

## Justification and the Law

*Romans, Part XXII*

Romans 4:13-22, Part One

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### I. Delving Deeper

### II. The Law and the Promise

<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." (Rom 3:13-22)

#### A. The Promise – Heir of the World (13a cf. Gen 12:1-3)

<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen 12:1-3)

In Abraham, *all the families of the earth would be blessed*. In other words, Abraham's *seed* (Christ and all those in Christ) would inherit the \_\_\_\_\_, be in a state of blessing with God. And what is this but to be *at peace with God*? In other words, to be *justified*?

#### B. Believing God's Promise (13b)

So how did Abraham respond to this promise? He believed God. He trusted God's word. He couldn't earn any of it; he could only rely upon God to grant it as a gift.

#### C. Nullifying the Promise (14-16)

And this is precisely the lesson Paul emphasizes in verses 14-15. Paul is amplifying what he wrote earlier: "*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness...*" (4:4-5). What is the nature of our relationship with God? Is it one where we \_\_\_\_\_ God's favor, or is it one where we \_\_\_\_\_ God's promise as a gift and respond in faith? As Paul will write later in Romans, "*And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work*" (Rom 11:6). Grace and works, gifts and wages, are competing principles.

#### An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
  - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
  - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
  - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live
  - A. God's Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - B. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (3:21-4:25)
  - C. The Triumph of God's Righteousness (5-8)
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- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith"
  - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
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  - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
  - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
  - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

### III. The Relationship between faith and works

#### A. The Ground of Justification

What is the ground of our justification? In other words, on what basis are we set right with God? We say that we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone. “*There is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith” (3:30). What do those words *by/ through* reveal? They reveal that faith is not *the \_\_\_\_\_ of our justification*. The ground of our justification is Jesus’ death and resurrection. What does faith do? Faith grasps hold of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Note the close of our chapter:*

*<sup>23</sup>Now it was not written for [Abraham’s] sake alone that [righteousness] was imputed to him, <sup>24</sup>but also for us. [Righteousness] 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. (Rom 4:23-25)*

John Murray writes in his book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, that properly speaking, “*it is not \_\_\_\_\_ that saves but faith in Jesus Christ; strictly speaking, it is not even faith in Christ that saves but \_\_\_\_\_ that saves through faith*” (Murray, 118).

#### B. The Instrument of Justification

So what role does faith play? Faith is the *instrument* or *means* of our justification. Faith is the means by which we lay hold of Jesus. True faith looks away from works to Jesus.

#### C. The Result of Justification

Good works are the \_\_\_\_\_ of justification, they are the fruit of trusting in Christ. The Westminster Confession of Faith states: “*Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love*” (11.2)

### IV. Faith, works, and the law

- 3:31 - Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.
- 4:14-15 - For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath...

A. Faith and works and the *perfection* of the law (Rom 3:19-20; Dt 27:26; Gal 3:10)

B. Faith and works and the *purpose* of the law (cf. Rom 3:20; 4:15; 10:4)

C. Faith and works and the *perpetuity* of the law (cf. Rom 8:4)

### V. Conclusion