

Romans 4:1~5

The bible has been at the “*center of controversy*” for thousands of years...the cause of numerous arguments, fights, even wars have been started over the bible. It’s teachings have been at the heart of countless debates, some arguing from the standpoint that it is the very “*Inspired words of God*,” while others seek to “*disprove or discredit*” those claims...

No doubt, man will continue to argue and offer “*valid*” reasons either for or against the “*Authenticity*” of the scriptures, with each side offering “*Compelling evidence*” for their stance...

The skeptics often point to those who are affiliated with the church, but outside live a life contrary, seeking to discredit it... That’s what Paul even says in 2:24...

*²³Thou that make thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonor thou God? ²⁴For the **name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.***

The Gentiles were “*Discrediting*” the Jewish faith, **and thus God**, by pointing to the “*inconsistency*” of their lives...

(Verses 21~23, steal, adultery, idols... Teaching one thing...and doing another...)

A passage that should serve as “*reminder*” as to how those around us are “*watching us...*” And how important it is to “*walk in the spirit...*”

But pointing to such inconsistencies, doesn’t prove the bible isn’t real, but that the “*individual*” is not real! That’s not so much a witness against the gospel, as it is to an “*unconverted heart!*”

Having said that...I will continue to challenge those people who point to such inconsistencies, to “*explain*” the lives of those who have been radically changed by this book! I could point to “*numerous people*” whose lives have been glorious changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ!

People who are “*Servants...*” People who pour out their hearts and lives for His sake!
The strongest evidence for the authenticity of the bible is that of a “*changed life...*”

It is extremely hard to argue against a “*good example...*” And here in this passage, we find that Paul has been arguing the case for “*Justification by Faith...*” Beginning back in chapter 1 all the way through the end of chapter 3, Paul has laid down the most comprehensive and compelling argument that justification comes not by man’s adherence to the Law of God, but by Faith...

²⁸Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

If the Jews would not listen to Paul, they would readily listen to what Abraham would say... And that’s exactly what Paul does here in chapter 4. He now turns his focus to the life of Abraham...

Here in chapter 4, Paul points to the “*life of Abraham*” as his illustration to his message... An illustration is merely a “*tangible object*” to show a spiritual truth... Though we walk by faith and not by sight...we are largely in part a “*Visual People...*” Illustrations was a major part of Jesus’ teachings...and so should it be ours.

With the exception of 3 verses, pointing to King David, this entire chapter is given to the witness of “*Abraham’s Life*” to justification by faith... Abraham and David were two of the most highly esteemed and respected men of the nation Israel...even to this day!

Paul knew, that this new message of “*Christ*” might be rejected by many of the devout Jews of Israel... But he knew, they would never reject what Abraham & David had to say... And if they were pointing to the same thing as Paul, then Paul would have a chance to “*gain the Jews.*”

Up to this point, Paul has been dealing strictly with the **Law of Moses**... who was another highly respected and honored man as was Abraham and David...

And Paul has made clear, that his message of “Faith” does not undermine the Law of Moses, nor set it aside or destroy it at all... But rather, “Faith” establishes it by pointing to it’s purpose and function IN “Faith...” That God did not give it to “justify” a man, but rather to “condemn” a man... It’s purpose was to render a man guilty before God... As Galatians says... a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ! Christ being the fulfillment of the law...

Explaining the “*Role*” of the HOLY LAW in the message of FAITH!

Here, Paul points to the “*life of Abraham*” as his illustration to his message...

(Vs 1) ¹*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*

What does Abraham say on the matter?
How was Abraham justified before God?

The point of Paul’s question is this...

However Abraham was “*justified before God*” holds true even today!

If Abraham was “just” with God on the basis of “his deeds” than Paul’s message would be render null and void. But if Abraham was “*justified by faith*”, then it would “*confirm*” Paul’s message!

(Vs 2~3) ²*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.* ³*For what saith the scripture?*

If God “*Justified Abraham*” because of his good works, because he was such a “*Godly Man...*” then Abraham would have the right to boast! But according to the scripture, that was not the case...

How was Abraham “*Justified by God?*”

³*For what saith the scripture?*

And I just want to say right here, thank God for a man who looks to the scripture... No doubt, Paul was taught the traditions of Abraham during his upbringing, but thank God he didn’t point to those things, but rather pointed to the scripture! A good reminder, that the opinions and thoughts of man, mean nothing... Nothing else matters but “*what saith the Lord...*”

Quoting Ge.15:6...*Abraham believed God, and **it was counted** unto him for righteousness.*

(Genesis 15) ¹After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. ²And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus? ³And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. ⁴And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. ⁵And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. ⁶**And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**

God “*rendered*” unto Abraham “*Justification*” on the basis of what?...his *Faith!*

Clearly... Abraham was a man of “*faith...*” And because he “*Believed God*”, God imputed unto him and counted it to him for righteous... meaning God put righteousness in his account!

The writer of Hebrews points to this...

(Hebrews 11) ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: ¹⁹Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

That passage says... ¹⁷*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac*
God had promised Abraham, that his seed would number as the stars! But if he did what God was asking him to do... then “*naturally speaking*”, that would kill any hope of it coming to pass... But Abraham “*believed God*”, in that if God wanted him to offer Isaac on the altar, then God must have plans to raise him from the dead! Because God said, that through this young man Isaac, he would bring forth a nation!

Abraham was best described as a man... “**Who BELIEVED God...**”

His “*Faith in God*” was counted unto him as Righteousness... Abraham was a man who “*lived by faith...*” (Ro. 1:17b) The *just* shall live by faith.

Paul’s whole point of pointing to Abraham was, that if Abraham was “*justified by faith*” then all who are justified before God will be by faith!

Something interesting that needs to be pointed out... For one, at the time of Abraham, the LAW had not yet been given... I can’t think of a better argument for “*Justification without the deeds of the Law*” than the Justification of Abraham... Because his “*justification before God*” **could not possibly** have anything to do with the LAW!

Think about it... by using Abraham, Paul was using a man who didn’t even have scripture!

(Vs 4~5) The Principle... ⁴*Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. ⁵But to him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

If one is rewarded for his performance, then he receives it, not as a gift, but rather because he has earned it!

But if you receive a reward, even though you didn’t do anything worthy of it... than it becomes a gift!

Paul ask... How was Abraham “*Justified by God?*”

³*For what saith the scripture?*

God “*Rendered*” unto Abraham “*Justification...*”

- Not because Abraham “*Earned it*” ...
- But because Abraham “*believed God...*”

Abraham was Justified before God by FAITH...

It’s always been by FAITH... and it always will...