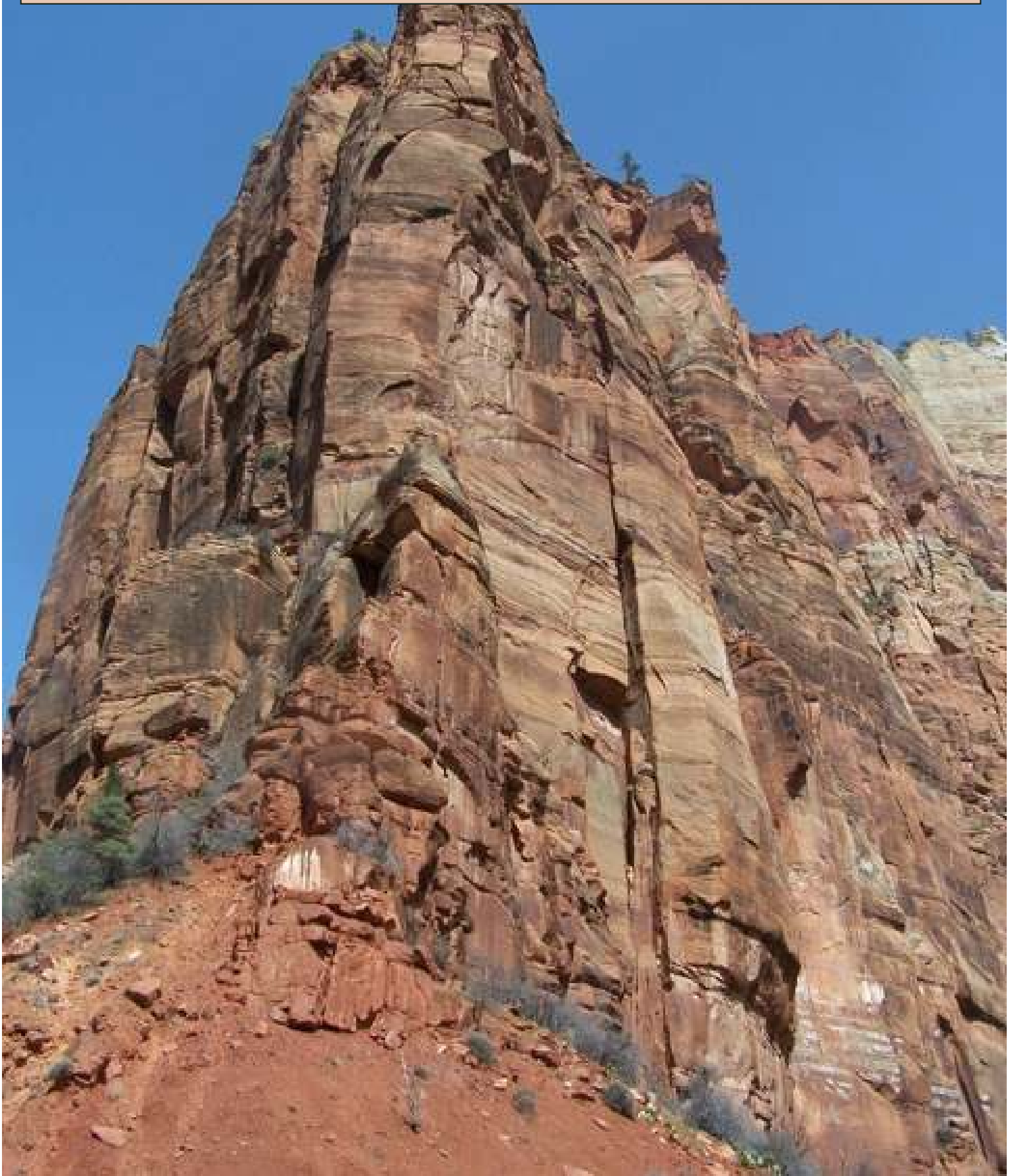


# THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #78 NOVEMBER 2013



# THE PENTECOST



In our last issue we talked about suffering. Many, in moments of great suffering, have made the decision to end their own lives. The Bible extends the message of help, hope and love to those who may be wrestling with this awful choice. In this November, 2013 issue, we will discuss suicide as well as continue our study in the Book of Romans. God bless you.

