***Abraham's Justification by Faith
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Please turn to Romans 4, as we pick up once more the tremendous story of justification by faith. Paul, in this fourth chapter of Romans, has begun a new segment of this letter – this formal dissertation on the subject of salvation. He takes up at this point the example from Israel's history to show that salvation in the Old Testament was by faith, just as it was in the New Testament – not by works. Abraham is the key personality, of course, in Jewish history, because he was the father of the Jewish people. He was the only gentile who ever became a Jew. He is viewed, consequently, as the pattern for the Jews in their own personal salvation.

The Jews, because of the Mosaic Law, had made a very serious mistake in the fact that they had concluded that salvation was via keeping the works of the Mosaic system. This is what Paul is trying to straighten out once-and-for-all in this letter. People in Paul's day fell into the false notion relative to the works idea, just as people today do. So, we need this information, because earnings salvation is the natural inclination of the unbeliever's thinking.

**Abraham**

James recognized (we pointed out) that Abraham's works did have a place in his experience of justification. However, James was speaking of the fact – not of works for securing salvation from God, but to demonstrate that one had been saved. So, Paul speaks of Abraham's justification by faith as acceptance with God, while James speaks of justification by works as proof before men. So, James and Paul actually complement one another.

Paul says the Jews are the physical descendants of Abraham. Abraham discovered that salvation was not by works, but by faith in God's promises. If salvation were be human good works, Abraham had a ground for boasting in his salvation. Paul, however, strongly denies that Abraham had any ground for boasting in the presence of God relative to his salvation. Abraham was a fine man in many ways, but he was a sinner, and could bring nothing that God could accept. So, the principle of the exclusion of boasting in salvation would have been violated – that principle stated in Romans 3:27. That would have been violated if Abraham could have been saved by his works. He would have had something to boast of.

Furthermore, since there is one God who saves, His basis of justification in the Old Testament has to be the same as in the New Testament – and that is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, Abraham was justified by faith apart from works, and Abraham could only glory in God. He could not glory in himself at all. As a matter of fact, we want to stress to you once more that there is only one thing that a believer can glory in, and that one thing is very simply what God Himself puts into it – Bible doctrine. This is what is stored in your human spirit, and functioning in your soul, and that is the thing that you can glory in.

I want to call your attention to Psalm 38:2, where the psalmist says, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness, and for Your truth (for Your doctrine). For you have magnified your word (Bible doctrine) above all Your name." Now that is a fantastic statement in the Word of God – that God has magnified Bible doctrine above all His name. Actually, the word "name" means the essence of God. You think through the qualities of God. Think through the essence of God, and you are awed by what God Himself is. Yet, God says that His Word (doctrine) is above His essence in God's esteem. He magnifies that above even what He is. So, there is nothing more important in the life of a human being than doctrine. That's why Satan attacks it so vigorously.

However, this is the one thing you can really take pride in. You can really glory and boast in the doctrine that is stored in your human spirit, because when you do, you are casting back glory upon what God Himself is in His essence. God's guidance and blessings in our lives await the storing of His Word in our human spirits through the grace system of perceiving spiritual things. The aim is to enable God to guide us and to prosper us tremendously.

The reason we are restricted from doing it is because we don't have the capacity. And we don't have the capacity because we don't have God's attitude toward doctrine which it seems it above the very essence of God, out of which doctrine flows. And when you are dealing with doctrine, that is the finest moment of your experience (of your daily life). That is your highest point. That is your finest hour.

Now we pick it up at Romans 4:3. Here we have Paul saying, "I've made this declaration about the fact that Abraham, our father, our physical ancestor, found that he had to be saved by faith and not by his works. Somebody is going to say, "Well, how do you know that? On what basis do you make a statement like that, Paul?" So, Paul immediately does what every wise believer should do in dealing with opposition in the Word of God – you go to Scripture.

So, in verse 3, Paul turns to the Word of God, and he says, "For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." The word "for" introduces the reason for the statement that we have in verse 2 – that Abraham has nothing to glory about in the presence of God: "For what says?" The word "says" is the word we learned in the previous session: "lego," which stresses the content of Scripture, not the words as such. Information in the Bible about Abraham's salvation is what is referred to.

