:9-12)

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. (Rom 4:9-12 KJV)

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. (Rom 4:9-12 NIV)

[Is] this happiness, then, upon the circumcision, or also upon the uncircumcision — for we say that the faith was reckoned to Abraham — to righteousness? how then was it reckoned? he being in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; and a sign he did receive of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith in the uncircumcision, for his being father of all those believing through uncircumcision, for the righteousness also being reckoned to them, and father of circumcision to those not of circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith, that [is] in the uncircumcision of our father Abraham. (Rom 4:9-12 Young's Literal Translation)

As Paul returns to his key text (Gen 15:6), he brings forth another aspect of Abraham's justification: it took place prior to his circumcision. That being true, Abraham is able to be the father of all the faithful, both Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised. And since circumcision has no bearing on salvation, then one is not required to become a Jew in order to receive the forgiveness of sins.

v9 — David was quoted about the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Paul raises the question then, did this forgiveness of sin come only upon the circumcised (the Jews) or is it available to the uncircumcised as well (the Gentiles)? Paul is raising a valid question, especially since at least some Jews interpreted Ps 32 as only applying to Israel. To answer his question, Paul quotes again his key text, Gen 15:6.

v10 — As in vv. 3-5, Paul focuses in on the circumstances when God 'imputed' righteousness to Abraham. The question asked is: was Abraham circumcised or uncircumcised when God imputed righteousness to him? The answer is clear: Abraham was justified while yet uncircumcised. Using the chronology of Genesis, Abraham was justified in Genesis 15 when God promised him a son. It was not until much later (possibly as short as 14 years; 29 years according to the rabbis) that Abraham was circumcised.

v11a — **the sign of circumcision** — While Paul expands on his previous explanation, he also adds a comment which shows the relationship between circumcision and justification. Paul calls it the 'sign of circumcision,' or, as one person has translated it, 'the sign that is circumcision.' Wuest: "And he received the attesting sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteous character of

the faith which he had in his uncircumcision.” [Rom 4:11a, Wuest’s Expanded Translation] This sign was of the faith which Abraham had while he was yet uncircumcised. “[P]aul uses the word to denote something that ‘confirms’ the truth or reality of something else, as in 1 Cor 9:2, where Paul describes the Corinthian believers themselves as the ‘seal,’ the confirmation and authentication, of his apostleship. In like manner, Abraham’s circumcision confirms his righteous status, a status that was his by virtue of his faith. **Circumcision, therefore, has no independent value. It cannot effect one’s entrance into the people of God; nor does it even ‘mark’ a person as belonging to God’s people apart from a prior justifying act. Abraham was declared righteous while still uncircumcised. His later circumcision added nothing materially to that transaction; it simply signified and confirmed it.**” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 269] Note: every comment here made of circumcision has a direct application to our modern-day baptism. “The sacraments and ceremonies of the Church, although in the highest degree useful when viewed in their proper light, become ruinous when perverted into grounds of confidence. **What answers well as a sign, is a miserable substitute for the thing signified. Circumcision will not serve for righteousness, nor baptism for regeneration....** Nothing is more natural, and nothing has occurred more extensively in the Christian Church, than the perversion of the means of grace into grounds of dependence. Thus it was with circumcision, and thus it is with baptism and the Lord’s supper; thus too with prayer, fasting, etc. This is the rock on which millions have been shipwrecked.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 117]

a seal of the righteousness of the faith — “*Sphragis* is old word for the seal placed on books (Revelation 5:1), for a signet-ring (Revelation 7:2), the stamp made by the seal (2 Timothy 2:19), that by which anything is confirmed (1 Corinthians 9:2) as here. The circumcision did not convey the righteousness, but only gave outward confirmation. It came by faith and ‘the faith which he had while in uncircumcision,’ ‘the in the state of uncircumcision faith.’ Whatever parallel exists between baptism and circumcision as here stated by Paul argues for faith before baptism and for baptism as the sign and seal of the faith already had before baptism.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*]

righteousness of faith — “The phrase, *righteousness of faith*, is a concise expression for ‘righteousness which is attained by faith,’ or, as it stands more fully in Philippians 3:9, ‘the righteousness of God, which is by faith.’ The word righteousness, in such connections, includes, with the idea of excellence or obedience, that of consequent blessedness. It is the ‘state of acceptableness with God.’” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 116]

