

Abraham

David

Romans 4:1-8 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

- 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
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Introduction

Tough Reading

Certain passages in the book of Romans are hard to comprehend outside of the context of Paul showing distinction between justification 'by faith' and 'through faith'. Romans 4 is certainly no exception, in particular to verses relating to Abraham and David.

The biggest mistake made on verses 1 – 8, is teaching that Abraham and David are each a separate Old Testament example of how someone is saved today. Truth is, each one is only half of the total picture of justification which is by grace, through faith and without works, as will be demonstrated in this chapter.

Paul's preaching of Christ crucified, for salvation, was a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek (1Cor 1:21-24).

1 Corinthians 1:21-24 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks

foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

- For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom
- But we preach Christ crucified
- unto the Jews a stumblingblock
- and unto the Greeks foolishness

This stumbling block was about to throw a wrench into a Jew's way of thinking as to how one was to obtain righteousness.

Replacement Standard of the Righteousness of God

Paul wrote of a remnant of Jews being saved at that time according to an election of grace, while clarifying what exactly that was and wasn't; it was no longer of works.

Romans 11:5-6 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 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.

- at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace
- 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

The Jew, having been under the law for several thousand years indoctrinated with its blessings and curses, had a hard time with the concept of righteousness being imputed by grace and without works. Because of the removal of the works of the law, for the righteousness of God, Paul addressed the issue of being granted a license to sin to which his reply was... God forbid.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Romans 6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Two Key Elements Illustrated of Salvation via Grace

Exceptions to the Rule

In God's foreknowledge of saving the Jew, as He now was the Gentile under Paul's ministry of salvation 'by grace', 'through faith', and 'without works', God left Israel with two OT examples that illustrated the two key elements of such a salvation:

Abraham (Rom 4:1-3; 9-25)

Imputed righteousness in simply believing a promise of God.

David (Rom 4:6-8)

Imputed righteousness without works and without the imputation of sin.

It cannot be overstressed that both Abraham and David are exceptions to the rule, as observed under the Old Testament. Unfortunately, both Abraham and David are often used as standards to the rule, which leads to confusion and contradiction when Paul is proving distinctions in Romans!

Let it be clear... these aren't two separate standalone examples, but the both put together is THE EXAMPLE of what justification by grace and through faith without works looks like under Paul's gospel!

Abraham

Two Specific Time Events

By faith, Abraham obeyed God's bidding to leave his country, for a land to be shown him for an inheritance, as recorded in Genesis 12. However, righteousness isn't recorded being imputed to Abraham until Genesis 15. There, Abraham is simply believing a promise of God regarding an heir coming forth from his own bowels for a promised seed. Though not admitted in most commentary, righteousness was typically applied via obedience, but here an exception to the rule is seen and used as illustration.

There is much hypocrisy in answering the question as to how an OT saint was justified! Correctly, Abraham is pointed to in reflection back to Genesis 15, when the issue of imputed righteousness is brought up. However, without taking into consideration or ignoring completely, is the fact that he was already living 'by faith' in Genesis 12. Let it be clear that Abraham didn't just start living by faith in Genesis 12! He was chosen because he was a man of faith. A distinction here, of a timeline, must clearly be made! There are two recorded events to which each the circumcision and the uncircumcision points to.

Obedied
Genesis 12

Hebrews 11:8-9 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

- By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance
- obeyed; and he went out

Genesis 12:1-4 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: 2 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: 3 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. 4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

- 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
- I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great
- and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed
- So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him

Believed
Genesis 15

Romans 4:2-3 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

- 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

Genesis 15:1-6 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. 2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 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. 5 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. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless
- This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir
- 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
- And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness

When was Abraham 'Saved'?

Abraham was already demonstrating that he was righteous via faithful obedience before Genesis 15. How do I know that? Because, as Abel, Abraham had been offering sacrifices... "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which

he obtained witness that **he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts**: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." **Hebrews 11:4** The whole lesson seen in the separate events recorded in Genesis 12 and 15 is God pointing out the difference, in the imputation of righteousness, between 'by faith' and 'through faith'! Abraham was already a bona fide OT saint living 'by faith' before Genesis 12.