So, Paul says. "OK, let's go to the information. Do you want to know how come I can say this? Let's see what the information is in the Bible concerning Abraham and his salvation. This information is found in what he calls "the Scripture," which in the Greek looks like this: the "graphe." Graphe is simply the word for "a writing," but it is a technical term for the Old Testament Bible. You can see that we get our English word "graphic" from this word, which has to do with drawing and designs and so on. The Bible is always the final authority on the question of salvation. And human viewpoints have no authority in the matter of salvation. And human viewpoint is what is constantly being brought in.

That's why we have such an outburst of cults. We've got the unification group. We've got the Scientology group. We've got a variety of very popular cults now that have swept the nation, and they're all human viewpoint ideas on how a person relates himself to God. And every one of them is wrong, because it misses the point of atonement through the death and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. So, the Bible (and the Bible alone) gives the answer to the question of salvation by works or salvation by faith, and how Abraham has been related to it.

Paul quoted the Old Testament here. So, before we actually look at this first, let's just go back to the Hebrew Bible, where this is actually quoted from. Genesis 15:6 is what Paul is quoting at this point. Genesis 15:6 says, "And he believed in the Lord, and He (that is the Lord) counted it to him (to Abram) for righteousness." This is the first reference that we have in the Bible to the fact that the sole ground of salvation is by faith in something that God has promised. It is by faith in God's Word. This is the first occurrence of that kind of a promise – the faith basis of salvation. It begins with the reference to Abram.

Now, just to give you the background so you know what it is that Abram is believing here, let me back up to Genesis 15:1, which says, "After these things, the Word of the Lord came up to Abram, in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram." (This was before his name was changed:) "I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward. Abram was a little down-in-the-mouth. He was a little discouraged because time was going by, and what God had promised he was going to do for him (way back there in Ur of the Chaldees, back in Mesopotamia, when he left that country and that pagan society, and came up to a land he knew nothing of, to the Promised Land) – nothing had developed of it. So, Abram is a little discouraged, and is wondering what is really taking place. What's going on here between himself and God? For the years are rolling by, and nothing has happened, of all the things that God told him were going to happen.

So, in Verse 2, God, first of all, is encouraging him. He says, "'I'm your shield, and I am your achieving great reward.' Abram said, 'Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless? And the heir of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.'" Eliezer of Damascus was the steward, the business manager, of Abram's household. It was a custom in these times that if a man died without a male heir, that his possessions went to the steward who had taken care of his household. He became the heir. He became the one who inherited the possessions.

In verse 3: "And Abram said, 'Behold to me You have given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house as my heir.'" Abram said, "I don't have a son. You promised You were going to give me one, but I don't have a son. And as it now stands, it's this man, Eliezer, born in my own household. He's the closest I have to a son. He, my business manager, will be my heir."

"And, behold, the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 'This shall not be your heir. But he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be you heir.' And He brought him forth abroad and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to number them.' And He said unto him, 'So shall your seed be.' And He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness."

Now, we add to that what the Lord had previously (originally) declared to Abram back in Genesis 12. This was the basic promise that was causing the doubts and the concern in the mind of Abram. Genesis 12 says, "Now the Lord said unto Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you. And I'll make of you a great nation. And I will bless you, and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you. And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' So, Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran.

What God has been doing is that, since the time of Adam, there has been a stream of humanity that has been flowing down through history. This stream of humanity we call the gentile stream. Now, what God has told Abram is that this stream is going to continue, but God says, "I'm going to pull off a little side-stream separate from that main stream, which is going to be the Jewish people. And Abram is going to be the patriarch (the founding father) of that stream."

This is what God has promised. And God has said, "The result of this specialized stream of humanity is going to be ultimately salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ." So, here was a promise such that God said, "I'm going to bless all the nations of the world through you." How? Through the fact that eternal life is going to be made possible for the nations of the world.

Now, notice that this obviously could not be true. Abram could not be the progenitor of the Savior of the world unless Abram himself were born-again. God is not going to bring the Savior of the world through a man who is unsaved. He's not going to bring a nation, who is going to be the specialized nation that God is going to create this marvelous blessing for the world through, if that nation does not begin with a man who's born-again.

