

Romans Session 6o

The Answer to Abrahams Faith

Romans 4:17-22 (NASB77)

¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

¹⁹ And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

²¹ and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

²² Therefore also IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

We were studying Romans Chapter four, and there we were looking at the analysis of Abrahams faith. (vv18-21)

With it came the Answer to that faith and (vv22)

The Application (vv23-25)

Today we take up the Answer to Abraham's faith.

In our last study, we learned that Paul was teaching the Roman Church that Salvation is by Divine Power and not by human effort. There were seven characteristics of Abrahams faith that is God given.

1. The object of Abrahams faith was God and His Promises. His hope was in God alone.
2. Abraham, was able to believe God without becoming weak in faith.
3. Abrahams faith prevented him from being discouraged by his own natural weaknesses
4. Abraham did not doubt God's Promises when circumstances around him seem to make those promises impossible.
5. Abraham did not waver from faith to doubt as so many believer do
6. Abraham's faith was characterized by his giving Glory to God
7. Abraham believed and was fully persuaded that God's promises were certain and that His power was sufficient.

Now because of these elements of faith in Abraham, we see the answer to his faith in verse 22

THE ANSWER TO ABRAHAMS FAITH

Romans 4:22 (NASB77)

²² Therefore also IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The heart of the entire passage, in fact the whole chapter, is that in response to Abraham's faith, God graciously reckoned it to him as righteousness.

In his sinful flesh, Abraham was totally unable to meet God's standard of perfect **righteousness**.

But the good news of salvation, "**the gospel of God**" (*Rom. 1:1*), is that the Lord will take the faith that He Himself has enabled a person to possess and count that faith as divine **righteousness** on the believing sinner's behalf.

It is not that faith merits salvation but that faith accepts salvation from God's gracious hand. Through that acceptance comes the **righteousness** that only God can impart.

THE APPLICATION OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

Romans 4:23-25 (NASB77)

²³ *Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him,*

²⁴ *but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

²⁵ *He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

The marvelous thing about Abraham's faith being reckoned as righteousness is that the same divine principle applies to every person who trusts in God's Son.

The Holy Spirit inspired that truth to be **written for our sake also to whom it will be reckoned** just as it was for Abraham.

No part of Scripture was given only for the time in which it was written.

Listen to the Psalmist;

Psalm 78:5-7 (NASB77)

⁵ *For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should teach them to their children,*

⁶ *That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children,*

⁷ *That they should put their confidence in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments,*

Paul declares the same truth later in Romans;

Romans 15:4 (NASB77)

⁴ *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

The story of Abraham and of his faith is important to us today because men are now saved on exactly, the same basis on which Abraham was saved, truth in God.

Even the sacrificial work of Jesus was the provision for Abraham's sin by which God saved him.

Mankind today has a much greater divine revelation than Abraham had.

During his lifetime and for many centuries afterward, there was no written Word of God.

Yet Jesus declared categorically to the disbelieving Jewish leaders;

John 8:56 (NASB77)

⁵⁶ *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

From the human side, the key phrase in Romans 4:24 is "*who believe in Him.*"

Faith is the necessary condition for salvation.

As the eleventh chapter of Hebrews makes clear, the only person who have ever been received by God are those who have received Him by faith.

If despite his limited revelation, Abraham could anticipate the Savior and believe that God could raise the dead, how much more reason do men today have, to believe that the Father did indeed raise **Jesus our Lord from the dead**, in order that those who believe, "*in Him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (John 3:16)

Jesus **was delivered up because of our transgression, and was raised because of our justification.**

Delivered up, was the judicial term, referring to the commitment of a criminal to his punishment.

Jesus Christ **was delivered up** to serve the sentence of death that **our transgressions** deserve, and He **was raised up** to provide the **justification** before God that we could never attain in our own power or merit.

The great nineteenth century theologian Charles Hodge wrote:

With a dead Savior, a Savior over whom death had triumphed and held captive, our justification had been for ever impossible. As it was necessary that he high priest, under the old economy, should not only slay the victim at the altar, but carry the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, so it was necessary not only that our great high Priest should suffer in the outer court, but that he should pass into heaven to present his righteousness before God for our justification. Both, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction on our behalf, and as a necessary step to secure the application of the merits of his sacrifice, the resurrection of Christ was essential, even for our justification. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983 reprint], p 129]

despite his claims of scientific objectivism, modern man has become enthralled by the supernatural and by the prospect of extraterrestrial beings.

Eastern mysticism, in many forms and degrees, is sweeping the intellectually "enlightened" world as never before in history.

Many men and women of great prominence would not think of making a major decision or taking an extended trip, without consulting their horoscopes.

This demonstrates that it is not that modern, educated, sophisticated man is beyond belief in the supernatural or the miraculous.

It is rather that, like unbelieving men of all ages, he inherently resists the supernatural and miraculous work of Jesus Christ.

For that supernatural, miraculous work to be effective, a person must confess and renounce his **transgressions**, which is the supreme offense to man's depraved nature.

But only by such confession and repentance, which always accompany true faith, can a person receive the **justification**, the reckoning of underserved righteousness to his account, that he sacrifice of Christ makes possible.

THE SECURITY OF SALVATION

Romans 5:1-11 (NASB77)

- ¹ Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*
- ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;*
- ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;*
- ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
- ⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*
- ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.*
- ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
- ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*
- ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*
- ¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

One of Satan's primary tactics against believers is that of making them doubt that salvation is secure forever or that it is real in their personal case.

Perhaps for that reason Paul describes one of the key parts of a Christian's armor as the "helmet of salvation" which is provided to surround and protect his mind against doubt and insecurity concerning his redemption. This is both subjective and objective.

First, salvation can be shown by the objective testimony of scripture to be eternally secure for all the saved.

The issue of eternal security, or "once save always saved" has been hotly debated throughout much of church history. Everyone agrees that the truth or falsehood of that doctrine is of immense importance.

But it is also crucial to the believer to recognize the evidence that he, actually, has that real salvation. Once security is established as a fact of salvation, then assurance must be maintained in the heart of the Christian subjectively.

If as some maintain, a person is saved by faith in Jesus Christ but can sin his way out of God's grace, then those Christians must live in continual uncertainty about their spiritual destiny on both counts.

That which they receive, on the basis of God's work, must be maintained on the basis of their own work; The divine righteousness they received from God as a gift must now be maintained by the righteousness they themselves achieve.

According to that doctrine, salvation is received by faith but maintained by works, given by God's power but maintained by man's power. Therefore, it is a form of works righteousness.

It teaches that if a believer's life does not measure up to God's standard, his salvation is forfeited and he is again lost in sin. We will continue this subject when we get together next time.