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The Example of Justification
4: 1-25

The entire fourth chapter of **Romans** is devoted to **Abraham**, whom **Paul** uses as an example of the central biblical truth that mankind can be **justified** only by **faith** in response to **His grace**, and never by good works. We can assume several reasons for this. First, Abraham lived about 2,000 years before Paul wrote his letter to the believers in Rome, demonstrating that the principle of salvation by faith rather than by good works was not new in Judaism. **Abraham** was the first and foremost **Hebrew** patriarch. **He** lived more than six hundred years before the TaNaKh was established through Moshe. Therefore, long before the Torah was given, and obviously could not have been saved by obedience to it.

Second, **Paul** used **Abraham** as an example of salvation by faith simply because **he** was a human being. Until this point in **Romans**, **Paul** had been speaking primarily about theological truths in the abstract. In **Abraham**, however, **he** gives a flesh-and-blood example of **justification** by **faith**.

The third, and doubles most important, reason **Paul** used **Abraham** as the example of **justification** by **faith** was that, although rabbinical teaching and popular Jewish belief were contrary to Scripture, as far as the basis of **Abraham's righteousness**

was concerned, they agreed that **Abraham** was the supreme example of a godly, **righteous** man in the TaNaKh, who was acceptable to **God**. **He** was, and is, the biblical model of genuine **faith**.

By using **Abraham** as the supreme scriptural example of **justification**, or salvation by **faith** alone, **Paul** was attacking the very foundation of Rabbinic Judaism that had perverted the message of the Torah into works righteousness. If **Abraham** was not, and could not have been **justified** by good works, then no one could be! Conversely, if **Abraham** was **justified** solely on the basis of **his faith** in **YHVH**, then everyone else must be **justified** in the same way since **Abraham** was, and is, the biblical standard of a **righteous** man.[89]