So, these promises that God has given Abram, and then this statement in Genesis 15:6 that he believed God: what did he believe? He believed these promises that God was going to cut off a specialized stream of humanity, which would be a great stream of humanity. There was going to be a mighty nation. And out of that, the nations of the world will be blessed: "And you will be such a special nation to Me, Abram, that anybody who raises his hand against you as a Jew comes under My wrath. And anybody who extends the hand of blessing and kindness to you as a Jew comes under My blessing." And please let me remind you that that has never been revoked. That is still true today. So, if you're inclined to push Jews around, you're playing a dangerous game. Mr. Hitler tried that, and you know where he is tonight. So, I'd not follow in his footsteps.

The reason the United States has been blessed, in part, by God is because we have always been kindly disposed as a nation to the Jewish people, and they have always found a refuge among us when they had been the dog's tail in every other part of the world.

So, this passage is saying that Abram is a born-again man as the result of believing what God has promised He was going to do through him, because that involved salvation. That involved a Savior which was going to come which would cover the sins of Abram himself.

**"Amen"**

Let's take a look in Genesis 15:6 at what the Hebrew itself is saying here. Then we'll go and look at the Greek translation of that: "And he believe." The word "believe" is a word that you actually know. It looks like this in Hebrew: "amen." "Amen" means "to believe." And that's what the word "amen" in English means. We just transliterate this Hebrew word. Every time you say "Amen" at the end of your prayer, you're speaking Hebrew. You thought you couldn't speak Hebrew, but you've been doing it for years. ...

So, "amen" is "believe." The word actually means "to sustain" or "to support." Hebrew has various stems, and this word in Genesis happens to be what's called the Hiphil stem, and that affects the meaning. The Hiphil stem of this word actually means "to lean upon" or "to build upon." And thus we get the idea of "to believe" or "to trust." Remember that we (some time ago) pointed out that the core concept of believing or trusting was reliance. It was leaning upon God. So, right here in the very beginning, in the first reference we have to justification by faith, God the Holy Spirit uses this Hiphil stem to indicate that it is a matter of leaning (of reliance) upon God – believing and trust.

Furthermore, the significance of this Hiphil stem in the Hebrew is that it is what we call a causative stem; that is, when this Hiphil is used, it indicates that God caused this to happen. That is very amazing. Here is Abraham, but you would think that Abraham would have something to boast about because he had the good sense to listen to God back there in Ur of the Chaldees, and to believe Him. That is not so. The very Hebrew tells us that Abraham didn't do anything. He can't even boast of the fact that he believed God.

What does Ephesians 2:8 say? Let's read it again. It is exactly the same principle. When we do believe God, is that a credit to us? That's why we say that salvation is a non-meritorious act. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that (faith), not of yourselves. It is the gift of God." Then verse 9 tells us why: "Not of works, lest any man should boast." So, even the New Testament reiterates the fact that if you're born-again, it is not because you sat down one day and said, "You know, I really would hate to go to hell for all eternity. I'd rather go to heaven. I'm going to go to heaven." And you made the decision to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. It might seem like that from your point of view. But if you have thoughts like that, it is only because God first moved upon your mentality and drew you like a magnet, so that you were just drawn to the Savior, and your mentality was prepared for believing.

This is how Abraham was saved – a causative condition where God caused him to be saved. God caused him to be able to believe. That's how you were saved. God caused you to believe. Someplace in our hymnbook, we have a hymn that says something to the effect of, "I found Him, O, I found Him." But the truth of the matter is that that's not quite right. You found Him, but remember that you weren't looking for Him when you found Him. We already learned that earlier in Romans: "There is none that seeks after God. No, not one." And not even Abram. Abram was sitting there in that cultured, sophisticated city of the Ur of the Chaldees, right there in the Mesopotamian Valley. It had civilization in one of its finest hours. Apparently, he came from a pretty well-to-do home, but he sat in a pigsty of morality. And somehow, something caused this man to learn about God, and to reach out, and to accept eternal life at the hands of Jehovah Elohim. And the Bible tells us that that something was God Himself. The Hiphil stem indicates that this was causative. God caused him to "amen" (to believe) the promise that God had given to him relative to eternal life that was to be brought to Abram.

This is active voice in Hebrew, which means Abraham did his own believing. It's in the perfect tense, which means it's completed action. Abraham was not just thinking it over. He accepted it, and he believed the promises that we read earlier here at the beginning of Genesis 15.

This is important because some of the Jews said, "Well, circumcision is what saves you." In Paul's time, they were saying, "If you're a male, and you're not circumcised, I can tell you that you're not going to heaven." But Paul's point here, in going back to Genesis 15:6, is to put a historical anchor point in the time when Abraham was saved, because circumcision did not come into the life of Abraham until something like 13 years after this.

