

Study 4

# FATHER ABRAHAM

## Romans 4

### In The Group

- ◆ Who have you recently shared with what you've learned from these studies?
- ◆ How have you grown so far this year?
- ◆ Who have you blessed in the last two weeks?

Having established that all people have fallen short of God's standard, Paul now introduces the father of Israel, Abraham, and states that even *he* had fallen short of God's requirements for being considered righteous - yet he was favoured by God. This would certainly give Abraham bragging rights. Yet, he couldn't point to anything he had done to deserve God's favour. So why was he favoured by God then? The answer is still true today, and it is the subject of Romans 4.

1. Based on Romans 4:1-2, even if Abraham had been the morally best person to have ever lived, why would this have not made him right before God? What does this tell us about those who claim that those who live a good life will go to heaven even if they never give their life to Christ? (note also Ephesians 2:9)

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2. God's salvation of a person is a *gift*. Consider Romans 4:4. How would you use this verse to explain to the person trusting their good deeds that this is not adequate to qualify them for their eternal salvation?

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Being *saved* requires that we are *righteous* before God. There are only two ways to be righteous before God. In the first instance you would have to be born without sin and then live a life without sin. In the second instance you would have to be declared innocent of sin in a ‘court of law’. There is no one in the first category apart from Jesus Christ. This also means that He is the only one qualified to defend the guilty one in God’s court of law. What He asks of His client in that court-room is: *Do you trust Me?*

Belief (right facts) leads to faith (accepting the truth) which leads to trust (appropriate action).



French daredevil Jean Francois Gravelot, a.k.a 'The Great Blondin,' tightrope walks across the Niagara River Gorge carrying his manager, Harry Colcord, on his back, August 19, 1859.  
(Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

To “believe” in Christ is not merely to accept certain truth claims about Christ. It leads to *trusting* Christ.

3. What is the *believer* trusting God for? (Note Romans 4:5)

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That God would take our sin and guilt and put it on Christ so that we are forgiven, declared *righteous* and *justified* is unbelievable to many. We live in a culture where nothing is truly 'free'. There's always a catch. Our sin nature causes us to *distrust* Christ's offer of salvation and it also deceives us into trusting *ourselves* for our salvation.

4. How does Romans show that Abraham was never able to obtain righteousness by what he *did*? (Romans 4:10-11)
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If you are on your death-bed wavering in your faith and wondering if you've *done* enough to be saved, remember Abraham!

5. In what way are we to follow Abraham today? (Romans 4:12)
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The use of the word 'faith' in Romans 4 is akin to our use of the word 'trust' (belief>faith>trust). Abraham *believed* God would make him a father. This *faith* led him to *trust* God. God then reckoned (note this accounting term in Romans 4:22) *righteousness* to Abraham.

6. Note Romans 4:19 as to why Abraham's faith/trust in God to be the father God said he would be, was so incredible -
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7. How did Abraham *grow strong in faith* even though his circumstances did not support his faith in God? (Romans 4:20)
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8. What can we learn from how Abraham grew strong in his faith (Rom. 4:20)?
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The 'Law' came hundreds of years after Abraham. At the time when Romans was written, Jews believed that if they kept the laws of Moses they would enjoy right standing before God ('righteousness'). But Paul shows from the Old Testament that faith came before the Law.

9. How does Genesis 15:6 show that even in the Old Testament, God was looking for faith rather than works?
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If someone can be *justified* or made righteous before God without works of the Law, by simply trusting (having faith in) God, then what's the point of keeping God's Laws?

1. It was a knowledge of the Law that brought a knowledge of sin.
2. Without a knowledge of sin a person can not recognise their need for God's forgiveness.
3. Without recognising the dire need we have to be forgiven, a person can never realise they need God to atone for their sins and make them righteous.

The Law could never save anyone - rather, it showed why everyone needed to be saved! Keeping the Law is referred to as "good works" in the New Testament.

10. Ephesians 2:8-9 is a powerful statement about being saved by grace apart from works. But after a person is saved, what are they expected to *do* according to the next verse, Ephesians 2:10?
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11. What does Romans 4 teach us about the Gospel?
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12. Who can you share with this week, what you have now just learned?
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13. In which part of this study did you sense God was speaking to *you*?
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14. Write out your prayerful response to God -
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