**Shawn Stevens**

Suicide is such a sensitive issue to touch upon. So, it is our prayer that what is written here will be received with the compassion and sincerity that is intended. To the many who have lost a loved one or friend to suicide, as I have, may the Lord Himself comfort your hearts. God bless you.

**Ramona Stevens**

P. O. Box 933,  
Lynden, Washington, 98264  
U. S. A.

[info@zionchristianministry.com](mailto:info@zionchristianministry.com)

Hey! Visit our ministry websites at  
[zionchristianministry.com](http://zionchristianministry.com) and [freedomesocialorder.com](http://freedomesocialorder.com)  
Art, History, Music, and more! Log on today!

## SUICIDE

A young man jumps in front of a moving bus; a young woman is found in her car with a hose running from the exhaust pipe to her window; a teenager jumps from a high bridge; a career professional is found having swallowed a bottle of pills – SUICIDE. After it has happened, family and friends are stunned, and tortured with the thought that they did not see signs that may have been there, ahead of time, and done something. Is suicide a direct ticket to hell? For many, it no doubt has been. Some have considered all suicide to be such a ticket. However, I think that the issue is not as black and white as many believe. There are many situations where it is best to leave that judgment to God, in fact, in all situations God is the judge, not ourselves. Suicide is killing – self-killing. Is killing murder? In the Bible we are commanded not to murder. However, there are some who have committed suicide under circumstances for which we would have great sympathy. There are prisoners, Christian prisoners, who have been awaiting horrible torture who have ended their lives to escape such treatment. God will be their judge, not us.

While suicide is not necessarily a ticket to hell for everyone, it no doubt has been for many. Friend, if you are reading this because you are considering suicide, let me warn you in as strong a way as I possibly can, “Do not do it.” Your life here on Earth is for the purpose of finding God, surrendering your life to Him, being converted and then serving Him for the rest of your days. Do not destroy your body; it may be the veil between your life on Earth and unimaginable suffering in the hereafter.

If you are considering suicide, you no doubt feel that you have come to the end of a long road of suffering and

grief. Your grief may be mixed with guilt, hopelessness and despair. You probably feel that your life has no meaning. You may feel that your life had meaning at one time but that all of that has been shattered. What can the future hold? Why carry on? There is reason for you to carry on and you can move into the future with hope. Friend, I want to tell you that your life counts and that you are of tremendous value. You have come to the place that you are in now by believing many lies. You need to now open yourself up to truth, God's truth and love.

What must you do when you find yourself in this condition? You should talk to someone about it. Don't hold all of this in like a balloon which is about to burst. You need an outlet. You need to express what you are feeling. You need to tell someone, and not tell just anyone. You need a spiritual Christian pastor or a Christian counsellor to unburden to. They should be able to help you with navigating through the web of pain that you are feeling. How can they do that? By leading you to Jesus Christ. Jesus alone can heal you and make things right in you.

What kind of things should you expect a pastor to tell you about when you seek help? A pastor will tell you about faith. Jesus, on one occasion, asked; “... Where is your faith? ... ” (Luke 8.25). I believe that Jesus asks men and women this same question today. God has ordained that the receiving of salvation is by faith. We read that the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls (see 1 Peter 1.9) and that God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith (see Romans 1.17). In fact, when we come to God by faith, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within us. The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian Church “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through

faith; ..." (Ephesians 3.17).

What, then, is faith? It is believing. We are told that it pleased God to save those who believe the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 1.21). How does one come to true faith in God? Firstly, it is by believing the truth that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again. He not only died on the cross but, after three days, God resurrected Him. Just as Jesus died on our behalf, for our sins, He rose from the dead to conquer death on our behalf. Because He was raised back to life, He can grant spiritual life to those who come to Him by faith. In this way, those who are spiritually dead in sin can be born again to life.