v11b,12 — From verse 11b into verse 12 we have one long ‘purpose’ clause with a ‘result’ clause placed inside of it. In the long ‘purpose’ clause, Paul represents Abraham as the spiritual father of all who believe, both Jew and Gentile. Paul specifies each group: Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, and he is the spiritual father of those who are circumcised if they have the faith Abraham had prior to his circumcision. The ‘result’ clause is as follows: ‘so that righteousness might also be reckoned to them,’ relating directly to the Gentiles.

FATHER ABRAHAM — “The word *father* expresses community of nature or character, and is often applied to the head or founder of any school or class of men, whose character or course is determined by the relation to the person so designated: as Genesis 4:20, 21: ‘Jabal... was the father of such as dwell in tents;’ and, ‘Jubal... was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.’ Hence teachers, priests, and kings are often called fathers. **Believers are called the children of Abraham, because of this identity of religious nature or character, as he stands out in Scripture as the believer; and because it was with him that the covenant of grace, embracing all the children of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, was reenacted; and because they are his heirs, inheriting the blessings promised to him.** As Abraham was the head and father of the theoretical people under the Old Testament, this relation was not disowned when the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the Gentiles introduced into the family of God. He still remained the father of the faithful, and we are ‘the sons of Abraham by faith,’ Galatians 3:7. The Jews were accustomed to speak in the same way of Abraham: Michlol Jophi on Malachi 2:15, by *the one* there mentioned, ‘Abraham is intended, for he was one alone, and the father of all who follow and imitate him in faith.’ Bechai, fol. 27, he is called ‘The root of faith, and father of all those who believe in one God.’ Jalkut Chadash, fol. 54, 4, ‘On this account Abraham was not circumcised until he was ninety-nine years old, lest he should shut the door on proselytes coming in.’” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 117]

FAITH AND PROMISE (4:13-22)

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring — not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the

For not through law [is] the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, of his being heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith; for if they who are of law [are] heirs, the faith hath been made void, and the promise hath been made useless; for the law doth work wrath; for where law is not, neither [is] transgression. Because of this [it is] of faith, that [it may be] according to grace, for the promise being sure to all the seed, not to that which [is] of the law only, but also to that which [is] of the faith of

which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. (Rom 4:13-22 KJV)

faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: I have made you a father of many nations. He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why it was credited to him as righteousness. (Rom 4:13-22 NIV)

Abraham, who is father of us all (according as it hath been written — ‘A father of many nations I have set thee,’) before Him whom he did believe — God, who is quickening the dead, and is calling the things that be not as being. Who, against hope in hope did believe, for his becoming father of many nations according to that spoken: ‘So shall thy seed be;’ and not having been weak in the faith, he did not consider his own body, already become dead, (being about a hundred years old,) and the deadness of Sarah's womb, and at the promise of God did not stagger in unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, having given glory to God, and having been fully persuaded that what He hath promised He is able also to do: wherefore also it was reckoned to him to righteousness. (Rom 4:13-22 Young's Literal Translation)

Some divide this into two paragraphs, breaking after either v. 16 or v. 17. While there appears to be a natural division, we will look at it as a whole since it all relates to faith and the promise given to Abraham.

PROMISE — *the word ‘promise’ is used here for the first time in the letter.* Paul uses the noun ‘promise’ four times in these verses and the verb ‘to promise’ once. Each of these times the reference is to the promise given to Abraham by God, with the emphasis upon the fact that it was faith that secured what God had promised.

