

Romans Part 9 (4:13 - 4:25)

--INTRO:

--in the remainder of Romans ch. 4 (4:13-4:25) Paul reiterates the central truth of the gospel through further explanation about the life of Abraham and adds a few new details which we'll focus on tonight

--central truth of the gospel: through faith in Christ our sin is credited to Christ's account and His righteousness is credited to our account, thus saving us from eternal separation from God

--in the words of Romans 3:21-22: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ..."

--Romans 4:13-17: HEIRS OF THE WORLD...

--God promised that Abraham and his seed would be "heir[s] of the world" (Romans 4:13)

--the exact phrase "heir of the world" doesn't occur in the Old Testament biography of Abraham's life, but it is Paul's way of summing up the end result of all the unconditional promises that God made to Abraham: that a great nation would arise from his descendants, that God would give them the land of Canaan, and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through them... (Genesis 12:1-3)

--Abraham's "seed" (4:13,16)

--**Abraham's physical seed...** Abraham's physical descendants, the Israelites, of which only some experienced a partial fulfillment of the individual promises (great nation, dwelling in land of Canaan, the birth of the Messiah)... the end result of being "heir of the world" belongs only to Abraham's spiritual seed

--**Abraham's spiritual seed...** when we place our faith in Christ, we become the spiritual descendants of Abraham and inherit the promise God made to him of being "heir of the world" – we become part of **the family of faith...**

--Galatians 3:26-29: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are **Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**"

--Romans 4:11-12: "[*Abraham is*] the father of all who believe... 12 [**who**] **walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had** before he was circumcised [*before the ceremonial law*]"

--note: those who "**walk**" – "walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had"; genuine faith is something that affects every part of our life, something we live by – "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)

--Ephesians 2:11-22: "Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands — 12 that at that time **you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise [of becoming "heir of the world"]**, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one [*Jew and Gentile*], and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two [*Jew and Gentile are both one as Abraham's spiritual descendants*], thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in

one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are **no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [the family of faith]**, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

--not all of Abraham's physical descendants are his spiritual descendants, as Paul explains...

--Romans 9:6: "they are not all Israel who are of Israel"

--Romans 2:28-29: "for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter..."

--Romans 4:16-17: "Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to **those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the [spiritual] father of us all** 17(as it is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations')..."

--if the promise was based on adherence to the law, then only Abraham's physical descendants who lived when the ceremonial law was instituted could receive the promise, which is an absurd conclusion because then Abraham himself would be excluded since he lived before the law – hence Paul wrote in Romans 4:14, "For if those who live by law are heirs, faith [by which Abraham was justified] has no value and the promise is worthless."

--"heir of the world..." (4:13)

--the phrase "heir of the world" sums up the end result of all the unconditional promises that God made to Abraham

--during the Millennial Kingdom, the capital of the land that God gave Israel – Jerusalem – will become the capital of the world from which Jesus Himself reigns over the entire world

--Zechariah 14:9: "**And the Lord shall be King over all the earth...**"

--Zechariah 14:16: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King..."

--even though the entire world "shall go up from year to year to worship the King" not everyone will worship from their heart and when given the chance at the end of the Millennium will take part in the final rebellion before God creates a new heaven and new earth and the "New Jerusalem"

--Abraham's spiritual seed (everyone who is saved, both Jew and non-Jew) will be a part of Christ's administration carrying out His rule over the population of the entire earth who survive the Great Tribulation (and repopulate the earth throughout the 1000 year reign of Christ); and thus the promise of Abraham's spiritual seed being "heir of the world" will be fulfilled – we will reign with Christ over the entire world!

--Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**"

--Joseph's rise to power from slavery to being the second most powerful person in the world is a picture of our future...

--Zechariah describes when Christ returns to rule over the earth (at the end of the Great Tribulation) and then summarizes the events by writing, "Thus the Lord my God will come, **and all the saints with You.**" (Zechariah 14:5b)

--Revelation 20:6: **"they [those who are saved] shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."** (see also Revelation 5:8-10, Daniel 7:18, 7:27)

--as far as Abraham's physical seed, only those who are also his spiritual seed will reign with Christ. All of Abraham's physical seed that is alive at the end of the Great Tribulation will be saved and thus at that time Israel as a nation will be "heir of the world" along with all the Gentiles who are saved

--Romans 11:25-27: "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.'"

