**Chapter Four**

“Justification Illustrated”

# JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS ILLUSTRATED IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM. – Vs. 1-8

## Paul uses Abraham the Father of the nation of Israel to show the Jews the concept of justification by faith.

### The Jews placed great confidence in Abraham the Father of their nation.

God is using the example of Abraham to prove to them how men are justified.

### Paul was addressing the questions of the Jew.

What about Abraham our Father? What about the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, doesn’t that make us righteous? The Jews were holding to the covenant of Abraham which they believed guaranteed them eternal life.

### What saith the Scripture? – V. 3

Paul was using the Scripture as the authority to refute the Questions of the Jews. So should the Christian today look to the Word of God as the final authority in settling questions. As much as possible it is good to answer the questions of people with the Bible.

## Abraham was justified by faith and not by works.

### Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. – V. 3

### Moses who was esteemed by the Jews as the writer of the Torah is called as a witness to the justification of Abraham by faith.

Genesis 15:6—*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness*

This is a passage the Jews would have been well familiar with. Paul is using their own Scriptures to preach to the Jews justification by faith. The word counted carries the same meaning in Hebrew as it does on Greek. Righteousness was put to his account by faith. This is the meaning of Justification. Abraham was justified by faith the same way the Christians are today. God gave Abraham a promise; he believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

### God justifies the ungodly. – V. 5

Those who are not born-again are sinners and ungodly. The repentant sinner is declared righteous by God through the blood of Jesus. The ungodly do nothing to earn their salvation. They are justified totally by faith.

## David is called as a witness for justification by faith.

### Paul brings testimony from David to support the message of justification by faith.

David was esteemed by the Jews as their great king. This quotation from the Psalms confirms that men are only justified by faith and not works.

Psalms 32:1-2— *A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

### David was thanking God that His sin was forgiven and the sin was not put to his account.

If sin was not imputed to him and his sin was forgiven this means he was restored to a right relationship with God. Justification is the Divine action of being placed in a right relationship with God through Jesus.

### David did not earn justification it was received by faith.

# ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BY GRACE. – Vs 9-17

## The Jews looked to circumcision and the Law as their source of righteousness.

### Abraham was justified before he received the covenant of circumcision.

He was counted as righteous in chapter 15 and he was 86 in chapter 16 when Ishmael was born. Chapter 17 records Abraham was circumcised when he was 99 years old.- Gen. 17: 24. It is quite clear that he was justified before he was circumcised. This passage is telling the Jews that Abraham was counted as righteous before he received the covenant of circumcision.

### Circumcision did not justify Abraham.

### Circumcision was given as a sign of the promise.

It was given as a seal of the righteousness of faith. It is a symbol of the cutting away of the flesh. There is no power of righteousness in a physical action. This is merely a sign of the work of God in much the same way that baptism is a sign of a completed work.

## Abraham was counted as righteous by Grace totally separate from the Law.

### He was justified before the Law was given.

This is further indication that he could not have been justified by the Law.

Abraham could not have earned any justification through keeping the Law since it had not yet been given to Moses. The Jews put so much emphasis on the Law; Paul is showing them that the Law had nothing to do with Abraham being counted as righteous.

### The Law gives knowledge of sin. – V.15

*For where there is no law there is no transgression* refers to the fact that if there were no law then there would be no law to break. This also must have reference to the moral law as well as Moses Law.

### Abraham was justified by faith through grace. – V.16

If he was not justified by the works of the law then the only alternative is that he was declared righteous by the grace of God. He did not earn justification; it was given to him without merit because of his faith.

## He received the promise that he should be the heir of the world through the righteousness of faith. – V. 13

### The righteousness of faith is in reference to justification by faith.

Justification is the declaration of righteousness by faith. Abraham did nothing to receive the promise; it was given to him by grace.