So, firstly, we must believe this truth and, secondly, we must believe in Jesus Christ Himself. Believing in Jesus also includes entering into a personal relationship with Christ. This can be done by coming to Christ in prayer, acknowledging to Him that you are a sinner, expressing to Him your remorse for sin and asking Him to forgive you; it is also acknowledging that you believe that He died for you and that He rose from the dead for you; it is also committing to turn from your own way to follow His will.

Dear Reader, have you believed in Jesus? The Bible tells us; "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment." (1 John 3.23).

Remember the discussion between Jesus Christ and Nicodemus (see John, chapter 3) on being born again. Further on in that discussion, Jesus said:

*16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should*

*not perish, but have eternal life.*

*17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.*

*18 He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

*John 3.16-18*

Many today try to come to, and be accepted by, God on the basis of the good things that they have done.

However, good works do not earn us salvation.

Salvation comes another way. The Scriptures teach; "... but the righteous shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2.4). Biblical faith leads to, and is an expression of, obedience to God. Faith is not an involuntary act on our part that just simply occurs due to the sovereign actions of God. Faith is a response which we must make to God and to His gospel. Faith is not merely affirming a set of doctrines or believing in a creed. Faith is an experience where a man or woman expresses trust. John Wesley described it as "a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he [is] reconciled to the favor of God." [1](#)

Faith is a response from man to God. It is a change from the common course of unbelief that humanity is traveling on. Faith is necessary for salvation, for one must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. Paul says this about the message of faith which he preached; "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:" (Romans 10.8-9).



“Confess” is a term for acknowledging, agreeing, affirming and declaring. A man first believes in his heart that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus died for our sins and that He rose from the dead and, then, because his heart believes, he eagerly confesses this to God and to others.

Faith is absolutely indispensable.

We must have faith if we are to please God. Scripture teaches; “and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.” (Hebrews 11.6). In order to come to God, we must believe in Him. We must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. That means we must believe that God will hear the cry of, and reward, those who are truly seeking Him.

Faith is more than a mental act of understanding that something is true. Faith is tied to repentance and to surrendering to God. One thief on the cross, beside Jesus, exercised faith. The Scriptures tell of how there were two criminals who were crucified along with Jesus. As they hung on crosses, one of these criminals blasphemed Jesus. The other criminal then rebuked the blasphemer, as we read; “But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.” (Luke 23.40-41).

The next verses tell us; “And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23.42-43).

In this amazing account we see a man putting faith in Jesus and receiving forgiveness, salvation and hope.

What did he do? First, he acknowledged his sin; he said that he was deserving of the penalty he was suffering. He acknowledged that his deeds had led him to judgment. Next, he acknowledged that Jesus was pure and innocent. Then he called out to Jesus, calling Him Lord. This thief put faith in Jesus. Jesus saved the soul of this thief and blessed him with the promise of being with Jesus in Paradise.

Oh, the salvation which came to the thief on the cross; how wonderful and good and extensive is the grace of Jesus Christ. The thief called out to Jesus. The thief was humble and confessed that he was deserving of judgment. He knew that he was a sinner needing God's forgiveness and he called out to Jesus. He put his faith in Jesus Christ and was saved. Today he is with Christ. Friend, how about you? Have you made this all-important choice to repent and put faith in Jesus Christ? Jesus has gone to great lengths to save you from hell, a place of judgment and suffering. Have you called out to Him in prayer? Remember Jesus' question earlier; “Where is your faith?” Where is it, and whom is it in? If you do not know the Lord, then it is time to put your faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is a voluntary act. You must choose to believe, or you do not believe. Faith is not merely affirming a creed. Faith is an experience. It is a trust and a confidence in God. Faith is a response from man to God.

Is faith your response to the Lord's love for you?