It is essential to understand that Paul, in addressing the blessedness of righteousness being imputed to the uncircumcision without works, points to Genesis 15; not Genesis 12!

Abraham Father of Both the Circumcision & Uncircumcision

Romans 4:9-25 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 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: 12 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. 13 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. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 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, 17 (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. 18 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. 19 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 Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

- Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?
- 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
- 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

Romans 4, can prove to be some tedious reading until understood what Paul is conveying.

At this time, it is well understood that Abraham was one of the fathers, of the nation of Israel, based on two covenants. One covenant being the promise of a physical seed combined with promise of a physical land. The other covenant was the Covenant of Circumcision, enforced not only on Abraham's seed, but also with any stranger to be identified to that seed.

A common error made is combining the Abrahamic Covenant with the Mosaic Covenant. In other words... making both the same or equal. The Abrahamic Covenant promised a seed and land, whereas the Mosaic Covenant covenanted for righteousness to remain in the land without repercussion if violated. This is exactly what John the Baptist was distinguishing, when addressing the scribes and pharisees, in preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Luke 3:7-9 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

- O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
- Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and **begin not to say within yourselves. We have Abraham to our father**
- And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire

Referring back to the statement that Abraham... already being assumed as a father of the circumcision, Paul then proceeded as to how the Gentile, being saved at that time, can now make same claim.

A Father of Many Nations

The following is my personal commentary on verses 9-25, in effort to present Paul's argument as accurately as possible, in simple explanation of the Gentiles' legit claim to Abraham also being their father.

Romans 4:9-25 Commentary:

9a Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?

Blessedness of iniquities forgiven, sins covered and not imputed (4:8-9), can now be applied to the uncircumcision as it was being to the circumcision.

9b for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. **10** How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Faith (having believed a promise), was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness when he was in uncircumcision, that righteousness one day be imputed unto the uncircumcision 'through faith' (via grace without works).

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." **Galatians 3:8**

11 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: **12** 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.

Circumcision became a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had prior to being circumcised.

Circumcision would then be used to identify his physical seed via the Covenant of Circumcision (Gen 17). Circumcision was a mandated act of faithful obedience (by faith), that continued to identify Abraham's physical seed under the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 4:26; Ex 12:44, 48).

Abraham was first recognized as the father of the circumcision via the Covenant of Circumcision (Gen 17). What transpired in Genesis 15, paved a path for the uncircumcision (Gentile), to one day also lay claim to Abraham. Thus, Paul declares Abraham being the father of all them that believe, both the circumcision and the uncircumcision.

13 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.

Again, the promise that Abraham should be the heir of the world was given to Abraham in Genesis 15, through the righteousness of faith (believing a promise of God), which preceded the giving of the law under Moses.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

The law was not 'of faith', "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." **Romans 10:5**

The righteousness of God, under the law, was solely based on faithful obedience with consequence of wrath when Israel was living in disobedience (Dt 6).

16 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,

In Genesis 12, promise of heirship of blessings had already been made to Abraham regarding a physical seed inheriting a physical land. Both the Covenant of Circumcision and the Mosaic Covenant, excluded the Gentile.

Now, blessings given Abraham have fallen on both, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; therefore, who is the father of both the circumcision & uncircumcision.

Two hopes and callings are seen in the expressions 'stars of heaven' and 'sand of the sea'. One an earthly calling, the other a heavenly (Gen 15:5; 22:17; 26:4).

17 (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.

"As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations" (Gen 17:4-5), is reflecting back to Genesis 15, where Abraham accepted God's promise by simply believing, which is 'of faith'.

18 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.

Paul's reference to Abraham's 'seed', in Galatians 3:16-19, in addressing Gentiles which were of the 'faith of Abraham', is a play on words; the words 'seed' and 'thy'. Though the 'thy seed', is technically Abraham's physical seed (Gen 15:3,5,18; 17:7-14), when applied to these Gentiles, which were being blessed with faithful Abraham in pointing back to Genesis 15, is here restricted to being Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but

as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." **Galatians 3:16** In context, this play on words now have 'thy' being Gentiles (through Abraham) and 'seed' being Christ (not Israel/the circumcision)! These Gentiles, though benefiting from Israel's spiritual things (Rom 15:25), were product of Paul's gospel, which is 'of faith'.