### The promise was to make of him a great nation and from his seed would all nations of the world be blessed. – Gen. 12:1-3

This is a prophecy of the nation of Israel that would descend from Abraham. Even more important it is a promise of the Messiah that would come to provide salvation to all both Jew and Gentile.

### The Jew looked for an earthly inheritance.

In the minds of most of the Jews, the Messiah would overthrow the Romans and re-establish the nation of Israel. Paul is showing them the provision of righteousness available not just to the Jew, but to the entire world through Jesus the Messiah.

# GOD WILL FULFILL HIS PROMISE –Vs.18-25

## Abraham was given the promise of God.

### God promised Abraham he would have a son.

### The Messiah would be a son of Abraham.

Jesus fulfilled prophecy and was born according to his natural lineage as a descendant of Abraham.

### Man has received the promise of justification by faith through Jesus Christ.

## Abraham believed the promise of God.

### Against hope believed in hope.

Abraham believed in the promise of God regardless of the circumstances. Sarah was about 90 and Abraham was more than 100 years old. There was no natural way possible for them to have a child.

### Abraham staggered not at the promise of God. - V.20

### Justification is received by faith.

## Abraham received the promise.

### God gave Abraham a son.

### The Messiah would come from this promised son.

### Justification is a Divine activity.

Man cannot justify himself any more than Abraham could produce a son. Justification is a work of God bestowed by grace in response to faith.

**Chapter Five**

“The Abounding of Grace”

# THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION – Vs. 1-10

## We have peace with God. – V. 1

### The sinner does not have peace with God. – Is. 48:22

Sin separates man from God. Adam was expelled from the garden because of sin. The sinner is dead in his sins. Death is a separation; in physical death the soul is separated from the body. In spiritual death the spirit of man is separated from God.

### Justification restored man to a right relationship with God.

Jesus came to reconcile man to God through the redemption of His blood. The Christian is now brought into peace with God through the righteousness of Christ.

Isaiah 32:17—*And the work of righteousness shall be peace;*

### Grace is a continuing work.

### *The grace wherein we stand* – V. 2

Grace is the unmerited favor of God granted to the repentant sinner at salvation. Grace is also a continued work in the life of the believer. The Christian is kept by the grace of God. Grace is the strength to stand in the heat of the battle. Paul sought the Lord three times to be relieved from the messenger of satan that was sent to hinder him. Jesus responded: *My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness*—

II Cor. 12:9

## Justification is no escape from the trials of life.

### Tribulation works patience

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## The Christian is to glory in tribulation. It is contrary to the carnal nature to rejoice in difficult times. Yet Scripture reveals that trials work for the benefit of the Christian and therefore we can even have joy in the midst of the trial. When the Christian understands that God is in control and places his life into the hands of the great potter the result is joy and peace in the assurance that God has a plan. Tribulation will yield patience. Patience is the attribute of waiting with calmness. Here in the context it applies to suffering with calmness and without complaint.

James 1:2-3—*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

Our English word “tribulation” comes from a Latin word *tribulum*. In Paul’s day, a *tribulum* was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the grain. The *tribulum* was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff. As we go through tribulations, and depend on God’s grace, the trials only purify us and help to get rid of the chaff.– The Bible Exposition Commentary

### Patience produces experience

The word experience here means character that has been proven. God will test the experience of the Christian through trials. Abraham’s faith was tested in the offering of his son Isaac. The experience that has not been put to the test is not proven to be faithful.

### Experience produces hope

Hope is the expectation of attaining something. The faithful Christian has a hope that sustains his experience in Christ. The proven Christian rests in the assurance of the Word of God. His hope is in God not in himself or the things of this world. It is the proven experience that will yield hope in God. The Christian can rest assured that God has a plan, and that He is in control.

## Justification saves man from the wrath of God – V. 9

### Those that are declared righteous through the blood of Jesus will escape the eternal punishment of the ungodly.

### The just must continue to live by faith.

The repentant sinner is declared righteous at initial salvation. The justified can lose their right standing with God if they do not continue in the way of salvation. Those who are justified must continue to live in Christ by faith in order to escape the judgment of God.

# THE BASIS OF JUSTIFICATION – Vs. 11-21

This section is a comparison between Adam and Christ. Through the sin of Adam all men have been born in sin and have suffered its consequences. Through Jesus Christ Salvation has been made available to all men. Adam was a figure of Jesus who was to come. The debt incurred by sin has been paid in full by Jesus’ blood.

## Justification is needed by all men because of the disobedience of one man. - V.12

### All men have been born in sin since the fall of Adam.

### Death is the result of sin.

The fact that all men have died since Adam is proof that all men are born in sin. *Death reigned from Adam to Moses*. – V. 14 The Law reveals what sin is, but death occurred before the Law was given. Sin was in existence before the giving of the Law.

### All men are guilty of sin and deserve the penalty of eternal death. – Rom. 3:23

## Justification has been provided by the obedience of Jesus Christ.

### Men can be made righteous because of the obedience of Jesus.

### Jesus came to give us life. – Jn. 10:10

### The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

## Justification is possible only through the blood of Jesus.

### Atonement has been provided through Jesus Christ. – V. 11

### Atonement means a making at one. It is the reconciliation of man to God through Jesus. It refers to the appeasement of the wrath of God through the redemption of the blood of Jesus Christ. The law requires the penalty of sin to be paid; Jesus satisfied the law by His death on the cross.

### The Grace of God availed over the power of sin. – V.20

Grace far outreaches the power of sin. The blood of Jesus can make the vilest sinner clean. The sinner can be set free from the chains of bondage by the power of God.

### Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ. – V.21

Grace is only possible because of the righteousness of Jesus. If it had not been for redemption by the blood of Jesus then God would not give salvation by grace. Grace is showed to man based on the merit of Jesus; it is only through His righteousness that man has been given the opportunity of eternal life.

**Chapter Six**

“Servants”

# GRACE IS NOT A LICENSE TO SIN.

## Paul addresses questions concerning the continuance of sin.

### Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? – V.1

This is continuation from the last chapter which states: where sin did abound, Grace did much more abound. Paul is refuting the reasoning of the carnal mind which says: if grace is so much more powerful than my sin then why not just keep on sinning for grace will overlook my sin. The answer is clear: God forbid. Paul denounces this carnal reasoning and explains why the Christian cannot continue to live in sin because of grace.

### How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? – V.2

The sinner is dead in his sins. That is his spirit is separated from God because of sin. The Christian has been made a new creature and is dead to his sin. That is because of his new nature he is separated from his sin. So those that have been set free from their sin should not seek to be reunited with sin which will end in eternal damnation.

### Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? - V. 15

Paul answers this question that is still being asked today. If we are no longer under the law, then why do we need to obey the law? We are now under the covenant of Grace and not the covenant of the law, but this does not mean that man is without law. Paul answers the question with God forbid. This should settle this question firmly on the authority of the Word of God; grace is not a reason to practice sin.

## Water baptism is a symbol of the death of the old nature and being raised in newness of life.

### There is no saving power in water baptism.

Baptism is an outward sign of a work already completed. It is for the Christian who has already been regenerated and made new in Christ. Water baptism cannot save or sanctify for there is no cleansing power in water.

### It is a symbol of being buried with Christ.

Dead men are buried in the grave. This passage is an analogy of baptism compared to the Christian who is dead to sin. Baptism shows the association of Christ with the sinner to kill the old nature and break the power of sin.

### It is a symbol of the new man resurrected with Christ.

The born-again man is made a new in Christ. There is not only a death of the old man; there is also the birth of the new man. The just shall live by faith; to walk in newness of life. That is to choose the pathway that leads to life, which is the straight and narrow way. It is the way of the new nature and the new man. The Christian experiences a new life that is only possible because of the resurrection of Christ. The new life of the believer rests in the victory of Jesus over the power of the grave.