PARAGRAPH OVERVIEW — The interpretation given by Paul centers around a common outline used by the Jews of his day. The focus is upon the miracle-working power of God and the way Abraham and Sarah experienced that power by ignoring the facts of the situation and trusting the Lord. “However, while this theme is evident in vv. 17-21, the first part of Paul's exposition departs from the traditional interpretation with its polemical contrast between the law and faith and, to a lesser extent, with its inclusion of the Gentiles in the ‘seed’ of Abraham.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 273] Our list of contrasts now include the following: *faith apart from works (vv. 3-8), faith apart from circumcision (vv. 9-12), faith apart from the law (vv. 13-16), and faith apart from sight (vv. 17-21).*

v13 — **why has Paul not referenced the law?** — the ‘for’ at the beginning of v. 13 relates back to what has been said. It explains why up to this point Paul has made no reference to the law when speaking of Abraham's spiritual descendants. “This omission, in light of the standard Jewish view that it was Abraham's fidelity to the law that secured God's blessing and that one could be Abraham's child only by taking on oneself ‘the yoke of the torah,’ requires explanation and defense. Paul makes his position clear in v. 13: it was not ‘through the law’ but ‘through the righteousness of faith’ ‘that the promise was to Abraham or to his seed, that they should be the heirs of the world.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 273] The ‘law’ here is obviously the Mosaic law. Paul's opening statement makes it clear that the promises made to Abraham were given to him by God prior to the law.

seed — a reference to all believers collectively, as evidenced by the usage in v. 16.

heirs of the world — “The clause ‘that they should be the heirs of the world’ explains what the promise is. This language does not exactly match any promise to Abraham found in the OT but succinctly summarizes the three key provisions of the promise as it unfolds in Genesis: that Abraham would have an immense number of descendants, embracing ‘many nations’ (Gen 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4-6, 16-20; 22:17), that he would possess ‘the land’ (Gen 13:15-17; 15:12-21; 17:8), and that he would be the medium of blessing to ‘all the peoples of the earth’ (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). Particularly noteworthy is the promise in Gen 22:17b that Abraham's seed would ‘possess the gate of their enemies.’ Later in the OT, there are indications that the promise of the land had come to embrace the entire world (cf. Isa 55:3-5), and many Jewish texts speak of Israel's inheritance in similar terms. Against this background — to which we can add Jesus' beatitude, ‘Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth’ — Paul probably refers generally to all that God promised his people.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 274] “If they who are of faith ‘are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of’ the promise,’ Galatians 3:9, 29, then will the promise, as stated by the apostle, have its literal accomplishment when the kingdoms of this world are given to the saints of the most high God (Daniel 7:27,) and when the uttermost parts of the earth become the possession of Christ. In this sense, the promise includes the universal prevalence of the true religion, involving of course the advent of Christ, the establishment of his kingdom, and all its consequent blessings. The Jewish writers were accustomed to represent Abraham as the heir of the world. Bemidbar, R. 14., fol. 202, ‘The garden is the world which God gave to

Abraham, to whom it is said, Thou shalt be a blessing.’ ‘God gave to my father Abraham the possession of heaven and earth.’ Midrasch Mischle, 19. Mechila, in Exodus 14. 31, ‘Abraham our father did not obtain the inheritance of this world, and the world to come, except through faith.’ [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 119]

v14 — Paul now begins an explanation as to why the promises given to Abraham cannot be attained by the law:

they which are of the law — literally ‘those who are out of the law’; probably has the sense of ‘those who are basing their hope for the inheritance on the law.’ This then would not necessarily refer to all Jews but to those who were resting solely upon the fact that they were Jews for their eternal blessing.

faith has become void — “‘*Is made void*’ is rendered useless; see 1 Corinthians 1:17; ‘The cross of Christ is made useless,’ 9:15, etc.; compare 1 Corinthians 15:17, ‘Your faith is vain,’ not only without foundation but of no use.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 121] ‘if those who are of the law were heirs, faith would be emptied and the promise would be nullified.’ Wuest translates the verse as follows: “For, assuming that those who are of the law are heirs, the aforementioned faith has been voided with the result that it is permanently invalidated, and the aforementioned promise has been rendered inoperative with the result that it is in a state of permanent inoperation.” [Rom 14:14, Wuest Expanded Translation] There might be several ways in which this might be understood:

- In one sense, if God granted the Jews their inheritance on the basis of their relationship to the law, then ‘faith’ and ‘promise’ has no meaning. How can it be faith if one has a birthright or it is one’s wage to receive eternal blessings? How can it be promise if that person has a right to it?
- In another sense, it would refer to the fact that faith and promise never reaches its natural end. Following the logic of Rom 1-3, and by Paul’s comments in the next verse (4:15), Paul may have been arguing in this manner: if the inheritance was based upon adherence to the law, then there would be no heirs because fallen mankind can obey the law. Therefore any faith would be exercised in vain and the promise would never be fulfilled.

