

Romans 4:13-17

Promise Without the Law

1. Chapter 4 Review

- a. 3:21 - *"But now"* - Paul's mystery gospel unknown before
- b. 3:28 - Conclusion - Justified by faith without the deeds of the law
- c. 4:1-8 - Righteousness without works
- d. 4:9-12 - Blessing without circumcision covenant
- e. 4:13-17 - Promised inheritance without the law
- f. Salvation is without works, Israel, covenants, and law. Then, what? 4:19-25

2. 4:13 - Promise Not Through Law

- a. *"for the promise"* - First mention of the 'promise' in this verse.
 - i. Paul is talking about imputed righteousness by faith (without works/covenants)
 - ii. Don't confuse believing the promise and the content of the promise.
- b. *"that he should be the heir of the world"* - Content of the promise Gen 17:4, 15:5, 12:3
 - i. Context is how Israel receives inheritance (see 4:12 'father of circumcision')
 - ii. Israel's future earthly hope, not the new creature in heavenly places - Gal 3:28
 - iii. Earthly dominion, reign, rule, residence, and blessing of earth - Mat 19:28
- c. *"Abraham, or to his seed"* - The promise was to both, seed being both singular/plural.
- d. *"not... through the law"* - Which was added much later - Gal 3:17

3. 4:14 - Law Nullifies Promise

- a. *"they which are of the law"* = Israel, circumcision, Paul's kinsmen in the flesh
 - i. The law would reward glory, prosperity, land, blessing if Israel kept it.
 - ii. That they did not keep it, and needed grace was not new - Hos 14:2, Ezra 9:8
 - iii. That they needed promises was not new information - Mt 3:9, Jn 8:33-34, 58
- b. *"faith is made void"* - If it is by works of the law, then faith w/o deeds is empty/dead.
 - i. Rom 3:31 is vindicated in that faith is the only way law can be established.
- c. *"promise made of none effect"* - a failure to do the law would nullify it, but no - Gal 3:17
 - i. If by law, Abraham's promises and Abraham as father are worthless to Israel.
 - ii. If by promise, then Israel is not heirs by law (deeds unnecessary for blessing)

4. 4:15 - Law Worketh Wrath

- a. *"because the law worketh wrath"* - The law is holy, just, good - Rom 7:12
 - i. The law added for transgressions to give knowledge of sin - Rom 3:20, Gal 3:19
 - ii. The law is a curse, ministry of death and condemnation - Gal 3:10-13, 2Cor 3:7,9
 - iii. The law could not save, it could not give life, righteousness - Gal 3:21
- b. *"for where no law is, there is no transgression"* - Logical proof of law working wrath
 - i. Where there are transgressions there is a law to transgress - Gal 2:18
 - ii. Result - Due to transgressions in Israel (Rom 2), law does not make Israel heirs.

5. 4:16 - A Sure Promise

- a. *"therefore it is of faith"* - the heirs of promise is through faith - Rom 4:13
- b. *"that it might be by grace"* - Faith without works/law requires grace - Rom 11:6
- c. *"the promise might be sure"* - Sure due to God keeping his promise, not men.
 - i. Paul's argument here would necessitate Israel's new covenant of grace, too.
 - ii. The "sure" promise follows those who through faith by grace receive.
 - iii. Assurance does NOT follow baptism, confession, good deeds, signs, etc.

6. 4:16-18 - Father of Us All

- a. 4:11 - Abraham the *"father of all them that believe"* <-- uncircumcision
 - i. 4:12 - the *"father of circumcision... who also walk in faith"* <-- circumcision
- b. 4:16 - *"to all the seed"* - Who is the seed of Abraham? A: those who believe - Gal 3:5-7
 - i. Israel and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision who are of faith.
- c. *"not to that only which is of the law"* - This would be Israel, not only to Israel ...
 - i. *"but to that also which is of faith..."* <- true circumcision 4:12, believing Israel
- d. *"who is the father of us all"* - Paul was a Jew, but also saved by grace not under law
 - i. The 'many nations' promise given centuries before the law was given
- e. *"father of many nations"* - 'all that believe' (4:11) who are not Israel
 - i. *"before him whom he believed"* - This is Rom 4:5, and not works, covenant, law
 - ii. The next 7 verses will be about righteousness imputed to Abraham's faith
- f. Paul makes the case using scripture of grace and faith, no more Jewish advantage
 - i. If salvation is partaking of Israel, their covenants, law, then Romans 4 is wrong.
 - ii. All faith + works, spiritual Israel, baptism, sabbath confusion is a Rom 4 problem
- g. Rom 4 removes Israel's boasts: church boasting as spiritual Israel is foolish
 - i. Paul does not put the church into Israel's promises to be heirs of the world.
 - ii. He is proving all receive justification by grace through faith (Israel or not)
 - iii. Which is greater: Abraham by faith, or Israel and their laws?