## The old man has been crucified with Christ. - V.6

### The Christian needs to know this truth.

It is knowledge of the truth that will make you free. This Scripture begins: *Knowing this*; God wants the believer to understand this concept of being crucified with Christ. The death of the cross was a slow death. The natural response of the body was to fight and struggle to stay alive; so it is with the death of the old man who will fight to stay active. The Christian needs to know the power of sin has been broken at the cross.

### The body of sin might be destroyed.

The word “destroyed” in Romans 6:6 does not mean annihilated; it means “rendered inactive, made of no effect.” The same Greek word is translated “loosed” in Romans 7:2. If a woman’s husband dies, she is “loosed” from the law of her husband and is free to marry again. There is a change in relationship. The law is still there, but it has no authority over the woman because her husband is dead. – Bible Exposition Commentary

The power of sin has been broken in the life of the Christian. The power of sin is still present in the world, yet the Christian has been loosed from the power of its clutches. This does not mean that the Christian is incapable of yielding to the temptation of sin. It does mean that through Christ the Christian has the power to overcome sin.

### He that is dead is freed from sin. – V. 7

Dead men do not sin. A dead drunkard will have lost his craving for alcohol. A born-again man who was a drunkard will also lose his craving for alcohol. The power of alcohol can be broken by the power of God; yet the freed man is still capable of yielding to the temptation to drink. Freedom from sin does not mean freedom from temptation or freedom from the ability to sin.

# DEAD TO SIN AND ALIVE UNTO GOD

## Consider yourself to be dead to sin.

### Reckoning is that step of faith that believes God’s Word and acts upon that Word. *Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin...-*V. 11

### The Christian should live his life separated from sin.

The Christian needs to realize the death of the old nature through his actions. To reckon to be dead to sin is to believe and consider this death as a fact and then act accordingly. For example, dead men do not purchase alcohol; so the actions of the one reckoned dead to sin should not purchase alcohol. The action of purchasing is a choice; the Christian must chose to live his life as though he were dead to sin by his actions.

## Do not allow sin to rule your life.

### The Christian must chose not to allow his flesh to control his life.

The flesh will fight against the spirit.- Gal. 5:17 The flesh will fight against the new nature. The old expression is: flesh is flesh no matter whose bones it’s on. Flesh will rule if it’s allowed to reign and take control.

### The man that allows sin to rule his life will become a servant to sin.

Sin is a hard taskmaster. Sin destroys lives and brings men into captivity.

Sin will gradually take control of a person’s life and drive them to ruin. The servant to sin becomes bound by the power of hell and is left empty and desolate. The final cost of sin is death and eternal punishment.

### Sin shall not have dominion over you.

Romans 6:14—*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Jesus defeated death when He rose from the grave. Death has no more power over Him. Likewise the Christian has been resurrected with Christ and the power of sin has been broken. The Christian’s victory over sin rests in the fact that Jesus conquered the power of sin. Man under the law had no power to overcome sin. Grace enables man to gain victory over sin.

## The Christian is alive unto God.

### The sinner is dead in his sins and separated from God.

### The Christian is born-again and his spirit is reconciled to God.

### Obedience to truth is necessary to overcome sin.

Romans 6:17—*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

# THE WAGES OF THE SERVANT-V. 23

## Man will receive his wages based upon his service.

### Servants to sin will receive the wages of the sinner.

### Servants to God will receive the wages of the righteous.

### Man must make a choice who he will serve.

## The wages of sin is death.

### A wage is a payment received for work.

### Sin always ends in death.

James 1:15–*Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

### This wage is eternal punishment in hell and the lake of fire.

## The wages of righteousness is life.

### Righteousness is only received through Jesus Christ.

### Salvation is a gift of God. – Eph. 2:8-9

### This wage is eternal life in heaven and a new earth.

Chapter 7

This is a very difficult passage to understand. The rendering of the words into English from the original Greek are at times awkward and difficult to understand. The chapter must be interpreted in relation to all of Scripture. This is a continuation of Chapter 6 which is clearly against sin reigning in the life of the Christian and an introduction to Chapter 8 which describes victory over the law of sin. This chapter is not an excuse to sin; Paul is testifying of his past struggle with sin and describes his victory over sin in Chapter 8. This is not to say that there will not be temptations and battles with the old nature, but that the Christian can have victory over sin through Jesus Christ.