v15 — **WHAT THE LAW DOES** — following on the preceding verse, Paul shows what the law does — produce wrath — as opposed to what it cannot do — provide the inheritance. “***Before and outside the Mosaic law wrath certainly exists, for all people, being sinners, stand under God’s sentence of condemnation (1:18). But the Mosaic law ‘produces’ even more wrath; rather than rescuing people from the sentence of condemnation, it confirms their condemnation. For by stating clearly, and in great detail, exactly what God requires of people, the law renders people even more accountable to God than they were without the law.***” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 277]

and where there is no law there is no transgression — this is a parenthetical explanation as to why the law produces wrath. Paul’s logic would be:

- (1) violation of the law turns ‘sin’ into the more serious offense of ‘transgression’, meriting God’s wrath
- (2) God gave the law to the Jews
- (3) the Jews have transgressed the law
- (4) the law brought wrath to the Jews

Note Paul uses the word ‘transgressions’ rather than ‘sin’ which suggests more than a general condition of sin. These are not synonyms here. While every transgression is also a sin, not every sin is a transgression. Transgressions denote a specific kind of sin, the ‘passing beyond’ the limits set by a definite, positive law or command. “Paul, then, is not claiming that there is no ‘sin’ where there is no law, but, in almost a ‘truism,’ that there is no deliberate disobedience of positive commands where there is no positive command to disobey. As Calvin puts it: ‘He who is not instructed by the written law, when he sins, is not guilty of so great a transgression as he is who knowingly breaks and transgresses the law of God.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 277] “*For the law worketh wrath,* etc. That is, it causes men to be the subjects of wrath. It brings them under condemnation. So far from imparting life, it causes death. If, therefore, the inheritance is suspended on the condition of obedience to the law, it can never be attained; for by the law no flesh living can be justified. The connection of this verse, therefore, may be with what immediately precedes. The promise fails if it be by the law, *for the law worketh death.* The truth here presented, however, although thus incidentally introduced, is none the less a new and substantive argument for the doctrine of justification by faith. It is the same argument as that urged in Galatians 3:10, derived from the very nature of the law. If it works wrath, if all who are under the law are under the curse, if the law condemns, it cannot justify. ***As, however, there are two ways in which, according to the apostle, the law works wrath, so there are two views of the meaning of this passage. First, the law works wrath, because it says, ‘Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,’ Galatians 3:10.*** As the law, from its very nature, demands perfect obedience, and condemns all who are not perfect, it, by its very nature, is unsuited to give life to sinners. It can only condemn them. If there were no law, there would be no sin, and no condemnation. But as all are under the law, and all are sinners, all are under the curse. ***The other way in which the law works wrath is, that it excites and exasperates the evil passions of the heart; not from any defect in the law itself, but from the nature of sin.*** This idea the apostle presents full in the seventh chapter; where it is properly in place, as he is there treating of sanctification. Here where he is treating of justification, that idea would be inappropriate, and therefore the former interpretation is to be decidedly preferred.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 121]

v16 — Paul has given the negative: the inheritance came not through the law (v. 13). This he elaborated on in vv. 14, 15. Now

Paul turns to the positive side of his point: the inheritance is given *'through the righteousness of faith'* (v. 13).

'it' is of faith — this 'it' that Paul uses here most likely refers back to the inheritance of Abraham, mentioned in v. 13.

FAITH AND GRACE ENSURES THE PROMISE — Once again Paul brings together faith and grace. As shown in vv. 4,5 grace is the necessary corollary to faith as 'wages' is to works. But here Paul brings forth another reason for God's provision to be provided through faith: *'in order that the promise might be confirmed to all the seed.'* The benefit of this is two-fold: first, that the promise might be firm, or that it might be sure to come to pass since it is not dependent upon works; and secondly, that the promise might be confirmed to all the spiritual descendants of Abraham. "Neither blessing would have come to pass if it had depended on human 'works' or obedience to the law; but because faith grasps the absolutely sure promise of God, a promise that he has determined freely to give, the inheritance God has promised can become a reality, and a reality for anyone who believes." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 278]