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:" **Colossians 2:11**

19 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 Sara's womb: **20** He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; **21** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. **22** And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. **23** Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; **24** But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; **25** Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Genesis 15:4-6, is the gospel (good news) referred to by Paul, in Galatians 3:8, that the scripture foresaw... "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." **Galatians 3:8** Abraham, having righteousness imputed to him that day for simply believing a promise made by God, is the exact illustration as to how imputed righteousness is applied today! "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 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 offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Abraham, being half the equation of imputed righteousness without works, simply believed what God had promised. Believing what God said, constituted... "And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Paul says... "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." **Romans 10:9-11**

Unbelievable as it may sound, I've seen attempt to make the gospel, being preached unto Abraham back in Genesis 15, to be the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is simply a sign of ignorance, in not being able to discern between familiar words such as faith, grace and gospel, within the contexts found.

Both the circumcision and the uncircumcision claim legitimately, as to Abraham being their father, but from entirely different perspectives.

The Circumcision's Claim to Abraham

God, justifying the circumcision 'by faith', pinpoints to that experience in Abraham's life to which he was living 'by faith' (Gen 12; Heb 11:8-9), coupled with the mandated Covenant of Circumcision (Gen 17). The imputation of righteousness was based upon faithful obedience, as we see Abraham offering sacrifices (**Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18**), along with the rejection of circumcision resulting in the expulsion from his people.

Genesis 12:1-4 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: 2 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: 3 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. 4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

- Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee
- And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land

Genesis 17:1-14 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, 4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. 6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken

my covenant. Genesis 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. Genesis 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. Genesis 17:23-27 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. 24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

- And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly
- And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee
- This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised
- And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant

It is both undeniable and indisputable, regardless of any attempt to spiritualize these covenants away, that a physical seed of Abraham doesn't exist that was promised a physical land. This earthly covenant promise to Abraham's physical seed is yet to be fulfilled!

The Uncircumcision's Claim to Abraham

As just covered in detail, it is clear to which experience, in Abraham's life, that Paul points to for the uncircumcision's claim to Abraham, as being their father!

Galatians 3:6-9 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed

- That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith

On that day in Genesis 15, there was an exception to the rule as to how God applied righteousness! On that day, righteousness was accounted to Abraham in ... "being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Herein lays the distinction between God justifying the circumcision 'by faith' and the uncircumcision 'through faith'! Whereas acceptance of the kingdom gospel to Israel was based on believing, accompanied with repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, Paul's gospel was 'of faith', based on believing via grace without works.

Can the Believer Today Lay Claims to Abraham as being Their father?

Life Experience: I believe the year was 1977, when ministering in a youth camp, that I share the following story. How do I remember what year? It was during camp week in which Elvis Presley died with news media proclamation that the, 'King' had died. Of course, the 'King' of Rock and Roll.

One of the favorite songs that was sung during this youth camp was, 'Father Abraham'. I can clearly recall a comment made by one of the Baptist pastors. Though, as most who enjoyed singing the lyrics to this lively tune, jested that there was question as to the doctrinal validity today?

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm, right foot!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you

So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm, right foot, left foot!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm, right foot, left foot,
Chin up!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm, right foot, left foot, Chin up, turn around!

Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them and so are you
So let's all praise the Lord.
Right arm, left arm, right foot, left foot, Chin up, turn around, sit down!

Having been saved in early 70's and having been introduced to rightly dividing the word of truth only around two years prior to this camp experience, I had already begun to see, perhaps, an issue?

Abraham is a focus of Paul during the Acts period, mentioning him 19 times in his pre-prison epistles; Romans, 2 Corinthians and Galatians. As mentioned elsewhere, within the Theme Study, Paul ministered to Gentiles in around the synagogues who were familiar with Israel's covenants and history. This is, I believe, the reasoning as to why Paul was able to so easily discuss a blessing associated with Abraham.

The Non-Covenanted Uncircumcision

The Heathen

Change in Audience

A turning of events is recorded in Acts 17, that I believe set the stage for what transition was about to take place in Paul's life.

