**6 – Faith of Abraham**

*Romans 4:13-22; James 2:21-24*

*When considering the faith of Abraham in Romans 4 it is important to set the context. Some say that obedience in general is done away with because of the text of Romans 4. However, through consideration of the context we will see that Paul was not making void the need for obedience, but refuting the Jews concept of justification through works of the Law of Moses.*

**Chapters 1-3**

* **(4:2)** – Indicates that Abraham was not justified by works.
  + **James 2:24** indicates that justification is by works, and uses Abraham as an example.
* There must be, and is, a logical explanation for the “seeming” differences in the contexts.
* What works do not lead to justification? 🡪
* **(1:5)** – Obedient faith, or working faith, cannot be the consideration. The entire purpose of the appointment of Paul and the other apostles was to produce obedient faith in all nations (Jew and Gentile) by the revealing of God’s word **(cf. 10:14-17**).
* **(1:16-17)** – God’s revealed plan of righteousness is the gospel. The way in which man attains righteousness is faith, and the gospel is that which produces that faith.
  + This is a plan that is available and attainable to both Jew and Gentile ***(Paul is beginning his refutation of the Jewish concept that Righteousness is only attained through the keeping of the Law of Moses)***.
  + Jew’s are no better than Gentiles **(3:21-26)** – There is no difference between Jew and Gentile in that all have sinned, and the only attaining of justification is by faith in Christ.
* All have sinned.
  + **1:18-21** – The Gentiles knew God, but did not obey Him. They had sinned.
    - However, this did not make them any worse than the disobedient Jew 🡪
  + **2:1-11** – The Jews had no special regard from God than the Gentiles. They were no better for they sinned as well. God shows no partiality.
* Boast in the Law, yet condemned by it because of disobedience.
  + **2:17, 23-24** – They consider themselves safe because of their Jewish nationality, but they cannot be just because they have broken the Law (**cf. James 2:8-11**).
  + **3:9-20** – The Jews would agree that the Gentiles had sinned but would boast of themselves in the Law. Paul points out that the law in which they boast reveals that even the Jews were guilty before God and in need of the Gospel of Christ.
* **3:27-31** – The Law of Faith in Christ excludes boasting in the old law, yet establishes the need for obedience.
  + There would be no need for the propitiation in Christ’s sacrifice if obedience was made void, much less faith in Christ.
  + Yet violation of law (disobedience) is sin, and sin requires death **(6:23**), the need for Christ’s death and the need for faith in Christ shows the legitimacy of obedience to God.
  + **We are justified by faith, but faith is not idle.**
    - The giving of a command implies the expectation, and necessity, of obeying that command. We are not justified by perfectly keeping all commands, because all have sinned.
    - We are still expected to follow commands, but are justified by faith in Christ in that we receive forgiveness of our failings through the shedding of His blood.
    - In order to receive the blessings of grace and mercy in Christ we are commanded to follow requirements **(cf. 5:1-2)**.
  + There is no boasting in our obedience, but there is necessity of obedience (**cf. Luke 17:10)**.
* The example of Abraham is powerful in context because the Jews held Abraham in high regard as their father and claimed to be his children (**cf. John 8:37-41**).
  + ***In Romans 4, Paul shows that Abraham was justified in a way that is foreign to what the Jews are claiming is the way that justification is attained.***
* (**4:1-12**) – Justified before circumcision.
  + **(1-4)** Works = perfect/without sin. (Only then could salvation be indebted to the man who works.)
  + **(5-8)** God imputes (accounts) righteousness apart from works through faith.
    - When sins are forgiven, a man is righteous because he has no sin. This is only possible by Grace (Jesus’ sacrifice) through faith (belief in Christ).
  + (**9-12**) Circumcision – the Jews taught that circumcision was a necessity for righteousness. That if one is not circumcised he is not righteous.
    - Abraham was justified by faith before circumcision.
    - This means that even Gentiles, although uncircumcised, are justified by faith, and that Jews, as circumcised, are justified not by their circumcision but walking in steps of faith.
      * **Galatians 5:6** – circumcision does not make one righteous, but faith.
      * However, this faith is one that works through love (**cf. 1 John 5:3**).
* **(v. 13-22)** – Promise through the righteousness of faith.
  + The quoting of Genesis 15:6 is to be taken as a general summation of the life Abraham lived.
    - Those who advocate faith only would suggest that as soon as God said what He said that Abraham upon general belief was made righteous. That would suggest before he was not righteous.
    - However, the scripture uses this quotation to describe other actions in Abraham’s life (**cf. James 2:21-24**).
  + Abraham’s righteousness by grace through faith is affirmed over an expanse of perhaps 50 years.
    - It is said of Abraham that he had faith displayed by action throughout his life (**cf. Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16, 17-19)**.
    - Abraham’s life is described as an individual who ***“walk[ed] in the steps of faith” (4:12)***.
      * It is a continuous lifelong process of trusting in God, and doing as He says. (**cf. Hebrews 3:18-19; 5:9; 11:6)**.
  + ***Paul explained that Abraham did not merit salvation by works, but attained righteousness by obedient faith to God, who by His Grace and mercy forgave Abraham of his sins looking to the propitiation in Christ’s death.***