

Romans

Faith righteousness is illustrated in Abraham. (4:1-25)

- a. The relationship of faith to obedience. (4:1-8)
- b. The relationship of faith to baptism. (4:9-12)

9 Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, “*Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.*” 10 How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

Abraham is the father of faith for both those who bear the mark of the covenant (circumcision or baptism) and those who do not because he was reckoned righteous by faith before he was marked.

c. The relationship of faith to the Law. (4:13-15)

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the **Law brings about wrath**, but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

The promise is on the basis of faith. If this is true then no one can claim that only those who are under the Law can claim the promise. All the Law does is bring about wrath. It does not bring the promise. When we take the Law out of the picture and look at the promise in terms of faith, then we do not have sin as a barrier. The Law makes sin an issue.

d. The relationship of faith to hope. (4:16-25)

1. Faith is the key to the world's hope. (4:16-17)

16 For this reason {it is} by faith, that {it might be} in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, 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, 17 (as it is written, “*A father of many nations have I made you*”) in the sight of Him whom he believed, {even} **God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.**

The universal application of the promise is secured by faith.

Abraham was not just the father of Jews but of many nations. If it is only the people of the Law that are blessed then Abraham was not the father of “many nations.”

The last phrase refers to the miracle of Isaac’s birth to the aged Abraham and Sarah.

2. Faith was the key to Abraham's hope. (4:18-21)

18 In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, “*So shall your descendants be.*” 19 And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, **he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God**, 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

Abraham believed God and demonstrated his faith by persevering through the trial of waiting for a son who would keep the promise alive. In spite of disappointing experiences, Abraham grew in faith.

3. Faith is the key to our hope. (4:22-25)

22 Therefore *also it was reckoned to him as righteousness*. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 {He} who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

The application of this story is for us. We who believe in the resurrected Christ who died for our sins, will inherit the promise just as Abraham did. Our faith is like his.

How are we to understand the following texts that seem to suggest that water baptism is necessary for salvation?

MATT. 28:19 “Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

It is suggested by some that this text teaches us that water baptism IS THE ISSUE in making disciples. In this passage, the initiation into the process of discipleship is our union with Christ. Water baptism (the symbol of that union) is an appropriate and common metaphor in this context (note Col.2:11-12 where baptism is likened to circumcision). The focal issue in this passage is the NAME into which a person was baptized not baptism as the MEANS of salvation.

MK. 16:16 “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

This text is understood by some to teach that faith PLUS baptism is necessary for salvation. I would respond by saying that baptism is here a description of the kind of faith (or the extent of the faith) that saves - it is an open faith (not a private faith). The real issue however is faith, as the last clause indicates. This would mean that if a person professed faith and was UNWILLING to be baptized he or she would be indicating that their faith was not saving faith but something short of it.

JOHN 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’”

Does the “water” in this text refer to Christian baptism? The water here, more likely refers to the baptizing ministry of John the Baptist (not a Christian baptism - see above)

which marked those who were penitent and looking for the Christ. The Jews who participated in John's baptism and were recipients of the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost would make up the early church (enter the kingdom). It is also possible that John is thinking of Ezek.36:25-27 where "cleansing" & "renewal" are linked. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols."

ACTS 2:38 "And Peter said to them, 'Repent (plural), {and let each of you be baptized (singular) in the name of Jesus Christ} for the forgiveness of your (plural) sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

This is one of the primary proof texts, where the Church of Christ would insist that the forgiveness of sins is directly tied to baptism. It should be noted however that the clause "and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" can be understood as parenthetical because of the harmony between Greek tenses indicated above. This suggests that we have here, a reiteration of Matt.28:19. The relationship between REPENTANCE and forgiveness is the key. Luke's writing (Lk.24:47; Acts 3:19, 5:31, 8:22, 11:18, 26:18-20) is clearly in support of this connection. Only in 2:38, & 22:16 is baptism even mentioned, and in these texts the link with forgiveness is not compelling.

ACTS 22:16 "And now why do you delay? {Arise (participle), and be baptized (imperative)} {and wash away (imperative) your sins, calling (participle) on His name.}"

This verse is thought to link "baptized" with "wash away your sins". The verse, however, can be divided into two clauses that point to a different connection. The baptism can just as well be linked to "Arise" as "wash away your sins". Baptism is however, only a picture of God's inner work of washing away sin (I Cor.6:11 "And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."). "Calling on His name" is the key (not baptism) to the removal of sin as Rom.10:9-14, Acts 2:21, & Joel 2:32 indicate.