Paul got mixed results while ministering to Jews and devout Greeks at a synagogue in Thessalonica. Unbelieving Jews forced Paul and Silas to flee to Berea where once again you find Paul ministering in the synagogue of the Jews. After finding out about the success Paul was having in seeing many believing, including honorable women which were

Greeks, and of men, not a few, the Jews of Thessalonica showed up to once again cause Paul to flee.

Paul ended up at Athens where we find him again ministering in a synagogue. However, a third group of people is introduced...

Acts 17:16-18 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

- Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews
- and with the devout persons
- and in the market daily with them that met with him
- Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him

Seeing a city wholly given to idolatry and now meeting with those beyond the synagogue, in the market daily, Paul is encountered by certain philosophers.

Here recorded is Paul's famous speech, 'TO THE UNKNOWN GOD'. What is very significant about his speech was that there is no mention of anything prophetic relating to Israel! Paul's focus was on one being raised from the dead... "...other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

Here is clear evidence of the gospel going beyond the familiarity of those who surrounded the Jewish synagogues that truly fell under the category of the heathen.

Acts 17:32-34 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

- when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked
- and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter
- Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them

Turning Away from the Synagogues

Paul's last record of teaching in a synagogue is at Ephesus in **Acts 19**, to which he was met with much resistance. It is not without significance that after this, Paul not only departed, but separated the disciples then ending up disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:8-9 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

- And he went into the synagogue
- But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude
- he departed from them
- and separated the disciples
- disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus

Paul was no longer confining himself to those who surround the synagogues and to those Gentiles familiar with Israel. His message went to an audience well beyond and to those who no doubt wasn't familiar with Israel's history or religion...

Acts 19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

- so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus
- both Jews and Greeks

Away now from the synagogues... **"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."** **Acts 19:20**

Converted Non-Covenanted Ephesians

I've always found it somewhat peculiar as to how Paul addressed his epistle in Ephesians? There seems to be both an identification with these Gentiles and yet, at same time, a degree of separation.

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: **Ephesians 3:1-2**

- If ye have heard
- of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me
- to you-ward

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward?

It is most interesting how the pronouns are used in Ephesians, in particular, chapter 2:

Ephesians 2:11-22 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh
- at that time ye were without Christ
- But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off
- For he is our peace
- hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us
- preached peace to you which were afar off
- For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father
- Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners
- In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit

It is obvious that Paul, a Jew, uses the pronoun 'our', from his perspective of being identified with the circumcision to which a middle wall of partition, as well as covenant promises, were once placed between the circumcised Jew and uncircumcised Gentile.

Is there any doubt that another floor is being assembled within an holy temple in the Lord?

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord...

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Unlike Paul's gospel, that was a mystery kept secret from the foundation of the world, hidden in the prophets, what's conveyed to these Gentiles are not only the unsearchable riches of Christ, but a mystery hid in God! The 'unsearchable riches of Christ' and a 'mystery hid in God', implies that as Paul's gospel was proved by the prophets, what has transpired here can't!

Real discernment has to be made between the Scripture foreseeing God justifying the 'heathen' through faith, from that of this mystery among the Gentiles... which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory. In other words, the Old and New Covenants belong to the Jew, this dispensation belongs to the Gentile/heathen.

Ephesians 3:8-9 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

- is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ
- And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery
- which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- To whom God would make known
- what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles
- which is Christ in **you**, the hope of glory

The Jew is between 'times' and currently it's the Gentiles' time! Another contrast is that of what a difference of background there was between these converted non-covenanted Gentiles, from that of Cornelius' household and those Gentiles that feared God who Paul encountered in and around the synagogues.

Regardless of whether these converted non-covenanted Gentiles had or understood a direct relationship to Abraham, imputed righteousness was and is identical... by grace, through faith and not of works (Eph 2:8-9).

David

Romans 4:6-8 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

- 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

In God's foreknowledge of saving the Jew, as He now was the Gentile under Paul's ministry of salvation 'by grace', 'through faith', and 'without works', God left Israel with two examples that illustrated the two key elements of such a salvation. Abraham was God's example of imputed righteousness in simply believing God. David's example is of imputed righteousness without works and without the imputation of sin.

As is pointed out in dealing with Abraham, it cannot be overstated that both Abraham and David are exceptions to the rule, as observed under the Old Testament, and not the standard rule of Old Testament justification! Using either Abraham or David as stand-alone examples, as to how God justified under the OT, leads to confusion and contradiction while Paul is proving distinctions in Romans.

