Abraham:
A Case Study of Justification by Faith

Romans 4.1-12

1. What Old Testament character does Paul use to prove that justification by faith was always the way that people were made right before God? Why would this example be so important to the Jewish people?

2. Was Abraham justified by works? Read Genesis 15:1-6. Upon what basis did God declare him righteous?

3. If Abraham was justified by works would he have something to boast about?

4. Is Romans 4:3 a contradiction of James 2:21? Explain why or why not.

5. From verse 4, what would salvation be if we worked for it?

6. What does verse 5 mean when it says that "faith is credited as righteousness? How is this accomplished?

7. Was Abraham perfect? Does the Scripture ever record an incident where he sinned? Where and how?

8. Based upon the first 5 verses, what would you say the first step would be in coming to accept the gospel?

9. What Old Testament passage does Paul quote from in verses 7-8 to show the blessing on the man whom God credits righteousness apart from works? Who wrote this passage?

10. As Jews, both Abraham and David had the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant – they were circumcised. They were the chosen people and in a place of privilege. Does grace favor the Jews? Explain from the passage why or why not?

11. Verse 11 says that circumcision is a "sign" or a "seal." It has nothing to do with Abraham's being declared righteous before God because that happened almost 14 years before he was circumcised (v. 10). Can justification be obtained by religious rites? What are some Christian "rites" or observances that people pervert to be a means of grace? What then is the purpose of outward displays of righteousness? How should we view them?

12. What does Romans 2:28-29 have to say about circumcision and being Jewish?

13. In verse 12, we see that Abraham is a father to those who "follow in his steps." Are you following in those steps? In what area of your life do you need to quit focusing on "working" and start focusing on "believing?"

14. Read Galatians 3:6-25. What instances from the life of Abraham and Sarah does Paul refer to in order to show that justification is a work of God and not based upon the works of men?

15. Explain how the blessings of the gospel and the method of justification are suited for all men, and are not to be confined by limits such as race and ceremonial observances.