TO BOTH JEW AND GENTILE — Paul emphasizes the universal appeal of the gospel, not to *'those who are of the law only'* (the Jews) but also *'those who are of the faith of Abraham'* (all believers, Jews and Gentiles).

v17 — PARANTHETIC CLAUSE — This verse is composed of two main clauses: (1) *even as it is written, 'I have appointed you as the father of many nations';* (2) *before the God in whom he believed, the one who gives life to the dead and calls those things that are not as though they were.* While not universal, most connect the first clause with the latter part of v. 16, making it a clarification: *'Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have appointed you as the father of many nations).'* Paul quotes this from Genesis 17:5 LXX. The *'many nations'* without doubt referred both to the Jews and the Gentiles, although it is unclear whether the original reference was of Abraham's physical or spiritual heirs.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE PROMISES OF GOD — There are language difficulties in this verse and commentators differs as to exactly how the second clause fits within Paul's argument. If we connect the second clause with the first clause in this verse, taking each in consecutive order, the sense is as follows: ***God gave the promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:5, all couched in the past tense, 'I have made you the father of many nations,' even though at the time it was given, all of the promises were yet unfulfilled. But God can promise Abraham — and Abraham can believe — that the promises of God which are yet unfulfilled will with absolute certainty come to pass because God is a God who 'gives life to the dead and calls those things that are not as though they were.'***

THE GOD WHO GIVES LIFE AND CALLS — This was common OT and Jewish teaching. "God's power to give life is underscored in the OT (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6) and was featured in the important Jewish liturgy, the *Shemoneh Ezreh*, the 'Eighteen Benedictions.'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 280] In this immediate context, Paul must have been thinking of life from the body of Abraham and the womb of Sarah (cf. v. 19). Also included in Paul's mind was probably the resurrection of Christ which he mentions in vv. 24,25. God *'calling things which are not'* possibly also refers to God's creative act. "In the OT, the verb 'call' refers to God's creative work (cf. Isa 41:4; 48:13), and later Jewish authors perpetuate this usage, sometimes adding the idea that this creative 'calling' involves a bringing into being things that were not. It may be, then, this tradition of a *creative ex nihilo* to which Paul alludes, with the purpose of reminding his readers of God's creative power generally. Moreover, several texts apply this language to spiritual conversion, and sometimes, as here, with reference to God's giving life to the dead. These parallels make it possible that Paul's description of God as 'the one who calls into being things that are not' is a reminder that God 'justifies the ungodly' (v.5): he creates out of the nothingness of people's empty, sinful lives a new, vibrant, spiritual life." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 281f]

v18 — There is a natural break here, shifting slightly to the positive aspects of Abraham's faith and how that faith obtained the promise of God. "The emphasis in v. 18 falls on the paradoxical description of Abraham's faith as *'against hope, on the basis of hope.'* No better explanation of the phrase can be found than Chrysostom's: 'It was against man's hope, in hope which is of God.' As Paul will explain in v. 19, Abraham had every reason, from a human point of view, to give up the attempt to produce a child through Sarah. His faith flew in the face of that hope which is founded on the evidence of reason and common sense — 'hope' as we often use the word ('I hope to win the lottery'). Yet his faith was firmly based on the hope that springs from the promise of God. We note here that Abraham's faith is not described as a 'leap into the dark,' a completely baseless, almost irrational 'decision' — as Christian faith is pictured by some 'existentialist' theologians — but as a 'leap' from the evidence of his senses into the security of God's word and promise." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 282f]

FAITH REWARDED — as a result of Abraham's faith, Abraham was blessed by God and became the *'father of many nations.'* Paul then quotes again from Genesis 15:5, suggesting that to Paul, the 'many nations' is equivalent to the 'seed as the stars of the sky' which therefore includes both Jews and Gentiles.

v19-21 — These next verses details the manner in which Abraham believed *'against all hope.'* Abraham refused to consider his own situation physically and put his faith in the Lord alone. He had every reason to doubt. His own body was 'dead' in the sense that he was past the age of procreation, being about a hundred years old. Genesis 17:1 gives his ages to be ninety-nine, so Paul's approximation is acceptable. In addition to Abraham's physical condition was that of his wife Sarah who was also way past the age of childbearing. Sarah's 'womb being dead' is not the usual manner in which the barrenness of a woman is described, it can only be that Paul is intentionally emphasizing the word 'dead' in relation to God who *'brings life to the dead.'*