The Other Half of the Equation

Imputed Righteousness Without Works and Without the Imputation of Sin

David is the other half of the equation, as example, for justification today. David, as an exception to the rule, should have been even more obvious to the Jew. Jesus Christ was being preached for the forgiveness of sins, for which one could not find forgiveness for, in under the law:

Acts 13:38-41 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

- that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins
- And by him all that believe are justified from all things
- from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

- Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?
- Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God
- And such were some of you
- but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God

Under law, David was in deep do-do or as Paul would say... deep 'dung' (Phil 3:8)! David committed at least two sins (murder & adultery) for which the law made no provision for forgiveness in sacrifice. As a result of David's sins, three things should or could have happened:

1. Separated from Israel
2. Stoned
3. Died in his transgression

Make no mistake, David did pay for his sins, in many ways, which included the death of a son (perhaps his substitute), rebellion from within his household and even rejection of his kingship by his nation at times. However, the real crisis which David faced is revealed in Psalm's 51, a familiar passage to most... "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." **Psalm 51:16-17**

How did David know that his sins were forgiven?

Life experience: I'll never forget watching a portion of a movie on David, when a freshman attending Letourneau College in Longview, TX, at the student center, many years ago. Though I have NO idea how David came to final realization as to forgiveness of his sins, a scene was shown that I didn't fully understand, at the time, that greatly illustrated the point.

The scene portrayed David in great agony over his sins as depicted in Psalms 51. David was fallen prostrate before the ark of God. It was a do or die moment in David's life; this burden of sin had to be lifted or else. David had witnessed the LORD striking Uzzah dead as he placed his hand upon the ark, to steady it, when the oxen shook it while transporting it to the city of David. It had been captured earlier by the Philistines. David was quite angered over that response of God (**2 Samuel 6**). Along

with all the sound effects and emotions displayed, the moment came during the scene that had David reaching up in touching the ark of God with end result of God sparing his life; David knew forgiveness.

Distinction Between Preaching Prophecy and Preaching Prophecy

Yes, the heading is correct. It is important to understand the distinction between validating prophecy, in presence of the Jew, while at same time preaching Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience 'of faith' (**Rom 16:25-26**).

This point is excellently illustrated during Paul's ministry in opening up the door 'of faith' to Gentiles. As Peter accused the house of Israel of crucifying Jesus and now demanding repentance and baptism with water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-40), Paul was faced with the daunting task of preaching salvation, via grace and without works, before a crowd of both Jews and Gentiles in a synagogue setting.

Acts 13:14-16 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

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- Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience

What follows is a message that corroborated prophetic events, surrounding Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, that should have been evident to any pious Jew. At same time, Paul is presenting a message of grace, for all, that did intrigue the Gentiles who were a target of this ministry in opening up the 'door of faith'.

Acts 13:17-42 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the

son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. 26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

- And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will
- Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus
- Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent
- And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David

- For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption
- But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption
- Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins
- And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses
- And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath

Here was a message of grace, that brought prophecy into play, that both the Jew and Gentile, who feared God, could recognize and respond to. The Jew walked away as the Gentile besought these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

David in Context of Romans

Paul references David four (4) times in his writings addressed to Gentiles (Ro 1:3; Ro 4:6; Ro 11:9; 2Ti 2:8). Three of these times, as it relates to prophetic resurrection and once, pertaining to this discussion, as an example of God's grace for today.

Romans 1:1-4 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

- separated unto the gospel of God
- Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures
- Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh
- And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Romans 4:6-8 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

- Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man
- unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works
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- Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin

Paul's focus on David, relating to his gospel, was other than Peter's focus in proclaiming the kingdom gospel in early Acts (Acts 2-3).

Under Paul's gospel, the Jew could no longer have excuse as to what justification by grace and through faith without works looked like. God's exceptions, in Abraham and David, painted that picture! Romans also clearly lays out the path, that God laid for the Gentile, to understand that righteousness which is 'of faith', the 'faith of Abraham'.

Two examples, Abraham and David, proved excellent illustrations, as well as exceptions to the rule of justification 'by faith', as to how God now saves by grace, through faith, and 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."