**I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE LAW VS. 1-6**

## The marriage relationship illustrates our relation to the law.

In this passage the illustration of a husband and wife is used to show that the believer has a new relationship to the Law because of his union with Jesus Christ.

### The woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he is alive.

### The death of the husband releases the woman to marry again.

### The fulfillment of the law released the believer to be joined to Christ.

Just as the woman is free from the obligation of the law to her husband through his death, so are we free from the observance of the ceremonial law through the death of Christ on the cross.

## The Christian is loosed from the ceremony of the law.

### The ceremonial law was fulfilled in Christ.

There is a distinction between the ceremonial law and the moral law. The ceremonial law was the offering of sacrifices, the keeping of feasts, and the ceremony of the priests. The ceremonial law was fulfilled on the cross.

### The purpose of the ceremonial law had come to an end at the cross of Christ.

### The ceremonial law was a shadow of Christ.

The ceremonial law looked forward to Christ. The blood of animals could not redeem fallen man. These sacrifices were only a shadow of Jesus who offered Himself once as the sacrifice for the sins of man.

## The moral law is still in effect today.

### No place in the New Testament has God done away with the moral law.

### God will write His law on the hearts and minds of men.

*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; -* Hebrews 10:16

This is not the law of ceremony, but the law of morality that God writes on the heart and mind of a man. God has placed within man a conscience that bears witness to the law of God.

### The Christian is not released from the morality of the law.

# THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW Vs. 7-14

## The Law explains in plain terms what sin is.

The law tells us: *Thou shalt not covet,* so then it is clear that coveting is against the law of God and therefore a sin.

## The Law was given because of sin.

*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions –* Galatians 3:19

## The Law leads to Christ.

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. –* Galatians 3:24

Let us explain the meaning of these verses.

Verse 8 Concupiscence means to desire that which is forbidden or against the law. The rule of the law only stirred the desire to have that which was forbidden in much the same way the serpent beguiled Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The sinful nature fights against the law of God. Without the law sin was dead, that is without the knowledge of the law there was not the knowledge of sin. Paul is explaining the purpose of the law in this passage.

**Rom 7:8** But sin - My inbred corruption. Taking occasion by the commandment - Forbidding, but not subduing it, was only fretted, and wrought in me so much the more all manner of evil desire. For while I was without the knowledge of the law, sin was dead - Neither so apparent, nor so active; nor was I under the least apprehensions of any danger from it.

- Wesley

John Wesley explains verse 9 well in the following quotation:

**Rom 7:9** And I was once alive without the law - Without the close application of it. I had much life, wisdom, virtue, strength: so I thought. But when the commandment - That is, the law, a part put for the whole; but this expression particularly intimates its compulsive force, which restrains, enjoins, urges, forbids, threatens. Came - In its spiritual meaning, to my heart, with the power of God. Sin revived, and I died - My inbred sin took fire, and all my virtue and strength died away; and I then saw myself to be dead in sin, and liable to death eternal. – Wesley

Verse 10 tells us the commandment was ordained unto life, yet the law itself could not produce life: *for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life* – II Cor. 3:6 The law could only point to the true life which is Christ this is why Paul found the law to be death before he came to Christ.

We must understand that Paul is using his past testimony to show the weakness of the law. In verse 11 Paul tells us he was deceived by sin through the commandment. Or to put it simply Paul had put his trust in the law without Christ and had been deceived into doing that which was sinful and against God. He was almost destroyed by sin, before he had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.