--but before "The Deliverer will come out of Zion" and before "all Israel will be saved" Zechariah tells us that two-thirds of Israel will perish during the Great Tribulation (Zechariah 14:8-9)

--Romans 4:17-25: FROM DEATH TO LIFE...

--in this section Paul touches on the subject of the resurrection, which ties into the previous subject of being heirs of the world... when we inherit the world with Christ, we're not going to be the way we are now... our sinful flesh will be gone and we will have new, glorified bodies!

--in Romans 4:17-22 Paul explains that in spite of "the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Romans 4:19), Abraham still had faith that God would provide the promised child through her

--even though Abraham at first doubted the means by which God would fulfill His promise, Abraham never doubted the promise itself, but rather suggested to God another way that the promise could be fulfilled, through Ishmael (Genesis 17:15-19)

--not only did God's promise that Sarah would give birth to Isaac past 90 years of age teach Abraham to have faith in what seemed impossible on a human level, but it also served as a foreshadow of the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3) – through the resurrection of Christ!

--Paul concludes Romans 4 by explaining that the same God who brought life out of Sarah's dead womb also "raised up our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:24-25)

--the resurrection of Christ is significant for several reasons...

--the resurrection of Christ proved that Christ successfully made payment for our sins so that we could be justified – He "was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25)

--if our sins were too much for Him to bear then He would still be in the grave

--in 1 Corinthians Paul makes the rhetorical statement, "if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep [*temporary separation of body and spirit at time of physical death*] in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep..." (1 Corinthians 15:17-20)

--the resurrection of Christ proved that there is life beyond the grave, changing the idea of the resurrection from theory that the Sadducees and Pharisees debated to proven fact.

--**Jesus is "the firstfruits" of the "first resurrection" which occurs in multiple stages, beginning with the resurrection of Christ...** 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become **the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**. 21 For since by man [*Adam*] came death, by Man [*Christ*] also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For

as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But **each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.**"

--the second stage of the "first resurrection" of all those who are saved at the time of Christ's second coming... 1 Corinthians 15:50-54: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [*experience the separation of body and spirit*], but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible [*that is, the bodies of those saints whose spirits already went to heaven will be raised to an "incorruptible", glorified state*], and we shall be changed [*that is, the bodies of those who are alive when Christ returns will be "changed..." into glorified bodies during the rapture*]."

--the final stage of the "first resurrection" occurs during the 75 day interval (alluded to in Daniel 12:11-12) where those who are saved during the Great Tribulation will be resurrected. (some scholars believe that the Old Testament saints will be resurrected during the final stage of the "first resurrection" rather than the second stage)

--the unsaved won't be resurrected until the "second resurrection" at the end of the Millennial Kingdom... Revelation 20:5-6: "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

--during Christ's 1000 year reign, because we will have sinless, glorified bodies, our desires will be perfectly aligned with God's desires. Life will be much different!

--think of the Millennial Kingdom as being a transition from the world as it is now to the the "new heavens and new earth" (2 Peter 3:13) and the "New Jerusalem." (Revelation 3:12, 21:2) The development of God's Kingdom is progressive... from Israel's history to the progressive spreading of the gospel throughout the world to the progressive expansion of the church... to the progressive establishment of Christ's rule – from "within you" (Luke 17:21) to rule over the whole earth from Jerusalem to rule over the "new heavens and new earth" from the "New Jerusalem."

--the resurrection of Christ demonstrated that the resurrected life begins in this life...

--we'll explore this theme in the section of Romans on sanctification... Romans 6:3-4: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that **just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**"

--everything that is of our flesh will stay in the grave with our body... but everything that is of our spirit continues into eternity and lays up treasures in eternity... so it's wise to invest in the things of the spirit in anticipation of our inheritance of "the world..."

--before we know it, we'll be receiving our inheritance!

--Acts 1:9-11: "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, **will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.**"

--from God's perspective, the resurrection and ascension of Christ were just two days ago and His return may be in a couple hours! ..."But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord **one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9)

--Hebrews 12:28-29: "Therefore, **since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken,** let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire."