

# KINGDOM. LESSON 14

<b>1</b>	<b>PRAYER</b>
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*Group leader. Pray* for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

<b>2</b>	<b>SHARING</b> (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[QUIET TIMES]</b> <b>2 KINGS 5, 6, 17 and 25</b></span>
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*Take turns and share (or read from your notes)* in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (2 Kings chapters 5, 6, 17 and 25). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

<b>3</b>	<b>MEMORISATION</b> (5 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH]</b> <b>(2) ACTS 2:42</b></span>
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*Review* two by two.

**(2) The activities in the Church. Acts 2:42.** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

<b>4</b>	<b>BIBLE STUDY</b> (85 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS]</b> <b>ROMANS 4:1-17a</b></span>
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*Introduce.* In Romans chapter 3, Paul said that the gospel method of salvation is justification by faith. In Romans chapter 4, he proves that justification by faith has always been the only true method of salvation in the Bible, thus also the method of salvation during the Old Testament period.

<b>STEP 1. READ.</b>	<b>GOD'S WORD</b>
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ Romans 4:1-17a together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

<b>STEP 2. DISCOVER.</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

**4:1-8**

**Discovery 1. Paul has two arguments that prove that justification by faith has always been the only way of salvation in the Bible.**

His arguments are based on two quotes from the Old Testament.

**(1) His first argument is from Romans 4:1-5.**

**Abraham's faith was imputed (ascribed) to him as righteousness.**

Paul asks, "What did Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, find?" Paul makes a hypothetical argument, which he immediately refutes. He says, if Abraham was justified by the works of the law, as some Jews, Christians and Muslims argue, he would have had something to boast about before people, but certainly not before God. Paul therefore concludes that *justification by works (circumcision) does not apply to Abraham.*

Paul proves that Abraham was not justified by the works of the law by making an appeal to the Bible. He quotes Genesis 15:6. Abraham received a number of promises from God. Although these promises were not fulfilled for a long time, Abraham believed God. He believed that God was speaking the truth and that God would fulfil these promises in his own time. That faith God ascribed (imputed) to him as righteousness. Thus Abraham was justified by faith (in God and his promises) alone and not by the works of the law (circumcision). **"To impute, ascribe or reckon as righteousness" is a better translation than "to credit as righteousness", because faith is not rewarded.**

The contrast (antithesis) in verse 2 and 3 is between “justification by works” and “justification by faith”. The contrast is not simply between “the one doing the works of the (religious) law<sup>1</sup>” and “the one not doing the works of the (religious) law<sup>2</sup>”, but rather between “the one doing the works of the (Jewish, Christian or Muslim) law” and “the person who *only believes* (in the God of the Bible and his promises)! Abraham was justified, not by compensating or rewarding his works of the law (circumcision), but by his faith in the God of the Bible (and his promises in the Bible)! “Faith” is not compensated or rewarded. “Justification (salvation)” is given by grace to the believer (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The contrast in verse 4 and 5 is between “compensation” (deserved reward for someone doing the works of the law) and “grace” (undeserved gift for the person who does not work but believes). God justified Abraham by grace through his faith in God and in God’s words. Thus, justification by faith is at the same time justification by grace (that is, the believer is “declared righteous” without deserving it)!

Moreover, Abraham was justified, not by “a general kind of faith” in any god of another religion (or belief in a book of the god of another religion), but he is justified by a specific faith in the God who has revealed himself in the Bible and justifies the ungodly and the unrighteous through Jesus Christ!

## **(2) His second argument is from Romans 4:6-8.**

### **David’s evil works were not imputed (ascribed) against him as unrighteousness.**

Paul quotes Psalm 32:1-2 to prove his argument. David says that the person, whom the LORD (the God who revealed himself in the Bible) does not reckon (NIV. credit) his sins against him, is blessed. What David calls “the non-reckoning of sins”, Paul interprets positively as “the reckoning of righteousness”. According to the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, “the forgiveness (covering) of transgressions” is the same as “justifying” (the sinner) and both the same as “not imputing (ascribing) unrighteousness (sins)”. The unrighteousness (sins) of these people will not be held against them in the day of judgement! Isaiah says, “You (LORD) have put all my sins behind your back” (Isaiah 38:17). Micah says, “You (LORD) will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). And God says, “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12)!