Friend, you are a sinner, just as the thief on the cross was a sinner. Jesus, the pure and innocent Son of God, died in your place and mine. Then He rose from the dead, showing His authority and power over death. You may have thought that death was simply the ending of a

life of pain, your life of pain. Suicide is not the answer. Today you can choose life, a new life with God living inside of you and giving you hope and freedom. Jesus Christ has made a way for you. Choose Him today. Jesus calls all men and women to put faith in Himself. Faith is two-fold; firstly, it is believing in the truth of the gospel, that Jesus died on account of our sins and that He rose from the dead. Secondly, faith is actively putting your trust in Jesus Christ, Himself.

Friend, do you have faith, as I have described it here? You may have good deeds, or even religion, but without faith it is impossible to please God. God is, and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Call out to Jesus Christ now. Call out to Him in prayer. Call out in faith.

I want to pray for you also:

*Lord Jesus, suicide is not an escape, it is a defeat. Death is something You are trying to save us from. We choose to listen to You today. Lord Jesus, it says in Your holy Word that if we would confess You with our mouths, and believe in our heart that God has raised You from the dead, that we will be saved. I pray for this reader, that this one would find this place of confession and believing. Let them find this place of faith and trust in You. I pray that this one will respond to You. I pray that this soul will respond to what You did when You died, on account of their sins, and when You rose again from the dead. Lord, You granted forgiveness and salvation to the thief on the cross. You granted it when he called out to You. Help this one also to cry out to You in this moment. Help them to repent and surrender. Amen.*

Your life has great value and worth. Jesus has died for you and risen again. He has conquered death and see Him now reaching into your life, pulling you back from the brink of death. It is time to follow Him. God bless you.

### **Shawn Stevens**

Scripture references taken from the American Standard Version.

[1](#)John Wesley, quoted in *A Compend Of Wesley's Theology*, Robert W. Burtner, Ed. et al (New York: Abingdon Press), 160.

## ROMANS CHAPTER 4

### OUTLINE :

I Abraham Justified By Faith 4.1-4

II David And Righteousness By Faith 4.6-8

III Abraham Justified Before Circumcision 4.8-25

### I Abraham Justified By Faith

We have all known many boasters. In fact, if we are honest we would admit to boasting many times ourselves. If Abraham was justified by his works then he could boast about it. However, he can't boast. Why? Abraham was justified by faith; "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4.3). Abraham exercised faith. How did he do so? He left his homeland, business, friends, most of his family, probably many possessions, all to obey God. The Book of Hebrews also tells us:

*8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

*9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

*10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

*Hebrews 11.8-10*

God made a great promise to Abraham:

*2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

*3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

*Genesis 12.2-3*

Abraham believed and this belief was accounted for righteousness.

There is variation in how Romans, verse one, is translated. Let's look at a couple of translations.

*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? (Romans 4.1 KJV).*

*What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? (Romans 4.1 ASV).*

The King James Version attaches "as pertaining to the flesh" to "father" where the American Standard Version attaches "according to the flesh" to "found." This difference traces right back to the manuscripts themselves. I prefer the King James Version in this case. It does not seem right that Abraham's flesh helped him find anything but, rather, that Abraham is a natural father to biological Jews according to the flesh, meaning through natural lineage.

Salvation is a free gift from God. We read:

*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. (vs 4).*

If salvation could be earned by human works it would be like wages and this cheapens or disregards grace. If salvation could be earned by human works then it would be apart from grace. If salvation could be obtained by works then God would owe man salvation. God, instead, gives salvation as a gift of His grace. The Bible clearly tells us; “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (vs 5).

This is an amazing verse. If salvation could be earned by human works then it would be apart from grace. God can justify us, the ungodly, by imputing our sin to Christ and imputing Christ's righteousness to us. Most rabbis in the Apostle Paul's time thought that Abraham was righteous by his works. In fact, some apocryphal books leaned to this idea. (See Ecclesiastes 44.19-21 and the Prayer of Manasseh (see vs 8) and the Book of Jubilees (see 23.10). By Paul asserting that Abraham was justified by faith, not works, and that that is how man must be justified, Paul was challenging and contradicting the foundation of rabbinical thought. Salvation by faith in Christ establishes a relationship with God. Abraham was a friend of God. We read in Isaiah 41.8; “But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.”