GAL. 3:27 "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Some, have suggested that "baptized" here is a reference to water baptism and that it is the act of clothing oneself with Christ. While it may be said that water baptism does picture our union with Christ it is not clear that water baptism is in view here. This is more likely the "baptism of or in the Holy Spirit" which according to Paul, unites all believers to Christ & His church (I Cor.12:12-13 "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks,---". See also Titus 3:5 with Ezek.36:25-27). This is the baptism referred to in Rom.6:3-4 "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

EPH. 5:26 "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word."

Does the "washing of water" here refer to Christian baptism? In this passage the metaphor of "washing of water" pictures the purification ritual of the Old Covenant (Ezek.36:25-27 above) which is accomplished here by the effectual (faith quickening) preaching of the word. In other texts it is attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at Titus 3:5 "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness,

but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,” Heb. 10:22 “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” The references to O.T. CEREMONIAL CLEANSING (sprinkled, pure water) in this text are hard to escape.

COL.2:11-12 “--- and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

This text is used by the Church of Christ to teach that AT THE MOMENT of water baptism the believer is united with Christ's death and resurrection. It is my sense that baptism pictures our union with Christ's death and resurrection just as circumcision pictures an Israelite's union with the covenant community. In Rom.4:9-13 & Gal.5:1-6, Paul makes it very clear that Abraham was saved BEFORE he was circumcised. So it is, I conclude with those who are baptized.

I PET. 3:21 “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

This text, we are told, clearly teaches that baptism saves. I would respond by noting that two things are said about baptism in this passage: (1) It corresponds to the salvation (separation) of Noah from his sinful generation via the flood - vs.20. The salvation in view here is not from sin or condemnation but from a wicked age or environment. (2) It is an appeal, by 1st century believers, to God for a good conscience. That is to say, it saves them (separating them, and gives them confidence through their union with Christ which baptism pictures) from their sinful generation.

Romans 4

Faith and obedience 4:1-8

Obedience is the fruit not the form of faith.

James is focused on the temporal role of faith before man while **Paul** is focused on the eternal role of faith before God.

Faith and baptism 4:9-12

9 Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, “*Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.*” 10 How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received **the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith** which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

Baptism is the sign of faith but not the substance of faith.

Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, I Pet. 3:21

Faith and the Law 4:13-15

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is

nullified; 15 for the **Law brings about wrath**, but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

The Law condemns while faith justifies.

Faith and hope 4:16-25

16 For this reason {it is} by faith, that {it might be} in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, 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, 17 (as it is written, “*A father of many nations have I made you*”) in the sight of Him whom he believed, {even} **God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.** 18 In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, “*So shall your descendants be.*” 19 And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, **he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,** 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 Therefore *also it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*

23 Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, 24 but **for our sake also**, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 {He} who was

delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Texts that seem to link baptism with salvation:

Acts 2:38

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent (**plural**),
*{and let each of you be baptized (**singular**) in the name of Jesus Christ}*
for the forgiveness of your (**plural**) sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Acts 22:16

“And now why do you delay?
*{Arise (**participle**), and be baptized (**imperative**)}*
*{and wash away (**imperative**) your sins, calling (**participle**) on His name.}”*

I Peter 3:21

“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an

appeal to God for a good conscience - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Three kinds of “works”

Moral Obedience (love of God and neighbor)

A substitute for
faith

justification
by the flesh

(the Jew)

(Meritorious
works of the
Law)

A fruit of
faith

sanctification
by the Spirit

(Christian
Disciples)

(Christian moral
obedience)

A sign of
faith

an expression of
repentance

(Christian Converts)

(Christian ceremonial
holiness)

- **Confession of
Jesus as Lord**
Rom.10:10

- **Water baptism**
Acts 2:38

“the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ” Galatians 3:24

<i>The Law reveals our sin</i>	<i>The Law reveals Christ as sinless</i>	<i>The Law reveals the meaning of the Cross</i>
The Law produces pain, shame, & longing for Christ.	The Law authenticates Christ as a worthy sacrifice.	The Law's demands for punishment of sin are fully satisfied.

Three mistakes we can make with the Law

<i>Live Above the Law</i>	<i>Live Under the Law</i>	<i>Live Outside the Law</i>
I have no respect for God or myself as His image bearer.	I seek to gain and keep God's love and favor through disciplined obedience to the Law.	I use my freedom to feed the lusts of the flesh.
A seared conscience is	Guilt or pride is the result.	Divine discipline is

the result.		the result.
I need to be broken by the Law.	I need to be liberated from the Law.	I need to be guided by the Law.

Romans 4:16-25

Faith and hope

Faith

“that it might be of grace”

Abraham

“the father of many nations”

Those under the
Law (Jews)

Law

*Those outside the
Law (Gentiles)*

Isaac

(the miracle child of faith)

Jesus

(the savior of the world)

“for our sake”