But although “forgiveness of sins” is a part of justification, “justification” in the Bible consists of much more! It consists of

- the forgiveness of iniquities (sins)
- the declaration that the believer is 100% righteous in God’s eyes
- the acceptance into God’s family (people, Church, Kingdom)
- and the experience of the love of God (to be a chosen beloved of the God of the Bible)

But because this passage speaks of “not ascribing his unrighteousness (sins) against him”, it is a proof that believers during the Old Testament period were justified by faith and not by their works of the (religious) law! This passage does not call a person blessed because he is performing good or religious works, but on the contrary because his evil works and lack of religious works are not counted against him, and he is not punished for this, but has been completely forgiven! Because Jesus Christ paid the ransom price for him (Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 1:18-19), he will certainly not be condemned or doomed in the last judgement day! What the Bible regards as a real blessing is not the crediting of a deserved reward for keeping certain religious laws<sup>3</sup>, but imputing (bestowing) complete undeserved grace through faith!

## **4:9-13**

### **Discovery 2. Paul has two more arguments that prove that justification by faith has always been the only way of salvation in the Bible.**

His arguments are based on contrasting the earlier faith of Abraham to his much later circumcision. And he contrasts justification by faith with alleged justification by the works of the law

## **(3) His third argument is from Romans 4:9-12.**

### **Abraham was justified, not through his later circumcision, but through his earlier faith.**

Paul asks the question, “Was justification by faith only a blessing for the circumcised Jews<sup>4</sup> or also a blessing for the uncircumcised Gentiles (non-Jews)?” He asks whether Abraham was justified when he was still uncircumcised or when he was circumcised. The fact that Abraham believed and was justified by God (Genesis 15:4-6) at least 14 years before he was circumcised (Genesis 17:1-14) proves that circumcision (the keeping of the law) was not a necessary condition for justification and also not the method of justification. Circumcision contributed nothing to the exercise of Abraham’s faith or to his justification by faith, simply because circumcision did not yet exist among God’s people.

But when circumcision was instituted 14 years later, it did have a relationship to faith. Circumcision was not a secular rite, nor a mark of racial identity, but had religious significance and value. Circumcision was instituted by God during the Old Testament period as “a sign and seal of his covenant of grace” with Abraham and all his descendants (Genesis 17:11). Circumcision was the sign and seal of justification by faith. As “a sign” circumcision signified that faith that

<sup>1</sup> The “Torah” of the Jews, “the law” of Christians and the “sharia” of Muslims.

<sup>2</sup> The Gentiles or “unbelievers” (the people who have no religion).

<sup>3</sup> The religious laws are described in “the ceremonial law” of the Jews and the “din” of Islam.

<sup>4</sup> And circumcised Muslims

justifies existed and was present (the faith of Abraham justified him). As “a seal” circumcision guaranteed that the faith that justified him was genuine and accepted by God. Thus, circumcision (of Abraham and all males in his household) as the sign and seal of the covenant of grace was at the same time the sign and seal that faith was present and that this faith was ascribed by God as righteousness! Without this faith the covenant of grace and the circumcision carried out by man were completely meaningless and useless.

Abraham received circumcision as a sign and seal from God in order that he should become not only the father of all uncircumcised believers (believers from among the Gentiles), but also the father of all circumcised believers (believers from among the Jews). With regard to uncircumcised believers from among the Gentiles, the fact that Abraham was justified by faith long before he was circumcised, guarantees that uncircumcised believers in Jesus Christ (Christians from among the Gentiles) will also be justified! With regard to circumcised believers, not the fact that they are circumcised, but the fact that they walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, guarantees that also circumcised believers in Jesus Christ (Christians from among the Jews) will be justified (Romans 4:12)! People are justified by faith and not by circumcision (by doing the law).

**(4) His fourth argument is from Romans 4:13.**

**Abraham received God's promise that he would be the heir of the world, not through keeping the law, but through the righteousness that comes by his faith.**

“The law” is here not the Law of Moses that is only given in 1447 B.C. at Sinai. Abraham received the promise of God in 2092 B.C. when he was 75 years old (Genesis 12:4; Genesis 15:4-19) 215 years before Jacob departed to Egypt (1877 B.C.) and thereafter another 430 years before the law was given at Sinai (Galatians 3:17). Thus the law was introduced 645 years after the covenant! The covenant of grace with Abraham was not set aside by the establishment of the law with Moses (Galatians 3:17-22)!

“The law” is also not the whole Old Testament revelation, because the Old Testament revelation also testifies to the reality of justification by faith (Romans 3:21).

“The law” is here the law that consists of religious commandments and prohibitions that require obedience to God and alludes to works of the law. It is God's holy and righteous demand that all people live 100 % righteous and that all unrighteousness must be 100 % punished. The law commands obedience, but produces wrath when it is violated. The contrast is between the law that knows no grace when it is transgressed and God's promise that is given by grace.

