

**The Epistle to the Romans
(Special English Edition)**

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Imputed Righteousness

Reading assignment: Romans 4

Introduction

Always remember that the key word in Romans is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. It is found 36 times in this epistle.

In Romans 1 we saw “**RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED**”(Romans 1:17). In Romans 1:18-3:30, we saw “**RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED.**”

In Romans 3, we also saw “**RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED**” for our justification (Romans 3:22-24). The Apostle Paul continued the thought of “Imputed Righteousness received by Faith” in Romans 4.

So, here, we have a sub-heading, “**RIGHTEOUSNESS ACCEPTED**” or “**The METHOD of Justification.**”

In Romans 4, Paul used Abraham as an illustration of how to accept righteousness. His emphasis on imputed righteousness, accepted on the basis of simple faith, is not a new idea. God dressed Abraham in His righteousness based on Abraham’s faith alone. He does the same for you today.

Importance of this Lesson

- ❑ It is important to know exactly what kind of faith makes us right with God.
 - ❑ In this lesson we witness a perfect illustration of the kind of faith that makes a person right with God. I am certain that it was a source of great joy to believing Jews and Gentiles to realize that someone as old and important as Abraham “staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”
 - ❑ This lesson should strengthen your faith and fill you with assurance.
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THE LESSON

- Outline:**
- A. Abraham’s Faith Was Apart From Works (Romans 4:1-8).
 - B. Abraham’s Faith Was Apart From Laws (Romans 4:9-12).
 - C. Abraham’s Faith Was Apart From The Law (Romans 4:13-16).
 - D. Abraham’s Faith Was In God and In The Resurrection (Romans 4:17-25).

I. ABRAHAM’S FAITH WAS APART FROM WORKS (Romans 4:1-8)

A. Romans 4:1 – *...Abraham our father...* – Here Paul identifies himself with Israel. The Jews had a right to be proud of their family line and tradition.

While Abraham may not be our father, *...as pertaining to the flesh...* he is our spiritual father because “they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7).

B. Romans 4:2 – *For if Abraham...works* – If God had justified Abraham by his own works he could have boasted, *...but not before God.* He would have glorified himself, not the Lord.

C. Romans 4:3 – *For what saith the Scripture...* – Learn a lesson here. Never feel that studying and using Scripture is a sign that a person is not intelligent. The Bible contains the knowledge and wisdom of God. When you study the Bible and use it, it opens great truths and enlarges our spiritual vision and understanding.

...Abraham believed God... –Without question! Unconditionally! Without doubt! It was complete trust in God’s Word and in God’s faithfulness to keep His Word. It was this kind of faith that was counted (reckoned, imputed) to him for righteousness.

- ◆ *Faith in itself is not righteousness. It is the INSTRUMENT whereby righteousness is accepted (Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6).*
- D. Romans 4:4 – *...Not...of grace, but of debt.* Very simply, if Abraham (or you and I) could earn salvation by works, God would owe him some kind of payment. Salvation is not a payment of WAGES. God owes us nothing! If we paid the price for our salvation, God would owe us some kind of reward. This would cancel out grace. It would make a joke of grace.
- E. Romans 4:5 – Since, *...to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted (reckoned, imputed) for righteousness.* Faith that makes us right with God is faith in HIM who justifieth which is the Almighty God Himself.
If it is impossible to earn salvation by works, the only other way is to accept it as a gift by FAITH.
...Justifieth the ungodly... What a statement! Romans 1:18-3:20 puts everyone in this category. Christ *...died for the ungodly* (Romans 5:6). Only when we see ourselves as unworthy and “...without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12) will we turn to God in faith.
- F. Romans 4:6-8 – Here Paul departs from his illustration of Abraham for a few verses and gives a quote from David found in Psalm 32. Please read this Psalm.
Even as David... – David, of course, is another great Biblical hero who was especially dear to every Israelite. It was very wise of Paul, therefore, to use the stories of Abraham and David to show the Jews especially, but also every person who would believe, the method by which we can accept God’s righteousness.
...Describeth the blessedness of the man... – Three reasons for this blessedness or joy are given. **(Learn these three blessings for the exam.)**
 1. *...Whose iniquities are forgiven...* – O the wonder of God’s tender mercies. Who can know the blessing of forgiveness?
 2. *...Whose sins are covered...* – The Hebrew word “atoned for” is translated as “covered” in this verse. The sins of believing Jews were covered by the offerings they brought for sacrifice. In Christ’s sacrifice, our sins are more than covered. They are put away forever (Hebrews 9:26, 10:12).
 3. *...To whom the Lord will not impute sin* – Because of Christ’s great sacrifice, God does not impute sin to the believer. He imputes righteousness.

