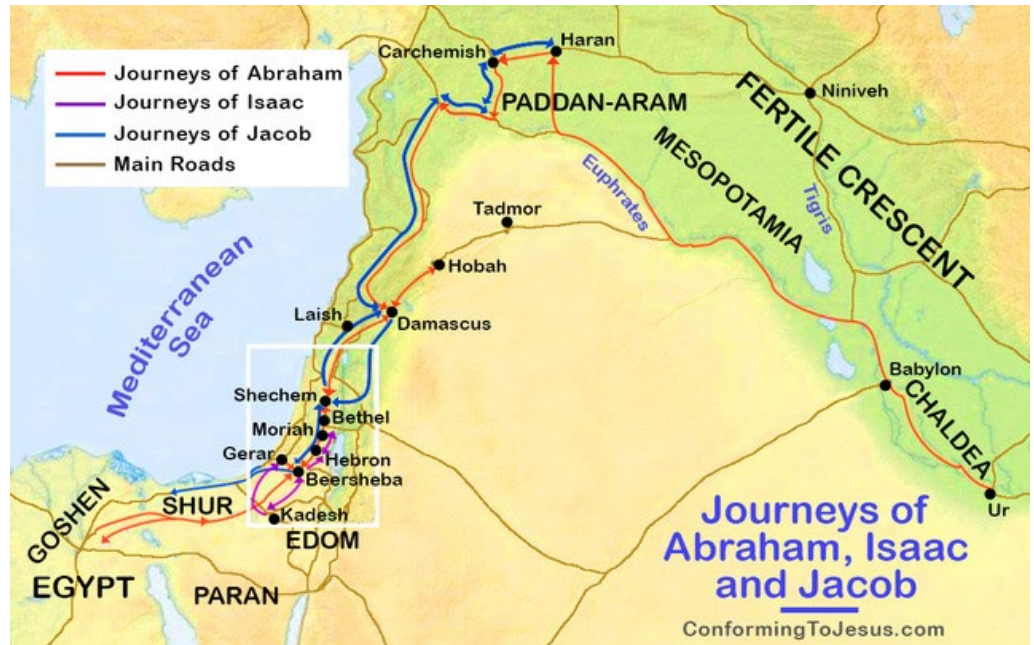


## Romans 4

Paul continues his argument about **righteousness**, now as it relates to the Jewish patriarch, Abraham. It's important to remember God's call to Abram in Genesis 12.

Who was Abraham?

- Gen 11:31 – A. is the son of Terah (a descendant of Shem). They move from Ur (Iraq) to Canaan, but stop to settle in Haran (Turkey). (map)



- In Gen 12:1-7, at age 75, God calls Abram to continue to Canaan. Abraham is told by God to head out and God will show him a new land, he will become great, and a blessing to many. He becomes the founder of their nation, the man to whom God had first spoken about their future: "To your offspring I will give this land."
- In Gen 15:1-6, God asks him to look to the heavens and count the stars - that's how many descendants A. will have. God calls him, and blesses him right there.
- In Gen 15: 9-21, the covenant is ratified and in v.18 it is called a covenant.
- Thus, A. was chosen by God - he heard God, he obeyed God - he believed God.
- In Gen 17: 1-13, at age 99 (14 years after his call), God gave Abraham the sign of his covenant, circumcision.
- Note: we see that circumcision wasn't given as the "gateway to his right relationship with God; it was only the sign and the seal that he had already entered into it. His being accounted righteous had nothing to do with circumcision and everything to do with his act of faith." Thus, circumcision is not the entry point into the covenant, but was a sign of the covenant.
- Note: The Law won't be given until hundreds of years later with Moses. Thus, Abraham didn't know any laws to keep. Abraham didn't have to earn God's favor through following the Law. He had God's favor because he believed what God said – basically, he believed what God said.

### Read Romans 4: 1-12

1. in v.3, the quote about Abraham believing God is from Genesis 15:6: "And he believed the LORD, and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness."

2. Paul's main point - Abraham trusted God and abandoned his life to follow God. It was Abraham's faith that made God regard him as a good man.

Note that God's covenant is not an "if-then" deal. God just says, "I am your shield. Your reward will be very great. You'll have a lot of descendants." And Abraham believed him. That's it. No contingencies. "I am your God. You are my people." God just chooses them.

3. In v.7, the quote from David is from Psalm 32:1-2. The point is - God's righteousness was credited to Abraham even before he was circumcised, thus, before he had God's commands to obey.
4. But the point is, Abraham believed God, and that was where his righteousness began. He was credited with righteousness before he obeyed and was circumcised. It was not through works (obeying God's law thru circumcision), but by believing God (faith) that led to his right standing with God.

#### Read Romans 4: 13-25

1. God's promise for Abraham and his descendants came thru faith, resting on grace (v.16). It did not come because he piled up merit by doing the works of the law. It's God's grace intersecting with Abraham's faith.
2. In v.15, the law brings wrath - it brings judgment, because we can't keep it.
3. In v.22, Abraham's faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness" and our faith will do the same for us, who believe in the God
  - who raised Jesus from the dead,
  - who was handed over to death for our sins,
  - who was raised for our justification.

"Our right standing with God now rests on us accepting these truths, and not acquiring merit in the sight of God through doing works which the law prescribes." (Barclay)

4. Thus, Paul sees only 2 ways of trying to get right w God - either on human merit, or on divine grace.  
 Human merit is always a losing battle - trying to obey an impossible law  
 Divine grace - you take God at his word. "I love you; you are mine."