

## Romans Chapter 4

ESV Text	Notations
Romans 4:1–25 (ESV)	Romans 4
<b>Abraham Justified by Faith</b>	<b>4.1</b> The first three words are equivalent to: “what <i>then</i> will we say?” in extension of chapter 3. So, if God is proven faithful and true so that it is only by faith in Jesus, we are righteous, what of “the flesh” / σάρκα? Not used here in the negative, but as in biological descent (which was quite important to Jews descended from forefather Abraham). St. Paul asks what was found or obtained or gained by Abraham/εὐρηκέναι...what did he gain by natural descent? Rhetorical question: Nothing!
<b>4</b> What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather 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 counted to him as righteousness.”	<sup>2</sup> The only way a person can be justified by works is before men, but not God. James 2:21 shows that faith <i>must</i> work. Abraham’s faith <i>evidenced</i> his faith which alone/by which alone he was righteous.
<sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. <sup>5</sup> And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:	<sup>3</sup> Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3 ἐλογίσθη = counted, a glorious word! See vs 5 below.
<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;	<sup>4</sup> Work earns payment, grace is pure gift. Natural religion insists on payment. Christianity is pure χάρις (v 4).
<sup>8</sup> blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”	<sup>5</sup> God’s gift of faith to us leads to God COUNTING/RECKONING us as what? Δικαιοσύνην. Hold on, let me get this right? God gives us faith through the Gospel, and <i>then</i> counts us as righteous in light of that faith?! <i>Exactly</i> .
<sup>9</sup> Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. <sup>10</sup> How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup> He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, <sup>12</sup> and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the	<sup>6-8</sup> Psalm 32:1-2 already taught this! Note: in Ro 4 “faith” appears 6x’s, but “count” 11x’s!
	<sup>9</sup> Not only did David know this, so did Abraham. Paul addressing Jew-Gentile.
	<sup>10</sup> Faith & Counting came <i>before</i> circumcision: Gen. 15 before Gen. 17. Read Gen. 15:6.
	<sup>11</sup> Abraham = “father of all who have faith” Sidebar: who is really the Israel of God? We are the people of a new circumcision. Read Col 2:11-12. Diff. between circumcision & baptism?
	<sup>12</sup> Circumcision was a sign of a greater reality: faith. Where there is no faith, the sign is useless.

faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

### **The Promise Realized Through Faith**

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

<sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup> That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup> In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup> But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

<sup>13</sup> The word διὰ/through occurs two times here. “through” law & “through” righteousness of faith”: NOT **causes**, but **instruments**. So, what is the cause of our salvation? God’s promise in Christ! Faith holds to the promise [insert Luther’s definition of faith here]. Faith is created by what comes outside of us/*extra nos*.

<sup>14</sup> St. Paul presents a contrast.

<sup>15</sup> *Lex Semper Accusat = The Law ALWAYS accuses*. Therefore, it brings God’s wrath or judgment upon us.

<sup>16</sup> “It” = salvation. Faith...crucial, but see here, “the promise may rest on grace.” The efficient or effective CAUSE of our salvation is GRACE. “his offspring” = ALL who share Abraham’s faith in God’s promise. See Romans 9:6-8.

<sup>17</sup> This verse brings out the power of God’s Word and promise which “calls into existence the things that do not exist.” *Creatio ex nihilo = Creation out of Nothing*. Same is true for saving faith.

<sup>18</sup> The first hope = God-given hope; the second hope = mere human hope. See 1 Peter 1:3-5

<sup>19</sup> God’s promise supersedes observation. *Faith does not see in the way we think of seeing*.

<sup>20</sup> The promise creates and strengthens faith.

<sup>21</sup> God keeps His promises. Note His track record recorded in Scripture.

<sup>22</sup> The powerful refrain and theme of Romans chapter 4.

<sup>23-24</sup> Written for our sake/my sake/YOUR sake!

<sup>25</sup> **Crucifixion and Resurrection = The Gospel!**