II. ABRAHAM’S FAITH WAS APART FROM ORDINANCES (Romans 4:9-12)

Romans 4:9 – *Cometh this blessedness...* – The blessedness or joy is found in the three things we have just reviewed as recorded in Psalm 32.

- A. Were these blessings only for the circumcised Israelites or were the uncircumcised Gentiles included?
 1. *...faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness* – Abraham was not declared righteous when he accepted the practice of circumcision. Righteousness was given to him because of his faith in God long before the practice of circumcision was established (Genesis 15:6; 17:10).
 2. Romans 4:10 – A repetition: righteousness was accounted to Abraham when he was *...in uncircumcision* (before he was circumcised).
 3. Romans 4:11 – Abraham received the sign of circumcision, *...a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.* Why? So that he might be the father of all them that believe – Jew and Gentile *that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.*
- B. Romans 4:12 – A concluding statement shows us that Abraham is a father to circumcised Israelites, and also to uncircumcised Gentiles who walk in the steps of that same kind of faith Abraham showed. Read Galatians 3:6-9
- ◆ *Many people today are placing their hope for salvation in some religious ceremony such as baptism, church-membership, communion, praying, etc. These verses destroy such empty hope. Salvation or our justification is by faith alone.*

III. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS APART FROM THE LAW (Romans 4:13-16)

- A. Romans 4:13 – Seven promises were made to Abraham.
 - 1. I will make a great nation out of you.
 - 2. I will bless you.
 - 3. I will make your name great.
 - 4. You will be a blessing to others.
 - 5. I will bless them that do good to you.
 - 6. I will curse them that curse you.
 - 7. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:5-7).
- B. These promises and the righteousness God put on Abraham, did not come “through the Law.” The Law was not given until at least 400 years later through Moses. All the blessings, including righteousness from God, came through faith.
 - 1. Romans 4:14 – The Jews believed that their inheritance came as a result of the Law. In this verse Paul said, if this were so then:
 - a. Faith is worthless.
 - b. The promises are also worthless.
 - 2. If salvation is by the Law, faith is cancelled out. *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).*
 - 3. You cannot mix law and grace. Each cancels out the other, “and if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6).
 - 4. If the promises came to Israel through the Law, the blessings would be a reward and the promises would be worthless.
- C. Romans 4:15 – *...the law worketh wrath* – Since Christ is the only one who has ever kept the Law, it condemns every person. It even condemns the most upright of human beings (Galatians 3:10; James 2:10; Romans 3:19-20).
Because of the Law we know sin. Sin condemns because it provides no cure.
Romans 7:7 – *...I had not known sin, but by the law.*
Romans 7:9 – *...when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*
Romans 4:15 – *...for where no law is, there is no transgression.* This needs no explanation.
- D. Romans 4:16 – *Therefore it (salvation) is of FAITH, that it might be by GRACE...*
 - 1. The Law failed to make anyone righteous. Faith is the only other choice.
 - 2. *By GRACE* – God’s free grace. There is enough grace for every person in the world. We cannot earn that grace. That grace is God’s favor toward us in and through Christ.
- E. Our salvation, our justification, is a gift of love that cannot be measured. God gives us salvation through grace alone (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 4:10).
- F. *...to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed...* We are so unworthy and so unable to save ourselves, that only by the means of grace through faith can the promise be made sure.