## **II David And Righteousness By Faith**

*6 Even as David also describeth the  
blessedness of the man, unto whom God  
imputeth righteousness without works,  
7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities  
are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.  
8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will*

*not impute sin.*

*9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the  
circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision  
also? for we say that faith was reckoned to  
Abraham for righteousness.*

*10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in  
circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in  
circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*

*11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a  
seal of the righteousness of the faith which he  
had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be  
the father of all them that believe, though they  
be not circumcised; that righteousness might  
be imputed unto them also:*

*12 And the father of circumcision to them who  
are not of the circumcision only, but who also  
walk in the steps of that faith of our father  
Abraham, which he had being yet  
uncircumcised.*

*13 For the promise, that he should be the heir  
of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his  
seed, through the law, but through the  
righteousness of faith.*

*14 For if they which are of the law be heirs,  
faith is made void, and the promise made of  
none effect:*

*15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where  
no law is, there is no transgression.*

*16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by  
grace; to the end the promise might be sure to  
all the seed; not to that only which is of the  
law, but to that also which is of the faith of  
Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

*17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father  
of many nations,) before him whom he  
believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead,  
and calleth those things which be not as*



*though they were.*

*18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

*19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:*

*20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

*21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

*22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

*23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;*

*24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;*

*25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

*Romans 4.6-25*

King David tells of righteousness apart from works:

*6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*

*7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

*8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

*Romans 4.6-8*

Here, sins are extinguished by forgiveness (God's), not

by our human good works. God can justify us, the ungodly, by imputing our sin on Christ and imputing Christ's righteousness on us. What is imputation? In verse 8, we see that blessed is the person to whom God doesn't impute sin.

### **III Abraham Justified Before Circumcision**

For those not yet persuaded by Paul in Chapter 2 concerning justification not being granted by circumcision, Paul now goes into round two. This time he has a heavy piece of evidence - Abraham.

Abraham was counted righteous. When? Before he was circumcised. In Genesis 15.18, God made a covenant with Abraham. This was at least fourteen years before he was circumcised. We read:

*5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

*6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

*Genesis 15.5-6*

Rabbis believed that a man must be circumcised to be saved. The Jewish apocryphal *Book of Jubilees* declares:

*This law is for all generations for ever; and there is no circumcision of the time, and no passing over one day out of the eight days; for it is an eternal ordinance, ordained and written on the heavenly tables. And every one that is born, the flesh of whose foreskin is not*

*circumcised on the eighth day belongs not to the children of the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, for he belongs to the children of destruction; nor is there moreover any sign on him that he is the Lord's but (he is destined) to be destroyed and slain from the earth. (15:25ff.)*

Abraham was ninety-eight years old before he was circumcised. Yet, God called him righteous. We read; “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15.6).

God declared Abraham righteous while Abraham was still uncircumcised. God's declaration squashes every contrary opinion. There is no comeback to Paul's evidence. Paul is showing more than how it was for Abraham. He is showing how righteousness must be appropriated by anyone (see Romans 4.23-24).

Salvation is nothing that we can boast about. This is because we have not earned it. Salvation is given to men and women as a gift. Just as righteousness is imputed. David and Paul testify to this imputation of righteousness and this righteousness being accounted to a man can be seen in the life of Abraham.

Shawn Stevens

## **REFERENCES :**

Bruce, F. F., D.D., F.B.A. *The Letter Of Paul To The Romans : An Introduction And Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985.

Earle, Ralph, Th.D. *Word Meanings in the New Testament, Vol. 3*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974.

MacArthur, John Jr. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : Romans 1 – 8*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. U.S.A.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997.

The Book of Jubilees. (15:25ff).

Scripture references taken from the King James Version and the American Standard Version.