Furthermore, the other thing they were saying was, "Well, it's the Mosaic Law." Obviously, the Mosaic Law was not in existence at this time. It was not in existence for 400 more years. Four centuries were to pass before the Mosaic Law came along. That's Paul's point: "So, those of you who are running around and championing the rituals of the Mosaic Law, and calling upon circumcision as the key step to salvation, you're wrong. Abraham, our father, was saved without circumcision. Abraham, our father, was saved without ever having the Mosaic Law or knowing a thing about it. Abraham, our father, was saved because God came and talked to him one day, and God caused to rise (within the mentality of Abraham) a faith that believed what God said, and he was saved.

So, we read, "And he believed in the Lord." The Hebrew has the word "in" ("lo") which directs that here it is. It is going to a certain point: "He has believed in." And that's what makes Abraham's faith of value. What he believed in is called, in our English Bible, "LORD." And you'll notice that it's in all capital letters. In the King James translation, this always indicates this Hebrew word for God. It is the Hebrew word "Yahweh." You're more used to seeing it as "Jehovah." The only difference is these things called the vowel points. Hebrew has these little points that tell you what the vowels are. The other letters are the consonants. This word "Jehovah" actually (we find now) didn't come into use until about the year 1520. So, the scholars really believe that the Jews pronounce it as "Yahweh."

You will notice that there are four letters. Therefore, it is called "the sacred Tetragrammaton." "Tetra" means "four;" and, "grammaton" means "letters." The Jews looked upon this name Yahweh as the most sacred name of God. It is God in His most magnificent concept and demonstration. Actually, they did not even pronounce that word whenever they read it in Scriptures. That's why we have this little confusion here (whether it's Jehovah or "Yahweh," because some of the vowel points cause it to come out as "Jehovah." But it makes no difference. It was because they actually didn't even say this word. They said another word. Every time they came to this, they said "Adonai," which is another name for God.

However, this Tetragrammaton is the most sacred name for God. And that is what is used here. We are told that Abram believed in Yahweh. And literally translating this, we would say that this means "the one who is," or "the eternal." It is similar to our words "I am" – the concept of deity. As a matter of fact, the specific object of faith here (in the Trinity) is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who is the revealed member of the Trinity. The Father planned salvation. The Holy Spirit empowers us to salvation. But Jesus Christ is the one who provides it.

So, when it says that Abraham "amen Yahweh," it's saying that he believed the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what he believed in. He was specifically putting his trust in the second person of the Trinity. Again, faith has no power and has no value in itself. It has only value as it is placed in the object.

The result of believing Jehovah God, expressed under this sacred Tetragrammaton, was the fact that it was counted to him for righteousness. And the Hebrew word for "counted" ... means "to impute" or "to reckon." We're going to see the Greek word in a minute on that. The idea is to credit something to one's account. This is the Hebrew word that was used in business to say, "I'm crediting this much to your account."

So, because Abraham believed God, here was a simple statement of what God was doing. And it is in the imperfect expression in the Hebrew, which means that it continues in the future. God is constantly attributing (accounting) this to Abraham's account. And what did he attribute to Abraham's account? He calls it righteousness. It's the word "tsthkah." "Tsthkah" is a very precious word to the Jews. This was the word that refers to that absolute righteousness of God. So, what Abraham received, as the result of "amen" God, was absolute righteousness. It's the equivalent of saying, here in the Hebrew, that he was saved: "And he believed in the Lord. It was laid to his credit (to him) for righteousness."

The New Testament confirms the fact that Abraham's salvation was by faith in a coming Savior. The New Testament confirms for us that Abraham was looking to the future. Let's look at a couple of passages to demonstrate that. We'll look, first of all, in the book of John. Now, I don't know how much Abraham knew specifically. I'm sure he did not know all that we know about the Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't have that kind of detail. He did know that Yahweh was going to produce a solution if he trusted in Him for that solution. We have a great deal more content. But the point that was important was that he had to believe God. He had to "amen" God just as you and I do. What Abraham actually was doing was recognizing that someplace down the line in the future, God was going to come up with the provision.

So, notice John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad." Abraham looked forward to the day that the Messiah Savior Jesus Christ would arrive to provide the ground for his justification.