WE TOO HAVE GOD'S PROMISES IN A WORLD OF DEATH — *“Let us also remember, that the condition of us all is the same with that of Abraham. All things around us are in opposition to the promises of God: he promises immortality; we are surrounded with mortality and corruption: he declares that he counts us just; we are covered with sins: He testifies that he is propitious and kind to us; outward judgments threaten his wrath. What then is to be done? We must with closed eyes pass by ourselves and all things connected with us, that nothing may hinder or prevent us from believing that God is true.”* [Calvin; q.v. Moo, *Romans*, pg 284]

ABRAHAM DID NOT WAVER — *“When Paul says that Abraham did not ‘doubt ... because of unbelief,’ he means not that Abraham never had a momentary hesitation, but that he avoided a deep-seated and permanent attitude of distrust and inconsistency in relationship to God and his promises. Unlike the ‘double-souled’ person who displays a deeply rooted division in his attitude toward God (Jas. 1:6-8), Abraham maintained a single-minded trust in the fulfillment of God’s promise.”* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 285] *“The eighteenth verse had stated it was contrary to all appearances that Abraham believed; this verse states the circumstances which rendered the accomplishment of the promise an apparent impossibility, viz. his own advanced age, and the age and barrenness of his wife. These circumstances he did not consider, that is, he did not allow them to have weight, he did not fix his mind on the difficulties of the case. Had he been weak in faith, and allowed himself to dwell on the obstacles to the fulfillment of the divine promise, he would have staggered. This does not imply that there was no inward conflict with doubt in Abraham’s mind. It only says, that his faith triumphed over all difficulties. ‘The mind,’ says Calvin, ‘is never so enlightened that there are no remains of ignorance, nor the heart so established that there are no misgivings.’”* [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 127]

FAITH INCREASES FAITH — *the phrase used by Paul here suggests that ‘faith’ is the object of ‘strengthening,’ meaning it was Abraham’s faith itself that grew stronger. “In what way did Abraham’s faith ‘grow strong’? In the sense that anything gains strength in meeting and overcoming opposition — muscles when weights are raised; holiness when temptation is successfully resisted. So Abraham’s faith gained strength from its victory over the hindrance created by the conflict between God’s promise and the physical evidence. And in this strengthening of his faith, Abraham gave ‘glory to God.’”* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 285f]

PAUL THE ARMINIAN? — Prior to moving on, we should again make a point of the balance in Paul’s preaching. Paul here places the emphasis upon what Abraham did and how because of Abraham’s faith and obedience, his faith grew even more. We would all agree with that emphasis. But what is noteworthy is the fact that Paul does not add that Abraham’s faith originated with God, nor that “God is sovereign and dispenses faith...”, etc. Does Paul not believe those things? Of course he does as the rest of Romans will illustrate. But then is Paul robbing God of glory by not pointing out the sovereignty of God? Again, how could we approach the great apostle Paul with such an accusation. The point I am trying to make is this: *Paul was perfectly comfortable with stressing the human responsibility of Abraham without feeling compelled to mention the sovereignty of God.* Paul was balanced in his approach and we would be wise to emulate his practices.

v22 — Paul brings this full circle: *‘therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness,’* concluding what he began in v. 3. In a sense, the historical exposition of Abraham is now brought to an end and Paul is ready to make application to his Christian readers.

