

(18) "The Father of Us All": Faith and the Law (4:13-17a)

Romans: The Outwork of the Righteousness of God

Justification!—Line of Thought

- The Way of Works Is Blocked (1:18–3:20).
- There Is Another Way (and the Only Way): Justification by Grace through Faith (3:21-26).
- The New Way Requires Exclusivity (3:27-31).
 - Exclusivity: Faith Alone, Not Faith Plus Works.
 - Universality: All Are Saved in the Same Way.
 - Connectivity: The Law Is the Pointer to the Faith.
- The New Way Was Illustrated by the Life of Abraham (and David) (Ch 4).
 - Abraham Was Justified by Faith, Not Works (4:1-8).
 - Abraham Was Justified as a Gentile, Not a Jew (4:9-12).
 - Abraham as Justified by the Promise, Not the Law (4:13-17a).
 - Abraham Was Justified by Hope, Not Circumstance (4:17b-22).
- The New Life Was Necessitated by the Law (Ch 5).

The Promise Is the Key

- 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, there also is no violation.
- ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed 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,
- ^{17a} (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU" (Gen 17:5) (Rom 4:13-17 NAU)

Three Kinds of Treaties

- There Are 3 Kinds of Covenantal Treaties in the Ancient Near East Made by Kings:
 - Covenant of Equals: Between Equally Powerful Kings.
 - E.g. Rameses II of Egypt with Suppiluliumas of Hatti.
 - Suzerain-vassal Treaty: Between a Suzerain (Great King: "Father") and Vassal (Subordinate King: "Son")
 - E.g. Mosaic Covenant: Between God and Israel.
 - Conditional: Need Renewal by Tribute; Violations Bring Wars.
 - Royal-grant Treaty: Between a King and a Nobody.
 - E.g. Abrahamic Covenant: Between God and Abraham, When He Was Still a Nobody.
 - Unconditional: Fulfilled by the Honor of the King.

Covenants between God and Man

- 1. Adamic Covenant: Test of Obedience (SV)
- 2. Noahic Covenant: Promise of Patience (RG)
- **3. Abrahamic Covenant: Promise of Salvation (RG)**
 - Promise of Land: Land of Canaan => Land of Israel, Permanent Ownership.
 - Promise of Nation: Seed => Nation => King (Rule over Nations as a Son of God => Son of David).
 - Promise of Blessing:
 - A: Israel's God Will Bless/Curse Those Who Bless/Cure Israel.
 - B: Through One Seed of Abraham God Will Bless All Nations.

Covenants between God and Man

- **4. Mosaic Covenant: Land Leasing Contract (SV)**
 - Obeying the (Mosaic) **Law** => Staying on the Land.
 - Disobeying the Law => Exile.
 - God Will Return Them to the Land:
 - Due to His Faithfulness to His Word.
 - Conditional on Their Repentance.
- **5. Davidic Covenant: Leader of the Nation as the “Son of God” (SV).**
- **6. New Covenant (Messianic Covenant): Blessing to All Nations Realized to the Full (RG).**
- **7. Millennial Covenant: Israel Will Have the Land, Nation/King, and the Blessing of the New Covenant Relationship (SV + RG).**

Abrahamic Covenant

- 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram,
 - "Go forth
 - from your country,
 - And from your relatives
 - And from your father's house,
- To the land which I will show you;
- ² And I will make you a great nation,
- And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;
 - ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.
 - **And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."**
(Gen 12:1-3 NAU)

Chronology Matters Again

- Abrahamic Covenant Was Given at Abram's Exodus Out of Ur (1876 B.C.), 430 Years before Israel's Exodus Out of Egypt (1446 B.C.).
 - ¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. ¹⁷ What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. (Gal 3:16-17 NAU)

Heir of the World

- “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.” (Rom 4:13)
- The Promise Was Made to Abraham and His “Seed” (Singular)
 - Collective Meaning: Israel (by Blood) + Church (by Faith)
 - Individual Meaning: Christ =
 - The King of Israel.
 - The Husband/Lord of the Church.

Heir of the World

- ^{17a} (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU" [Gen 17:5]) (Rom 4:17)
- When Abram Received the Promised Seed Isaac, He Was Renamed Abraham.
 - Abram = "Exalted Father".
 - Abraham = "Father of Many Nations".
- The Promised Seed =
 - Directly: Isaac: Bound but Not Killed, to Test if Abraham Feared God and Qualify as the Father of the Messiah.
 - Ultimately: Christ: Bound and Killed, to Redeem the Sin of the World, and Restore the Elect to God.

Consequences of Wrong Idea

- Nullification of Faith and Promise
 - “¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified” (Rom 4:14)
 - Abraham Believed in God’s Promise; His Faith Reckoned Him as Righteous before God (Gen 15:6).
 - The Promises of God Will Proceed to Fulfillment by the Honor of God, the Giver of Promise in a Royal Grant Treaty.

Consequences of Wrong Idea

- Nullification of Faith and Promise
 - The Mosaic Law Is the Content of the Mosaic Covenant, a Suzerain-Vassal Treaty.
 - It Is Based upon the Abrahamic Covenant, a Royal-Grant Treaty.
 - Israel/Jews Are the Chosen People of God as the Result of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - The Conditional Terms of the Mosaic Covenant Have Nothing to Do with the Identity of Israel/Jews; It Is Related Only to the Land Lease.

Consequences of Wrong Idea

- False Understanding of the Nature (Expected Result) of the Law:
 - “¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.” (Rom 4:15)
 - The Mosaic Covenant (SV) Is Conditional.
 - Obedience => Covenantal Blessings.
 - Disobedience => Covenantal Curse.
 - Sin Was Present before the Law; but the Law Made Explicit both Covenantal Blessings and Curses.
 - The Sinful Nature of Man (Including the Chosen People of God) Inevitably Leads to the Transgression and Curse!
 - The Law Is Not Bad.
 - The People Are!

Consequences of Right Idea

- Faith Established Grace.
 - “¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace” (Rom 4:16a),
- Faith Made Salvation Certain.
 - “so that the promise will be guaranteed” (Rom 4:16b)
- Faith Expanded the Family of God.
 - “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,” (Rom 4:16c)

Lessons and Applications

- Salvation Is by Faith in the Grace/Promise of God.
- Adding the Law as a Condition of Salvation Is a Bad Idea.
- It Will Nullify Faith and Make the Promise Empty.
- It Will Inevitably Lead Us into the Wrath of God due to Our Sinful Nature and Inability to Keep All the Laws at All the Time.

Lessons and Applications

- We Need to by Faith Receive God's Grace Hidden in the Blessing Promise of the Abrahamic Covenant
- We Need to Recognize That Our Faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ Have Made Us Spiritual Children of Abraham
- We Are Now the Heir of the World to Come, Despite Being Unwelcomed in the World Present

Lessons and Applications

- We Need to Hold on to the Faith, Cherish God's Grace, Know Who We Are in Christ, and Live Out the Life of Christ While We Are on Earth
- Our Salvation Is Based on the Abrahamic Covenant, a Royal Grant Treaty, Which Is Unconditional, and Will Be Fulfilled by the Honor of God

Lesson and Applications

- Our Sanctification Is Similar to Israel's Mosaic Covenant, Which Is Conditional
- Because of us Being under the Royal Grant Covenant (the New Covenant)
 - The Violations of the Spirit of the Law Will Not Result in the Condemnation
 - The Obedience to the Spirit of the Law Will Result in the Reward and Glory
- Let Us Not Abuse Our Privileges, but Strive for Perfection.