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**4:14-16**

**Discovery 3. The promise of God cannot be received by doing the works of the law, but only by faith.**

In the matter of justification, “the works of the law” and “faith in God” are mutually exclusive! Jews, Christians, Muslims or anyone who lives by a religious law are people who try to be justified (saved) in the eyes of God (or gain Paradise or heaven<sup>5</sup>) by doing the works of the law by keeping the religious law as good as possible). But, because people continually transgress the law and can never keep the law, the law produces the wrath of God instead of the justification by God!

Romans 4:15 says, “Where there is no law there is no transgression”. Here “the law” refers to God's righteous demand, namely, that all people must be and live perfect righteous lives and that all transgressions of the law must be punished! It is already clear that no one can comply with God's righteous demand! When Paul says, “Where there is no law, there is no transgression”, he does not intend to say that there are people who have never transgressed, because they never possessed the written law. He emphasises exactly the opposite: because all people in the world possess God's law, either in written form in a book (Romans 2:27; 3:21), or written on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15), they have all transgressed the law! And because they have all transgressed the law, all people stand under God's wrath! Because the law produces God's wrath, it cannot produce God's grace, which is the ground of both God's promise and man's faith in God's promise!

Thus, wherever Jews, Christians or Muslims try to be justified by doing the works of the law, there is not a single promise of the God of the Bible. Human faith in something that does not exist is completely futile! Human works of the law and divine grace exclude one another completely! Therefore, according to Romans 4:16, the inheritance of God's grace and of God's promise cannot be received by human works of the law! That is why all people who live according to the law, whether they are Jews, Christians or Muslims, cannot be heirs to God's promise or God's grace!

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<sup>5</sup> Hindu's try to become so-called one with Brahman (the Universal Soul) through yoga or good karma; Buddhists try to gain so-called enlightenment and reach Nirvana where there is no suffering by means of the eightfold path of Buddha. A sect tries to become one of the 144000 elect by ceaseless witnessing, etc. etc.

#### 4:16b-17a

#### **Discovery 4. God's promise: the receiver and the content.**

##### **(1) God's promise was made to Abraham and his "seed".**

In Galatians 3:16-17 the "seed" refers to no one less than Jesus Christ alone! But in Romans 4:16, the "seed" refers to the collective descendants or offspring of Abraham. God's promise was made "to all Abraham's offspring" (Romans 4:16) that consists of "many nations" (Romans 4:17; cf. Revelation 21:3, "people" in plural). These peoples consist of those out of the Jewish people who had received the written law in the time of Moses and who like Abraham believed in God's promise concerning the coming Messiah (Seed)(cf. Genesis 12:3; 15:5-6; 22:17-18) and consists of those out of the Gentile nations who had not received the written law, but like Abraham believed in God's promise concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Thus, the promise of God is only given to people believe in the Seed, the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, whether they are by nature circumcised Jews or uncircumcised Gentiles. Abraham is the Father, NOT of two groups of people, namely:

- Israel (circumcised Jews of whom many do not believe in Jesus Christ (cf. Hosea 1:6,8 and Isaiah 1:10)<sup>6</sup>)
- And the Church (uncircumcised Gentiles of whom also not everyone believes in Jesus Christ) (cf. Matthew 7:21; Matthew 13:36-43)

Abraham is the father of one group of people<sup>7</sup>, namely, all people who believe in Jesus Christ, regardless whether they originally come from among the circumcised people of Israel or from the uncircumcised people the Gentile nations.

##### **(2) The content of God's promise is that Abraham and his "Seed" would inherit the world.**

This promise refers to the promise God repeatedly made since Genesis 12:3, namely, that God would bless all the families (nations) on earth in Abraham's Seed (single: Jesus Christ). God's promise nothing less than that Jesus Christ and all believers in Jesus Christ would inherit "the world" (Romans 4:13). They would have worldwide dominion. This promise will go into fulfilment at the second coming of Christ, when Christ will restore everything (Acts 3:21), when the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay (Romans 8:21), when all things in heaven and on will be brought under one Head (Ephesians 1:10) and when Christ and Christians will inherit the new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-2)!

#### **STEP 3. QUESTION.**

#### **EXPLANATIONS**

*Consider.* WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 4:1-17a and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

*Record.* Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

*Share.* (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

*Discuss.* (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

#### 4:3-5

#### **Question 1. What is the meaning of the word "imputed" (reckoned, ascribed, counted, credited)?**

*Notes.* Romans 4:3-5 speaks not of the person who does something, but of the person who rests his faith in God. His faith is reckoned to him as righteousness. The word "reckon" is an important word in the book of Romans. It means the following:

- To credit to someone's account (e.g. money as a compensation for work delivered)
- To ascribe a quality, to make a statement and then regard and treat a person accordingly (e.g. righteous)

The word "reckon" (NIV: credit) is a legal term and means that the relationship of a person to God and to God's requirements in the law have changed even before anything changes in his moral behaviour.

