

## Notes for midweek

If you still have questions about 3:21-26 they may become clear in the next few weeks as Paul elaborates on all of this.

### 1. Romans 3:27-4:25

Paul argues further from the story of Abraham.

How to become a Christian and what it means to be one.

Jesus makes it possible for Gentiles to become part of God's chosen people. The only requirement of people who want to get into a right relationship with God is to come to trust in God, to trust in Christ. History showed that absolutely nobody was able to keep the Old Testament law. Except Jesus, that is. By his death Jesus offered himself in our place.

Some people reckon our relationship with God depends simply on believing the right things.

But then there are people who behave as if our relationship with God depends essentially on whether we go in for the right kind of actions (churchgoing, baptism, holy communion, foot-washing, tithing).

Paul knows that Abraham's story shows this can't be right. In Romans 4 he emphasizes that God's "counting" Abraham's trust in God as righteousness happened before he did anything, such as getting circumcised.

By pointing to this story from Genesis (Genesis 15:6) Paul shows that you don't have to *do* anything. Abraham didn't *do* anything when God counted him righteous. Israel didn't *do* anything to become God's people. Christians don't *do* anything to join that people.

That shows vividly that the **covenant** relationship between God and Abraham didn't depend on Abraham's obedience to the Torah but on God's grace and God's promise.

To be a Christian you have to know who God is, who Jesus is, and you have to trust him. You don't have to *do* anything.

(Adapted from John Goldingay, *Genesis for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1–16*, Old Testament for Everyone.)

## 2. Boasting

Another troublesome word that comes up repeatedly is “boasting.” This English word implies an unpleasant pride in one’s own achievement.

The Greek word here simply means to take pride in, with no sense of bragging to other people. Some translations say “rejoicing” to avoid the negative connotations of “boasting.”