

Character Studies: Abraham

Passages

Read Romans 4



Tim's Tools

Go over Romans 4 again, making a note of any *repetition* and referring back to Genesis for any *quotes* Paul used, making a note of the *context* of these passages. (Genesis 15:1-6, Genesis 17:15-22) What do you notice, and what is the significance?

When do the Genesis passages occur in the *Bible timeline*? Is it before the Fall or after the Fall? Before Jesus died or after He died? What is the significance of this?

Why do you think Paul wrote this chapter? (Refer to Romans 3, Galatians 3:6-9)

Discussion

What are some of the characteristics that we can learn from Abraham?

How did he contribute to the overall story of the Bible?

Can you relate to Abraham? What aspects of Abraham's character do you relate to?

Can you trust God's timing for promises or things being fulfilled in your life?

Romans 4

New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”^[a]

⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷“Blessed are they
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
⁸Blessed is the man
whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”^[a]

⁹Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹²And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.”^[a] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

¹⁸Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”^[a] ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”²³ The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.