- The Bible says that God does not ascribe (impute) something to the believer what in reality belongs to him (namely, his unrighteousness or sin) (Isaiah 53:5-6; Psalm 32:1-2; Romans 4:7-8).
- And the Bible says that God ascribes (imputes) something to the believer what in reality does not belong to him (namely, the righteousness of Jesus Christ) (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The punishment for our sins is born by Christ's as a substitute. Our sins are ascribed to him. And the required righteousness is acquired by Christ in our place (1 Corinthians 5:21). His righteousness is ascribed (imputed) to us. By his death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement Jesus Christ has become "the salvation" (righteousness, holiness and redemption) of the Christian (1 Corinthians 1:30).

<sup>6</sup> In Hosea 1:6,8 God calls Israel "not loved" and "not my people". In Isaiah 1:10 God calls Israel "Sodom and Gomorrah". In Romans 9:6 Paul says that not all who belong to natural Israel are "spiritual Israel" or "the Israel of God"

<sup>7</sup> The true "Israel" is not *terminated* by God, nor *replaced* by the New Testament Church, but is *continued* on a higher plane (of realities instead of shadows) and *extended (enlarged)* to include the believers among the Gentile nations.

### 4:3

#### **Question 2. What was ascribed to Abraham as righteousness?**

*Notes.* The word “reckon” means to ascribe something to someone. The same statement, “it was ascribed (NIV: credited) to him as righteousness” is used of Abraham in Genesis 15:6 and of Phinehas in Psalm 106:30-31. But although the words are the same, the contexts are completely different.

##### **(1) “The deed” of Phinehas was ascribed to him as righteousness.**

In Numbers 25:1-9 a plague broke out amongst the Israelites, because they had fallen into spiritual and sexual immorality. They worshipped idols and committed sexual immorality. Phinehas, the son of the high priest, stood up and intervened in this godless and wicked situation by punishing some of the evildoers. His faith in God produced devotion and zeal towards God in his heart and his deed of devotion and zeal for God was ascribed to him as righteousness. His deed was regarded as a good deed in a religious ethical sense, that is, in the area of the sanctification in his behaviour and not in a religious legal sense. He did something for God! Phinehas was not necessarily saved (justified by God) by his act of devotion and zeal.

##### **(2) “The faith” of Abraham was ascribed to him as righteousness.**

God promised Abraham that all nations on earth would be blessed “in Abraham’s Seed” (Genesis 12:3; Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:25). “Abraham believed God and he reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6). The faith of Abraham in God and God’s promise (with regard to the coming Messiah was reckoned (imputed) to him as righteousness. God regarded his faith as a good deed in a religious legal sense, that is, in the area of the justification of his legal position with respect to God and not in a religious ethical sense. God did something for him! His faith in the promise of God was regarded as the right response (answer) in the area of justification. Abraham was saved (justified in God’s eyes) by his faith! God declared him “righteous” and regarded and treated him henceforth as completely righteous.

The whole argument in Romans chapter 4 is based on the contrast between “justification by faith” and “justification by works of the law”. If Paul had used the example of Phinehas instead of Abraham, he would have violated his whole argument in Romans chapter 4. The subjects in these two contexts are completely different! Abraham became a believer (someone who has become righteous in God’s eyes), but Phinehas lived as a believer and demonstrated that he was a righteous person by performing a righteous deed.

According to Genesis 15:6, God made certain specific promises to Abraham: Abraham himself would have a son and his offspring would be as many as the stars in the heaven. Although these promises had not yet been fulfilled, Abraham believed that God would fulfil them in his time. God’s promises were received, not by unbelief, but by faith. His faith was not regarded as a good deed of a believing person and also not as a deed that needed to be compensated or rewarded (that needed to be credited to his account). On the contrary, faith was the instrument by which God ascribed the righteousness of Christ to him. His faith was the empty hand by which he received God’s undeserved gift of righteousness (grace) (cf. Romans 5:17).

That is why God declared Abraham completely righteous in his eyes and regarded and treated him from then on and forever as completely and perfectly righteous!

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### 4:13

#### **Question 3. What does it mean that God promised Abraham that he would be the heir of the world?**

*Notes.* God made a promise to Abraham and all his spiritual children, that together with Jesus Christ they would be heirs of the whole world. God promised three things to Abraham:

- The Promised Land (the area between the River Euphrates and the border of Egypt) to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 15:5-7; Genesis 22:17-18)
- His descendants (thus not only Jews) would be uncountable as the stars in the sky and the sand in the sea.
- In Abraham’s “Seed” (singular) all the families (nations) on earth would be blessed.

