

# JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH EXEMPLIFIED IN ABRAHAM

**BIBLE TEXT** : Romans 4:1-25; Genesis 12:1-3; 15:4-6

LESSON 383 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

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### **Romans 4:1-25**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

<sup>3</sup> For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

<sup>4</sup> Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

<sup>5</sup> But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

<sup>6</sup> Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

<sup>7</sup> *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

<sup>8</sup> Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

<sup>9</sup> *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

<sup>10</sup> How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

<sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **I Righteousness by Faith**

1. Abraham received righteousness by faith and not by works, Romans 4:1-3; Genesis 15:6;

#### **Galatians 3:6**

<sup>6</sup> Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

#### **James 2:23**

<sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

2. If salvation came by works it would be a debt due us from God, and not free grace, Romans 4:4, 5;

#### **Romans 11:6**

<sup>6</sup> And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

3. David bears testimony to the same doctrine, Romans 4:6-8;

#### **Psalm 32:1**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed *is he* whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

#### **Psalm 32:2**

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

### **II The Blessings of Faith for Both the Circumcised and Uncircumcised**

1. Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, Romans 4:9-12;

#### **Galatians**

**3:7**

<sup>7</sup> Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

2. The promise was made to Abraham through the righteousness of faith and not by the Law, Romans 4:13-17; Genesis 12:1-3;

#### **Galatians 3:18**

<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

#### **Galatians 3:29**

<sup>29</sup> And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

### **III Description of Abraham's Faith**

1. From the natural it was impossible for Abraham to have a son, but he believed in God who instituted the laws of nature and was able to work aside from the laws of nature, Romans 4:18-22;

#### **Genesis 15:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

<sup>5</sup> And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

<sup>6</sup> And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

#### **Hebrews 11:11**

<sup>11</sup> Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

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:

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

<sup>15</sup> Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

<sup>16</sup> 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 which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

<sup>17</sup> (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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> And being not weak in faith, he considered not his

#### Hebrews 11:12

<sup>12</sup> Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

2. This account was left on record for our salvation, that we might believe on Christ who died for our sins and was raised for our justification, Romans 4:23-25;

#### 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>21</sup> For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

#### Galatians 1:4

<sup>4</sup> Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

#### 1 Peter 1:21

<sup>21</sup> Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

### Notes:

#### The Voice of God

Abraham came from a land of heathen darkness. Possibly the people were like those Paul describes in (**Romans 1:21-32**

<sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: <sup>25</sup> Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: <sup>27</sup> And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. <sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; <sup>29</sup> Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, <sup>30</sup> Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: <sup>32</sup> Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them..) They did not like to retain God in their thoughts so God gave them over to all uncleanness. But amidst the sin and darkness of the world there was one man to whom God could reveal Himself and find a response in his heart; and that man was Abraham.

It is surprising how in a world of sin and darkness, God can speak and you will know it is the voice of God. It is not always in the thundering tones of Mount Sinai nor in the still, small voice of Horeb; but when He speaks you know it.

In that land of pagan darkness Abraham recognised the voice of God and believed in God. That faith brought righteousness into his soul. How easy it should be to believe when one is reared in a Gospel land and has not been taught to bow down to idols of wood and stone! But the devil brought his doctrine of infidelity and unbelief to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He will try to present it to you even in the house of God; but remember, Abraham believed God when there was unbelief and idolatry all around him.

#### Father of All Who Believe

Abraham had been a heathen, but God pardoned him and took him and his posterity into a special covenant whereby his seed was to

own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

<sup>20</sup> He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

<sup>21</sup> And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

<sup>22</sup> And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

<sup>24</sup> But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

<sup>25</sup> Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

### **Genesis 12:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

<sup>2</sup> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

<sup>3</sup> And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

### **Genesis 15:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

<sup>5</sup> And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the

possess the earth. Abraham was justified in the only way in which a sinner can be justified: by the mercy of God and by faith and obedience. Through faith he became the great head or father of all them that believe. In patriarchal times it was great to be a father, greater still to be the father of a tribe; and it was the greatest of greatness to be the father of many nations.

That the just were justified by faith is clearly shown in the life of Abraham. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Long before the Lord sealed the Covenant with Abraham and his posterity by the seal of circumcision, Abraham was justified by faith. We are not told just how or when Abraham first believed God; but God called, and he obeyed the call. It was not only obedience to the call that justified Abraham but also faith that brought him into favour with God. Good works follow the uniting of our hearts with God by faith. James says, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." There were Jews in Rome saying one must be circumcised to be right with God. They were trying to bring Christianity back under the Law. Paul states that one cannot be under the Law of Moses and under grace through Jesus Christ at the same time. Just so, you cannot unite works with justification. If works unite us to God, then it is of debt and not of mercy that we are saved. But it is God's mercy that saves us, and not works. (**Galatians 2:16** <sup>16</sup> Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. **Galatians 3:11** <sup>11</sup> But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith..)

How many poor sinners who did not have one good deed to recommend them to God have knelt and cried for mercy and have found pardoning grace. They believed the promise and were accepted by the Son.

David says: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

### **Real Christianity**

We have those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ but expect their church membership, their good deeds of mercy, their external works to gain them an entrance into Heaven. But Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). They skip over that experience and merely assent with their mind to the story of Jesus.

The Bible says: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). They are blind and are led by blind leaders and will "fall into the ditch" together.

Sinners who acknowledge their helplessness and plead to God for mercy find forgiveness. Through faith they are pardoned and find cleansing from all their sins. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).

As Jesus' death is atonement for our sins, so His resurrection is the proof and pledge of our eternal life.

### **The Seed of Abraham**

Years went by. The Lord led Abraham out under the canopy of Heaven one night and said, as it were, "Abraham look up! Count the stars! So shall thy seed be. Do you see all these tiny grains of sand? Can you count them? Then you will be able to number your seed."

Abraham had no child and he and Sara had grown old. From a natural standpoint, all hope had fled for them to have a child. But Abraham staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. Where is the materialist who sees only nature's law? Abraham did not belong to that class. He staggered not, but hoped against hope. Through that firm, unwavering faith he became the father of faith. We who believe are the children of Abraham. The Jews would like to hold

stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

<sup>6</sup> And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

that they alone are the children of Abraham. Paul says that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly but he is a Jew who is one inwardly. He declares that the promise was given to Abraham while he was still a Gentile, and that the promise was to his Seed, which was one, even Christ. If we have been born into the family of God through the new birth, we are Christ's seed and are the progenies of Abraham.

Isaac's birth was a miracle. Christ's birth was a miracle. The "new birth" is a miracle. Abraham did not know how God was going to make his seed as numberless as the sand of the seas, but he knew there was nothing impossible with God. Christians are those who believe after the example of Abraham. They are the spiritual seed. The promise of salvation is to them who believe in Christ, for He is the promised Seed.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. How did Abraham obtain justification? How do we obtain it?
2. Why was Abraham called the father of the faithful?
3. Tell how the Gentiles are included in the promise to Abraham.
4. Was the promise made to Abraham through the giving of the Law?
5. The Scripture says Abraham was strong in faith. Give incidents.