Verse 57: "Then the Jews said (the enemies of Jesus) unto Him: 'You are not yet 50 years old, and have you seen Abraham?'" The enemies of Jesus Christ said: "What do You mean that Abraham saw Your day? What do You mean that Abraham saw You? Abraham lived centuries ago. You're not even 50 years old? Are you some kind of a crazy man?"

**I Am**

Verse 58: "Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily." There's the Greek "amen amen." "I say unto you, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'" Here's an extraordinary declaration on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the assertion of the eternity of Jesus Christ. This is the assertion of Jesus Christ that He has always existed. If He says that, that means He is saying that He is God. In the Old Testament, anytime you have this expression "I am," without "I am John," or "I am Sue," or "I am something," without anything here in the blank (just "I am"), that is always a term for deity. And the Jews knew it. And God identified Himself to them as "I am that I am."

Here, the Lord Jesus is deliberately taking those words (so significant to the Jews), and saying, "Before Abraham came into existence ('before Abraham became' is what it literally says), I am." It doesn't say, "I was," but "I am," which means no beginning and no ending.

**Jesus Christ Claimed to be God**

It is interesting that the liberals in our day like to declare that Jesus Christ never claimed to be God. This is a favorite confusion of the liberal theologian – that Jesus never claimed to be God. But notice what His hearers understood He was saying: "Then they took up stones to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself; went out of the temple, going through the midst of them; and, so passed by. They were moved to stone Him (to kill Him). What right did they have to do this to Him? They had the right of blasphemy, because they looked upon him as merely a human being, as the liberal do, and they very clearly knew that Jesus stood up and said, "I am God." And worse than that, He spoke of it in terms of the sacred Tetragrammaton: "I am that I am. I am the eternal one. I am the existing one." They knew what he was saying. The liberals today are too dumb to understand. But the people who listened to Jesus – there wasn't any doubt in their minds. They knew exactly what He was saying. And they took up stones in order to kill Him.

Abraham was looking to God's future provision for his sins. That's what this passage indicates. Abraham was looking forward with rejoicing to the day that the Messiah Savior would arrive. Abraham was not looking to something of his own works – that his own works had accomplished, or that his own works could accomplish.

Turn to Acts 7. Let's take a look at the speech of the first Christian martyr, Steven, in the process of his speaking to the Sanhedrin, and to the really enraged enemies of the early Christians. In Acts 7:2, Steven says, "And he said, 'Men and brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared on to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Haran. And He said unto him, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I will show you. Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran, and from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which he now dwells."

Abraham was saved way back there in the land of Mesopotamia, in the city of Ur in the Chaldees. Somehow, he began to get the information bit-by-bit, and piece-by-piece, and God gave him the understanding of eternal life, and what was involved in salvation. And Abraham went from God-consciousness to personal salvation way back there in Ur of the Chaldees. Well, what God had said was for him to leave, and Abraham expressed his positive volition to this call by leaving; thereby demonstrating that he did believe God and that he had faith in God's promise.

Verse 5: "And He gave him no inheritance in it (that is, in the land of Canaan); no, not so much as to set his foot on." He had no title to any land whatsoever. Yet He promised that he would give it to him for a possession: "And to his seat after him, when he as yet had no child." What this passage is pointing out is that Abraham was just a squatter. He got in the land of Canaan. He set his tents up hither and yon, but he had no land. When his wife died, that's when he had to go out and buy a little plot of land to bury her in. He owned nothing. He was just a wanderer. Yet, God says, "This is your land."

God brought him from the Euphrates and Tigris River, here from Mesopotamia, way across the Fertile Crescent, and down into the land of Canaan – a 1,000-mile trek. Now he finds himself here in the Land of Promise. And he doesn't have a title to anything – not even a burial plot.

In verses 6-7, Stephen goes on and says, "And God spoke in this way, that his siege of sojourn in a strange land: 'And they should bring them into bondage, and he'll treat them 400 years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage I will judge,' said God. 'And after that, they shall come forth and serve Me in this place.'" All this information was to Abraham: The time is coming when your descendants are going to be slaves for 400 years. I'll judge that nation, but they're going to have 400 years of a terrible time.

Then verse 8 goes on and tells him how he sealed all this with the covenant of circumcision, and so on.