## ROMANS CHAPTER 5

### OUTLINE :

I Justified By Faith - Results In Peace 5.1-5

II Jesus Died For Us 5.6-11

III Death In Adam / Life In Christ 5.12-21

### I Justified By Faith - Results In Peace

*1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

*3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*

*4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:*

*5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

*Romans 5.1-5*

The Apostle Paul has well laid out his case (or gospel) that justification does not come about by observing the Law or by circumcision. Instead, it comes by faith. Such justifying faith results in peace. Paul says that we have this peace now, in the present tense. The fallen state is one of being at war with God. Justification brings this war to an end and ushers us into peace. This peace is

through our Lord Jesus Christ, not through our own works. Jesus gives access to God's grace and we stand in grace. We read of the “... grace wherein we stand, ...” (vs 2). Stand is to stand fast, or stand whole. Compare this to what Paul says elsewhere in the New Testament; “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;” (1 Corinthians 15.1) and; “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.” (2 Corinthians 1.24) and; “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6.11).

In Romans 5.2, we read; “... rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” The gospel brings hope. Only the gospel brings hope. The gospel brings the hope of salvation. Paul's hope is anchored in God's redeeming love. We read further; “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:” (vss 3,4). Paul says here that he glories in tribulations. Why? It is because tribulation, endured, brings reward. Like a bridge where its steel needs to be tested, so the Christian is tested with tribulation. Tribulation, endured, also develops in us things that we need. What does tribulation, rightly handled, develop within us? It develops patience. The word “patience” is “Hupomone” in the Greek, meaning “a remaining under” and “patient enduring”. 1 Patience produces experience. Experience produces hope. God's hope does not disappoint.

We read further; “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by

the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (vs 5). God's love is shed abroad in the hearts of His children. Here, it is not rationed out, drop by drop, but is shed abroad.

## II Jesus Died For Us

*6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

*7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

*8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

*10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

*11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

*Romans 5.6-11*

Jesus died for ungodly men and women. Yes, Jesus died for us.

This was Christ's demonstration of love, not just to befriend sinners, touch sinners or help sinners, but to die for sinners. We read; “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (vs 9). The word “justified” is to be saved from wrath and reconciled to God. We read further; “For if, when we were enemies, we were

reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” (vss 10-11).

## III Death In Adam / Life In Christ

*12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

*13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

*14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

*15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

*16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*

*17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

*18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

*19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

*20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

*21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Romans 5.12-21*

When God created the world, He said that all was very good. (See Genesis 1.31).

However, something happened to the world and to human nature when Adam sinned and ate the forbidden fruit. Sin entered the world through Adam's sin. This is a great mystery.

The concept of mankind being adversely and sinfully affected by Adam's sin is not foreign to the Scripture. However, it is not developed in detail and there is mystery surrounding it. It, therefore, requires interpretation. To show that the concept is not foreign to the Scripture, let us look at some of Paul's teaching.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” (Romans 5.12). We read here that sin entered the world through one man and we know that that man was Adam. Death entered the world through sin and death is something that spread to all men. Why did death spread to all men? Does it say that it spread from Adam to other men automatically? This verse says that death passed to all men “... for that all

have sinned:”. This seems to put responsibility on all men for their acts of sin being the reason for their death.

Paul goes on to say in the next two verses:

*13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

*14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

*Romans 5.13-14*

Here, Paul says that although sin was in the world (brought in by Adam), “... sin is not imputed when there is no law.” (vs 13). God's law was formally given and written down at the time of Moses. However, from the time of Adam until Moses death still reigned, even over those who hadn't sinned according to the similitude or likeness of Adams's sin. (See vs 14). Death still reigned over them.

The word “imputed” is interesting. We are told that “... sin is not imputed when there is no law.” (vs 13). The Latin word “imputare” means “to reckon” or “to charge to one's account.” “Imutare” was chosen for the Greek word “logisomat.” It appears that the Greek word has roots in the commercial and legal language of Greco-Roman society in which a person had something imputed to them, such as a debt. If a debt was imputed to someone, they then became accountable for that debt as their own. An example of this would be Paul's request to Philemon that Onesimus's debt be imputed to Paul. 2 “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account;” (Philemon 1.18).



