

## **Romans 4:1-5, 13-17<sup>iv</sup>**

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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### **<sup>iv</sup> About the Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**

Paul cites the example of Abraham to show that the concept of justification by faith is not contrary to the Old Testament, but rather supported by it. In first-century Judaism, Abraham was held up as the ideal model of righteousness through works. Paul argues that Abraham's faith, his readiness to believe and act upon God's promise, was "reckoned to him as righteousness." It put him in a right relationship to God apart from works.

Not only was Abraham justified apart from works, but God even "justifies the ungodly," as Paul shows by quoting Psalm 32:1-2. Righteousness is open to all who trust in God, Jew or

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Gentile. The promised inheritance comes through faith to Abraham's true descendants, those who follow his example of faith.