

1. **Introduction**: David is another example of salvation by grace through faith.
2. **Romans 4:6-8**: *“just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; <sup>8</sup> blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*
  - Like Abraham, David spoke of the blessing of being credited with righteousness apart from works (v. 6). Verses 7-8 are quotes from Psalm 32.
3. **Psalms 32:1-2**: *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; <sup>8</sup> blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*
4. **Romans 4:9-10**: *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.*
  - Because of his belief in the coming Christ, Abraham was credited with righteousness before he was circumcised.
5. **Romans 4:11-12**: *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 faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*
  - Like Abraham, we receive God’s blessing of justification only because we believe in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished on our behalf in His life, death, and resurrection. Abraham is the Father of all who believe.
6. **Circumcision**: Of what importance is circumcision in salvation? Paul says none!
  - Abraham was justified before he was circumcised.
  - Circumcision had no causal effect on Abraham’s justification. He was saved by belief not by works or circumcision.
  - Abraham is considered the father of all the justified – not only of circumcised Jews but of everyone who believes, even those not circumcised.
  - Abraham was circumcised 14 years after he was justified.
  - Though God commanded circumcision, no one is saved by being circumcised nor by being baptized nor by sharing in communion nor by any ritual or liturgy.
  - Salvation is by grace through faith in the perfect, completed work of Christ with nothing added or subtracted. Either you are saved by Christ or not saved at all.
  - What then is the value of signs like circumcision, baptism, etc.?
  - Circumcision was given as both a sign and a seal. It is a sign pointing to God’s covenant and a seal authenticating that they are one of God’s chosen people.

7. **Signs:** A sign is an object, event, or a quality that points to something different from and greater than or more important than itself.
- The burning bush was a sign to Moses of God’s presence.
  - Circumcision and other biblical signs serve to point to vital steps in God’s provision for salvation. A sign may also indicate ownership.
  - A sign saying “Martin’s Diner” indicates ownership as well as location.
  - Some biblical signs are like that. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper point to Christ and also indicate ownership. Believers belong to Christ (are His sheep).
8. **Seals:** A “seal” is used to authentic validity. A seal applied to a document by someone with authority (like a notary) validates the document as authentic.
- The sign of circumcision was given to Abraham and his people as a “seal” authenticating what God had already done.
  - Baptism is a seal authenticating the person being baptized as one identified as already belonging to Jesus Christ as His disciple.
  - Receiving the elements of the Lord’s Supper indicates that those receiving the elements are “in Jesus Christ” as intimately and inseparably as eating bread and drinking wine.
  - The sacraments have no importance as means of salvation but are vitally important as signs and seals of the grace of salvation that has happened spiritually and invisibly.
  - Salvation is by grace through belief in the perfect savior, Jesus Christ, and His perfect, finished salvation work. There is no other way to salvation.
9. **Romans 4:13-14:** ... *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.*
- *“the promise ... did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.”*
  - The Law promise was that if you perfectly obeyed the Law all the time you would earn righteousness. But no one could do that. So, the result was that the wrath due sin remained on those under the Law.
  - Faith in Jesus’ salvation work in His life, death, and resurrection brings a declaration of justification from God and makes perfect obedience to the Law unnecessary. Righteousness comes through faith in Christ.
10. **Romans 4:15-** <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.*
- These verses demolish any hint of a thought that salvation can be obtained by obeying the Law. Paul’s point is that Law is man-focused (requiring obedience by human ability) while faith is God-focused (pointing to God’s saving work on our behalf).

- Why does the Law bring wrath. The Law reveals our sin. Christ saves us from sin and justifies us before God!
- If those who strive to live by the Law were heirs, faith ceases to be of value and God's promise has no power. But it is not that way. Salvation is based on faith that God's promise to Abraham has been realized in Christ.
- All who believe in Christ share Abraham's faith. Abraham is the father of all who believe.

11. **Romans 4:18-22:** *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."*

- God gave Abraham the faith that enabled him to confidently believe God's promise that he would become the father of many nations.
- The realization of the promise making it possible for Abraham to become the Father of many nations was entirely dependent on God and would occur in God's timing.
- Abraham believed God's omnipotent power, omniscience, and ability to control the outcome of events would inevitably produce God's promised result.
- Abraham believed God's promise despite his and Sarah's ages and their long life of childlessness. Abraham's faith was God-centered. He trusted God was both capable and trustworthy to do what He promised.
- If faith in God were something we were required to generate within ourselves, it would necessarily depend on our power, not God's. But God graciously gives us faith enabling us to live in an uncertain world trusting His strength and goodness to carry us through.

12. **Faith:** Consider the nature of faith. We always have Faith "in something or someone."

- Faith always has a purpose, or we might say, faith is directed toward realizing a goal.
- Faith is usually action-oriented. Faith is a special kind of confidence that enables action in the face of insufficient knowledge.
- The convictions and trust we call faith may be strong or weak, but faith is always focused on an object by which it is believed that the goal of faith will be realized.
- Faith is seldom "blind faith." The reason for faith may be false and deceptive.
- But there is always a ground of reasons (or perhaps assumptions) forming the basis for believing that the object toward which faith is directed can bring about the realization of faith's goal. Not the strength of faith but the object of faith is the important factor.
- In Christian faith, Christ is the object of faith. The reason(s) for choosing Christ as the object of your faith may be as simple as hearing and believing the gospel. It may follow many years of investigating the Scriptures and hearing the gospel.

- In the end, whatever the route or length of time involved, God the Father draws you to Christ (John 4:43-44, *Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*)
  - The goal of Christian faith is right relationship with God which will includes receiving His salvation and everlasting life.
  - Why do we believe Jesus is the path to right relationship with God and all that means?
  - Jesus Himself gave reasons and so did the authors of the NT. There is also an abundance of testimony from present and past believers.
  - Jesus said you believe in God, believe also in Me. He also said to judge who He is from what Scripture (the OT) says about Him and comparing that to what He accomplished in His earthly life, death, and resurrection – the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and the dead come back to life.
  - Faith in Jesus Christ is far from being blind faith.
13. **Errors Driven by Strong Conviction:** Having a base of strong conviction does not assure the validity of faith. It is possible to hold strong conviction based on false evidence.
- Believing salvation can be earned by good works is an example of a false conviction that is often held with great certainty, yet completely in error.
  - Conviction that there is no God may be held with strong conviction perhaps supported by faith in science and its findings.
  - Strength of conviction never guarantees truth. It is in the object of faith where truth or falsehood is found. Jesus Christ, the object of our faith, is the source of truth. There is no falseness in Him.
14. **Next:** More on faith and faith’s object.