Now, Abraham had to accept all this information on faith. He had to believe it, or not believe it. He had to believe that there was a land, such that if he left Ur of the Chaldees and came over, that God was going to give him. He had to believe that God was going to put his people in such a place that for 400 years they were going to be slaves in Egypt.

When Joseph ended up as second-in-command in the land of Egypt, and when he died, one of the orders that he gave was: "Take my bones back with you." He was placed into a sarcophagus, a coffin-like container above ground – not underground, but above ground. And every time the Jews passed that sarcophagus of Joseph back there in Egypt, it was a reminder to them of the faith of Joseph in the patterns of the faith of their father Abraham, that God was going to keep His promise. And though they were way off down in the land of Egypt, he knew that they were going to come back someday. And Joseph said, "When you go, you take my bones." And that's exactly what they did. One of the last things they did was rushed out; jerked that top off of that sarcophagus; pulled that box open; lifted Joseph out; and, put him on a cart, and off he went back to Canaan land with them.

Abraham had been told all this. He knew all this was in the future. His eye was on the future, and he believed God completely. He said, "That's exactly what's going to happen." He taught his children that's what was going to happen. They passed the story on down. Joseph believed it, and it went right down until God actually fulfilled it.

Let's look at one more passage in the New Testament that helps us to understand that Abraham was acting on faith. Hebrews chapter 11 is the great faith chapter of the Bible. Hebrews 11:8 says, "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 where he went. By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Verse 8 says that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees because he believed God's promise. He relied upon God.

Verse 9 says, "That he lived in the land of promise as a wandering alien in tents. Yet, he believed that God was going to fulfill His promise."

Then verse 10 says that he anticipated: "Without a doubt, someday a permanent home in heaven." That's what it means by "a city with foundation" – that someday, Abraham said, "I'm going to have a home. It's going to be in heaven. It's going to have great foundations. It's going to be a permanent place. And I'm not going to be wandering out here in the desert from place to place as I am now." His hope was based entirely on the fact that he believed what God had said.

So, even here in the New Testament, these references to Abraham constantly stress one thing about this man. He was not trying to make it with God on the basis of his works. He was very definitely dealing with God simply on the fact that God had told him something, and he says, "You don't lie, and I believe you."

That's what Genesis 15:6 means when it says, "It was counted (it was lead to his account) for righteousness."

Now, let's take up the New Testament quotation in closing this now. You'll see, on the basis of what we've seen from the Hebrew, translating it now into the Greek, that it comes out exactly the same. In the Greek, we read in verse 3, "For." This begins again with the idea of a continuing thought: "For what do the Scriptures say? Abraham believed God." The word" believed" is that word we have had so many times: "pisteuo." "Pisteuo" means "to trust;" "to have faith in;" or, "to rely upon." That is exactly what "amen" meant. In the Old Testament, it was the word "amen," and here it's the word "pisteuo." It means exactly the same thing: "to have faith in." This is a non-meritorious act, connoting reliance. There is no merit in believing God. Why not?

Somebody may bring this up to you and say, "Well, you decide to believe. That's to your credit." It would be, except for one little thing. You did not move to believe. This is the Hiphil stem. God caused you to believe. And it is God causing you to do the believing. Abraham believed, but it is not any merit to him. This is aorist tense, which looks at that point when he trusted in those promises. It's active. Abraham had to move on his own. He had to make the decision, though God moved him. Yet, he was responsible – that relationship of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. And the result of information that somehow God gave Abraham in Mesopotamia, in Ur of the Chaldees, gradually let Abraham to God-consciousness, and then to personal trust and salvation in Jehovah.

His trust here in the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, was that he believed God. The word "God" is the Greek word "theos." In the Old Testament, it was Yahweh, the sacred Tetragrammaton. Here again, the object of Abraham's faith that gives it value is the living God. Here in the Greek, it's "*the* God," indicating that it is the real God. It is not all those kookie, imagined, made-up gods of Mesopotamia. It is the one true and real God.

Then it says, "And:" He adds the result here: "It was counted." The word "counted" is "logizomai." "Logizomai" means "to put to one's account;" "to be credited with;" or, "to reckon." It has a variety of English translations, but the best idea is "to put to one's account."" Then it say: "It." Abraham's faith in God's Word of promise was then put to Abraham's credit – to his account.

