

## “Standing Before God” Romans 4

**4** What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was* accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

<sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,  
And whose sins are covered;*

<sup>8</sup> *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.*”

<sup>9</sup> Does this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. <sup>10</sup> How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. <sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, <sup>12</sup> and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, <sup>15</sup> because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, “*I have made you a father of many nations*”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; <sup>18</sup> who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “*So shall*

*your descendants be.”*<sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.<sup>20</sup> He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,<sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.<sup>22</sup> And therefore *“it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*

<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,<sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 4:1–25 (NKJV)

## *How can we stand before God?*

### *I. Not by standing against Him, not by shaking our fist against Him –*

**<sup>5</sup> Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5)**

*The ungodly are sadly mistaken about God’s patience -*

**<sup>3</sup> The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, ... (Nahum 1:3 NKJV)**

*They mistake God’s patience to be approval of or indifference to their sin or they make an even bigger mistake and misinterpret His patience into an imagination of His non-existence. Yet, they cannot stand against His wrath! –<sup>6</sup>*

**Who can stand before His indignation? and who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire (Nahum 1:6)**

**<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,<sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!<sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”**

**Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV)**

## II. *Not by our own good works, or by any imagined self-righteousness –*

1. *Abraham was not justified by works:*

**<sup>4</sup> What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.**

**Romans 4:1–4 (NKJV)**

A. *By grace and faith, Abraham clearly walked with God.*

*Speaking to Isaac (Abraham’s promised son) God says – I swore to Abraham your father. **4 "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Genesis 26:3-5 NKJV)***

*Note, Abraham’s obedience is the reason (at least one reason) for God’s blessing Isaac and his descendants, but the verses above do not say Abraham was justified (before God) by perfect righteousness –*

B. *Because of misinterpreting verses like **Genesis 26:3-5**, many of Paul’s contemporaries believed Abraham was sinlessly perfect – The Book of Jubilees (circa B.C. 100) says, “For Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life.” The Prayer of Manasses, concluded that Abraham never had need of repentance: “Thou, therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the righteous, hast not appointed repentance unto the righteous, unto Abraham.... ” R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pages 48 & 662.*

*This kind of thinking, Abraham to be perfect and justified by works was what many in Jesus’ day, notably the Pharisees, thought of themselves. It necessitated Jesus’ parable against such an idea –*

– <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <sup>13</sup> "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:10-14 NKJV)

*The thinking, "I am perfect, I am sinless;" kept (and still keeps) people from repenting, asking for forgiveness, or forgiving others, it leads to great ungodly PRIDE!*

*B. Abraham, like everyone else, was born in sin, his history shows us a SINS –*

- *Twice he instructed his wife to lie and put her in highly compromised situations – **Genesis 12:10-20 & 20***

- *Listening to Sarai, he took Hagar (Sarai's maid) to be his second wife and bare him a child – **Genesis 16***

*2. More obviously David was not justified by works – **7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8 NKJV)***

*Anyone who knows even a little about the Bible knows David was a sinner:*

*A. He committed adultery with Bathsheba – **2 Samuel 11***

*B. He murdered her husband Uriah – **2 Samuel 11***

*C. He was born in sin, like all of us, except Jesus – **Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 64:6-7; Romans 3:10-11; :23; Hebrews 4:14-15***

<sup>5</sup> **Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> **But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses**

**are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. <sup>7</sup> And *there is* no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities. Isaiah 64:6–7 (NKJV)**

**<sup>10</sup> As it is written: “*There is none righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.* Romans 3:10–11 (NKJV)**

**<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 (NKJV)**

**<sup>14</sup> Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:14–15 (NKJV)**

### ***III. Not by ritual or by nationality –***

**10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Romans 4:10-13 NKJ)**

- 1. Abram was a believer and counted righteous before his circumcision –**
  - A. Believer, counted righteous – Genesis 15:6**
  - B. Circumcised – Genesis 17 2.**

2. *Circumcision was a Covenant Sign, it pointed to more important realities:*

A. *Abraham's descendant Jesus Christ would bleed and die for believer's sins*

B. *Spiritual circumcision, repentance had to be of the heart –*

**Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 4:9 -11? 2:9???**

**Deuteronomy 10:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> **Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.**

**Deuteronomy 30:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> **And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.**

**Jeremiah 4:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> **Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,  
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,  
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
Lest My fury come forth like fire,  
And burn so that no one can quench it,  
Because of the evil of your doings.”**

*IV. Not by a false or fruitless faith –*

<sup>19</sup> **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble! (James2:19 NKJ)**

*In John 8, Jesus confronts a false faith ...*

<sup>29</sup> **And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”** <sup>30</sup> **As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.** <sup>31</sup> **Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.** <sup>32</sup> **And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free?’” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. <sup>38</sup> I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” <sup>39</sup> They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. <sup>40</sup> But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. <sup>41</sup> You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.” <sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. <sup>44</sup> You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. John 8:29–45 (NKJV)

## V. *Only with a true, living faith in Christ and in God –*

1. *Abraham’s faith for the future was accounted for righteousness –*

**NKJ Romans 4:1** What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? **2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **3** For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:1-3 NKJ)

**6** And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6 NKJ)

2. *What did Abram believe God for? Genesis 15 tells us –*

A. *God as his Shield and Reward –*

**the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (Genesis 15:1 NKJ)**

B. *A multitude of children, descendants both natural and spiritual –*

**"Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to endants be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:5-6 NKJ)**

C. *Land –* <sup>7</sup> **Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." (Genesis 15:7 NKJ)**

*For us the promised land is Heaven -*

3. *David's faith for forgiveness was accounted for righteousness –*

<sup>4</sup> **Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin." (Romans 4:4-8 NKJ)**  
**A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. <sup>1</sup> Blessed *is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.* <sup>2</sup> Blessed *is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.* Psalm 32:1–2 (NKJV)**

*David had faith to kill Goliath, but more important he had faith to be forgiven – God imputes / accounts righteousness to us – λογίζομαι logizomai {log-id'-zom-ah-ee}*



*Meaning: 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over, it is an accounting term*

*1a) to take into account, to make an account of*

*1a1) metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute Forms of this word are used 11 times in **Romans 4***

*It means we are considered, counted, reckoned to be righteous in God's sight, because we trust what Jesus did – Three Latin terms describe ingredients of saving faith:*

1. Notitia – content of faith, the things we believe
2. Ascensus – is the conviction the things we believe are true
3. Fiducia – personal trust and reliance -

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1) ...**

**<sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)**

*Are you willing to climb in the barrel?*

*Arnold A. Brevick*