Theologians have wrestled with the concept of imputed sin. Those who believe that Adamic sin is imputed usually wrestle with God being just in such a scenario. Would God judge a man for imputed Adamic sin? Would God judge a man for “alien sin” which was not the sin of men personally? Some theologians have argued that all men were in Adam as a part of Adam, even at the point of Adam's fall and for that reason they (we) actually participated in Adam's sin as being a part of him. Others express the view of the *Westminster Confession* that Adam was our representative and, as our representative, he sinned, transferring guilt on us as well. 3

However, are these the only ways of interpreting human sin? If we jump ahead to Chapter 7 of Romans, we read: “but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin is dead. And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;” (Romans 7.8-9 ASV). Paul, here, says that sin took opportunity by the commandment, or by God's law, and sin produced coveting within Paul. Some other translations seem to expand the word “coveting” to include other forms of evil desires. What was Paul's understanding or experience of sin before he had exposure to hearing or reading God's law? Did he have sin or was there an age or time of accountability at which Paul, all of a sudden, experienced sin as an actual reality, understanding in his conscience that he was a transgressor? What does he mean when he says “And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;” (7.9 ASV)? In what sense was Paul alive once without the law? Was he always dead in Adam's inherited sin or was there a period of innocence in which he was not yet accountable for sin, not knowing God's laws yet? I am

not proposing an answer but I am acknowledging that there is mystery concerning the doctrine of imputed sin.

We have looked at some Scripture verses which discuss sin as a nature. Is this the most frequent context for the word “sin” in the Bible? Remember the Scripture also says; “Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3.4 ASV). Here, John defines sin as “lawlessness.” Whose sin is John talking about? Is he talking about Adam's sin only? No, he isn't. He is talking about the transgressions of “Every one that doeth sin ... ” (vs 4 ASV). Everyone is everyone. Everyone is not Adam only. So, actual sins are the individual transgressions that everyone makes against God's laws. As we look through the Bible, we will find that the word “sin” is usually used in this same way. In searching this out, I discovered that the root word “sin” (not counting the words forms or synonyms) appears 336 times in the King James Old Testament and 112 times in the King James New Testament. That is a total of 448 times in the Bible. When the word “sin” is used, the large majority is of actual personal sin.

We also read:

*17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

*18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto*

*justification of life.*

*Romans 5.17-18*

Is Paul teaching universal salvation? No, he is not. What is he teaching? We read; “ ... even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” (vs 18). My understanding of this is that the free gift came to all men but they still need to choose it. I believe that salvation is made available to all men and women.

From this precious chapter we learn of the peace that can come to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in Him. We are also introduced to the mystery of sin and death which has roots in Adam but is also personal to us. We are told of the free gift of salvation which has come to all men. Will we receive it?

Shawn Stevens

#### **ENDNOTES :**

1. Ralph Earle, Th.D., *Word Meanings in the New Testament, Vol. 3* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 98.
2. Walter A. Elwell, Editor, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 554.
3. *Ibid.*, 555.

#### **REFERENCES :**

- Earle, Ralph, Th.D. *Word Meanings in the New Testament, Vol. 3*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974.
- Elwell, Walter, A. Editor. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.
- Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary by William Hendriksen : Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible. Vol. 6. Acts to Revelation*. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers.
- Jones, D. Martin Lloyd. *Romans : Assurance* : Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- MacArthur, John Jr. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : Romans 1-8*. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1991.
- MacArthur, John. *MacArthur Study Bible*. U.S.A.: Word Publishing, 1997.
- NKJV Study Bible*. Editors Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, et al. Nashville. Thomas Nelson. 2007
- Scripture references taken from the King James Version and the American Standard Version.
- 1 John Wesley, quoted in *A Compend Of Wesley's Theology*, Robert W. Burtner, Ed. et al (New York: Abingdon Press), 160.



Zion Christian Ministry  
Shawn and Ramona Stevens

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 933  
Lynden, WA 98264 USA

E-mail: [info@zionchristianministry.com](mailto:info@zionchristianministry.com)  
website: [zionchristianministry.com](http://zionchristianministry.com)