This word "logizomai" is a very expressive word. It again is comparable to that Old Testament Hebrew word that conveyed the same idea – that God credited to Abraham's account. Here, "logizomai" conveys the same concept that we had before in the Hebrew word ... This word is used 41 times in all of the New Testament. It is used 35 times by Paul himself; it is used 19 times in the book of Romans by Paul; and, it is used 11 times in Romans 4. Romans 4 keeps punching this keyword: "Credited to your account; credited to your account; credited to your account." Paul is really trying to make it clear that salvation cannot be by anybody's works. And that means that you can't keep your salvation by your works either.

There are pathetic people who think that you can be saved today and lost tomorrow. They have never really studied what the language of the book of Romans is saying – if they only understood what God says He has done here. And again, this particular word "logizomai" (credited to his account) is aorist tense, which is a point in time – the point in time when Abraham exercised faith back in Ur of the Chaldees. And it's passive voice. Abraham did not justify himself. It was God that laid this to his account: "Unto him (that is, to Abraham) for." And the word "for" is the Greek word "eis." What it is saying is: 'Resulting in (the precious word for) absolute righteousness." The New Testament has an identical word. It's called "dikaiosune." This is the noun for describing the absolute righteousness of God's essence. This has no "the" before it. It is not "the righteousness." It was not accounted to him for "the righteousness." Therefore, whenever you do not have "the," it is quality of the word that is stressed. And the quality is absolute righteousness of God. That kind of righteousness is what is stressed.

**Justification**

This means that Abraham's name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life as one eternally secure in justification. The sin of Adam, which had once been imputed to Abraham, now, because of his faith in God's promise, was imputed to Jesus Christ, the coming Savior. The Bible makes no effort to cover up the fact that Abraham had a seamy side to his life. The Bible never makes any effort to cover up the seamy side of Abraham's life. Don't forget that all of us have a seamy side. But that does not affect our justification. It is a declaration of our position in Jesus Christ. That's what justification means. And it does not mean that we are sanctified because of it.

That's another great mistake people make: "If I'm a Christian, then I'm never going to do anything wrong." That is wrong. The biggest rats I know are Christians. That's how it usually works. You know why? Because they're harder to deal with. They're sneaky. They know how to put on a good front. They walk around with the Bible. Are you going to call a guy walking around the Bible a rat? Obviously, he's a real nice guy. She's a very non-gossipy lady. No, justification just means how God looks at you. It does not say that you have become. He says that that will happen when you're in His presence.

So, Abraham had some very seamy experiences, and we've looked at some of those, but God's grace wiped all that out, relative to his eternal destiny. God, in His sovereignty, reach down, and He brought Abraham into justification. There was no credit to Abraham. All Abraham did was a non-meritorious act of believing God. So, all of Abraham's guilt is removed, and all of Christ righteousness was credited to Abraham. His spiritual bankruptcy was removed forever, just as it is for you and me. On what basis? One word: faith. And Paul tries to stress it very, very hard that there were no works involved in that.

So, what have we said? In verse 3, Paul says, "I'll prove that Abraham was saved by faith without works. I'll appeal to the Scriptures." Of course, once the Bible speaks on a subject, that's it. That's the mind of God, and whatever you come up with (human viewpoint), it makes no difference.

Then he quotes Genesis 15:6, and gives a complete, accurate, Greek translation of that Hebrew passage. Abraham trusted and relied on the living and the true God, the second member of the Trinity specifically, and that trust in the promises that God had made to him, to make him a great nation, and obviously a saved person from whom the nation and the person of Jesus Christ would descend, was then credited to his account as absolute righteousness. It resulted in God declaring him fit for heaven.

What did Abraham do? Nothing. If he had tried to include his works, he would have contaminated what God had provided.

So, now the Jew is in a very difficult position. Here is there forefather, the head man, the one they all look to and said, "Whatever happened to him, that happens to us." And for centuries, they've been saying he was saved by works, and now Paul goes right back to Scripture, and rams it right to them, and says, "The Bible itself says, 'No, he was saved by believing God.' Now what do you have to say?" And they ground their teeth.

**Grace**

He follows this up very quickly with probably the second most important person in Jewish history that we'll look at next time: King David, the royal line of Israel. And David comes through with the same principle. God does nothing for you through your efforts, which would give you a ground for pride and boasting. He does it all for you through grace – the preciousness of grace.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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