FAITH OF ABRAHAM AND FAITH OF THE CHRISTIAN (4:23-25)

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. (Rom 4:23-25 KJV)

The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (Rom 4:23-25 NIV)

And it was not written on his account alone, that it was reckoned to him, but also on ours, to whom it is about to be reckoned — to us believing on Him who did raise up Jesus our Lord out of the dead, who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised up because of our being declared righteous. (Rom 4:23-25 Young’s Literal Translation)

v23 — Paul has made application to believers throughout this chapter, but he now specifically directs his teaching to Christians. Paul’s conviction was that the OT everywhere had application to the Christian (cp. Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11).

v24 — Paul gives two parallel clauses to describe the Christian. First, Christians are those *‘to whom it was going to be reckoned,’* that is, those who have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. Secondly, Christians are those *‘who believe in the One who raised Jesus from the dead.’*

UNUSUAL DESIGNATION — Paul uses an unusual designation here by placing God as the object of the Christian faith instead of Christ. Possibly Paul wanted to bring the believer into the closest possible relationship to Abraham’s faith. Not only is our faith similar to Abraham’s but it ultimately has its object the same God. “It is the God of the promise, the promise given to Abraham but ultimately fulfilled in Christ and Christians, in whom both Abraham and we believe. While, therefore, the locus of faith has shifted as the course of salvation history has filled out and made ever more clear the specific content of the promise, the ultimate

object of faith has always been the same.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 288]

v25 — There is a clear parallelism in this concluding verse:

<i>who</i>	<i>was handed over</i>	<i>because of our trespasses</i>
<i>and</i>	<i>was raised</i>	<i>because of our justification</i>

The language resembles that of Isaiah 53, especially v. 12 LXX. For both Isaiah and Paul, the divine Agent is God the Father who Himself took the initiative in ‘handing over’ his Son to and for sinful people. The second part of the parallelism might also refer to Isaiah 53:11 of the LXX (which differs significantly from the MT). There Isaiah speaks of the servant ‘justifying the righteous.’ But the LXX’s meaning is not the same as Paul so what his exact meaning here is unclear.

BECAUSE OF? — The two parallel prepositions, both the same, is difficult to understand. The first preposition has the sense of ‘because of’— Jesus was handed over by God the Father ‘*because of*’ our sins. But if that is so, then the second clause, using the same preposition, would have the sense of Jesus was resurrected ‘*because of*’ our justification. Godet argues this point but if this is so, this is a unique verse in all of scripture. Probably the best manner in which to take this is to give the two prepositions differing senses in both clauses: ‘Jesus was handed over because of our trespasses and was raised for the sake of our justification (i.e., in order to secure our justification).

THE RESURRECTION AND OUR SALVATION — “[P]aul is affirming here a theological connection between Jesus’ resurrection and our justification (cf. 5:10). As Jesus’ death provides the necessary grounds on which God’s justifying action can proceed, so his resurrection, by vindicating Christ and freeing him forever from the influence of sin (cf. 6:10), provides for the ongoing power over sins experienced by the believer in union with Christ.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 290] “Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. – This verse is a comprehensive statement of the gospel. Christ was delivered *unto death* for our offenses, i.e., on account of them, and for their expiation; see Isaiah 53:5, 6; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:21. This delivering of Christ is ascribed to God, Romans 8:32; Galatians 1:4, and elsewhere; and to himself, Titus 2:14; Galatians 2:20. It was by the divine purpose and counsel he suffered for the expiation of sin; and he gave himself willingly to death. ‘He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.’ Christ is said to have been delivered unto death, and to have been raised, that is, he was delivered in order that our sins might be expiated, and he was raised in order that we might be justified. His death and his resurrection were alike necessary; his death, as a satisfaction to divine justice. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. That is, he bore the punishment of our sins.... His resurrection was no less necessary, first, as a proof that his death had been accepted as an expiation for our sins. Had he not risen, it would have been evident that he was not what he claimed to be. We should be yet in our sins, 1 Corinthians 15:17, and therefore still under condemnation. Our ransom, in that case, instead of being publicly accepted, had been rejected. And secondly, in order to secure the continued application of the merits of his sacrifice, he rose from the dead, and ascended on high, there to appear before God for us. He stands at the right hand of God, ever to make intercession for his people, thereby securing for them the benefits of his redemption. With a dead Savior, a Savior over whom death had triumphed and held captive, our justification had been for ever impossible. As it was necessary that the high priest, under the old economy, should not only slay the victim at the altar, but carry the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat; so it was necessary not only that our great High Priest should suffer in the outer court, but that he should pass into heaven, to present his righteousness before God for our justification. Both, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction on our behalf, and as a necessary step to secure the application of the merits of his sacrifice, the resurrection of Christ was absolutely essential, even for our justification.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 129]