The first two parts of God’s promise were already fulfilled when Joshua conquered the land of Canaan (Joshua 21:43-45; cf. 23:14-16). But the third part of God’s promise only began to go into fulfilment with the first coming of Jesus Christ!

Abraham believed God’s promise; especially that through one of his offspring God would bless all the nations on earth! This means that Abraham (in about 2000 B.C.) believed in the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ (Galatians (Galatians 3:16). Abraham’s faith in the coming Saviour Jesus Christ was the means by which God justified Abraham.

The Jews believed that only Jews would be inherit the Promised Land, because they thought that they kept the law, especially circumcision. However, according to Romans 4:13 and 16, God’s promise was made to “all Abraham’s spiritual children”, that is, to all believers in Jesus Christ from among both the Jews and the Gentiles (non-Jews).



God promised that all believers in Jesus Christ together with their Head and Representative, Jesus Christ, would inherit, not only a small piece of land in the Middle East (the land Israel), but the whole world! This promise will go into complete fulfilment at the second coming of Jesus Christ when he will establish his kingdom in its final glorious phase on the new earth, in the East, the Middle East, the West, the North and the South! Then, according to Daniel 7:27, “the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. Then his kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and everyone will worship and obey him.” Then the true religion (the faith in Jesus Christ) will fill the new earth.

**STEP 4. APPLY.**

**APPLICATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

**Share and record.** Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 4:1-17a.

**Consider.** WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

**Record.** Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

**1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 4:1-17a.**

- 4:2-5. Christians have nothing to boast about in the presence of God. They can never boast about their obedience to God’s will or about their good works.
- 4:3. The teachings of the Bible is the final ground and test of truth.
- 4:5-8. If your sins are not yet forgiven, believe in Jesus Christ. When you believe in the God who justifies the wicked through Jesus Christ, he will forgive all your sins and never again count your sins against you (Hebrews 8:12). He will regard and treat you as 100% righteous in his eyes forever!
- 4:9-12. The blessing of God that consists in being 100% forgiven and 100% accepted by God as his spiritual child is not only for circumcised Jews and Muslims that believe in Jesus Christ, but also for uncircumcised Gentiles that believe in Jesus Christ.
- 4:13. Faith in Jesus Christ has not only the greatest spiritual consequences, but also the greatest physical consequences possible. The future blessing of God is that *every country in the whole world* will become the inheritance of all believers in Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>
- 4:14-16. Living by the law guarantees that you will never be justified by God and that you will never inherit any of God’s promises! However, living by grace through faith in the completed salvation work of Jesus Christ guarantees that you are already justified by God and that you will certainly inherit all God’s promises, including becoming an heir to the whole world!

**2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 4:1-17a.**

Romans 4:5 says that the faith in God who justifies the wicked through Christ is credited as righteousness. I realise that I am justified, not by any work I did, but by faith only. I realise that I am justified, not because God compensates or rewards me for some work, but because God freely and graciously regards and treats me as completely righteous in his eyes. My justification is based on what Christ has done in my place and became a reality when I received that by faith.

Romans 4:12 does not say that circumcised people (that is, people who keep the law) will be justified, but rather that believers in Jesus Christ will be justified, even when they were already circumcised (Jews or Muslims) in the past. I realise that no religious ceremony or rite, like circumcision or baptism can justify me. Nothing people or the Church does, can justify me. Circumcision in the Old Testament was not the condition or means of justification, but rather the sign and seal of justification by faith. Likewise, in the New Testament, baptism can never be the condition or means of justification, but is rather the sign and seal of justification by faith (Colossians 2:11-12; Romans 2:28-29).

**STEP 5. PRAY.**

**RESPONSE**

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 4:1-17a.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

**5**

**PRAYER** (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]  
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

Continue to pray in groups of two’s or three’s. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

<sup>8</sup> Inheriting the whole world (new earth) after the second coming of Christ is something different than the prosperity gospel in which believers are promised material prosperity at the present time.

*(Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. Preach, teach or study Romans 4:1-16 with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time with God from half a chapter of **2 Chronicles 16, 18, 20 and 26** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. (3) The ministries of the church: **Ephesians 4:12-13**. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Teaching. Prepare the parable of “**the two sons**” in Matthew 21:28-32 and the parable of “**the barren fig tree**” in Luke 13:1-9. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. Update your notebook on preaching God’s kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.