IV. ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS IN GOD AND IN THE RESURRECTION (Romans 4:17-25)

- A. Romans 4:17 – *...I have made thee a father of many nations, before him (God) whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead...* (Genesis 17:5).
Abraham believed in the God of miracles. He believed in the God who is all powerful. He believed in the God who raises the dead and creates things out of nothing. The important thing here is to recognize the nature and power of the God in whom Abraham believed.
- B. Romans 4:18-19 – *...Who against hope believed in hope...* – We must consider two things here about Abraham’s faith in the God who could raise people from the dead.
 - 1. God made the promise that Abraham would have a son by Sarah a long time after Sarah was no longer able to have children (Genesis 18:11, 21:5-7). Even though it looked like it was impossible, Abraham “against hope believed in the hope.” He believed that his seed would be as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15:6).

2. God asked Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). Abraham's faith never changed. He obeyed God and offered up Isaac, "Abraham believed that God was able to RAISE ISAAC UP, even from the dead" (Hebrews 11:17-19).
 - a. Romans 4:20-22 – *He staggered not...* – Abraham's faith did not change. He did not move from belief to unbelief! Complete, unconditional faith brings glory to God.
 - b. *...Being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* – Abraham believed that God never fails. He believed that God always keeps His promises. This is the way we must believe today! We should be very ashamed of any doubts.
 - c. Abraham lived without any written word from God. He lived in a world that had totally rejected God. We have the whole Bible, which is full of promises for us. May God help our unbelief!
"And therefore...imputed... for righteousness" (Romans 4:3; Genesis 15:6).
- C. Romans 4:23-25 – *...not...for his sake alone...* – Praise God! We are included. These verses state clearly that the story of Abraham's faith was written down for our benefit also. The righteousness God put on Abraham is put on us also, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). Christ died for our sins and was raised up for our justification. He was raised so God could make us right with Himself. The resurrection of Christ guarantees our justification. The resurrection of Christ makes the believer's justification a fact that cannot be doubted. It is positive proof. The work of salvation is done. It is settled by Christ's resurrection.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
EXAM – LESSON 9

Name _____

Address _____

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1. The theme of Romans chapter 4 is: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
 - a. Righteousness Revealed.
 - b. Righteousness Imputed.
 - c. Righteousness Appropriated.

 2. According to chapter 4 the Old Testament person who was also justified was: (Value 5 points)
 - a. Moses.
 - b. Abraham.
 - c. David.

 3. In what way is Abraham the father of every believer? (Value 6 points)
 - a. In the physical sense.
 - b. In the typical sense.
 - c. In the spiritual sense.

 4. A person finds the knowledge of God in: (Value 5 points)
 - a. the Word of God.
 - b. the advice of other believers.
 - c. prayer.

 5. Salvation is a: (Value 5 points)
 - a. reward for works.
 - b. gift of grace.
 - c. way of life.

 6. Salvation is received by: (Value 5 points)
 - a. works
 - b. living a good life
 - c. faith

 7. In Psalm 32 we find the three blessings promised to David. **Mark three.** (Open Bible) (Value 15 points)
 - a. His sins are forgiven.
 - b. The believer understands spiritual things.
 - c. The believer will endure forever.
 - d. The believer's sins are covered.
 - e. The believer's sin is not imputed to him.
 - f. God will never forget the believer.

8. The verse in Romans chapter 4 that tells us Abraham received righteousness before he was circumcised is: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
 - a. Romans 4:9.
 - b. Romans 4:10.
 - c. Romans 4:12.

9. Abraham could not have received righteousness through the law because: (Value 6 points)
 - a. the law was given 400 years after Abraham lived.
 - b. the law did not apply to Abraham.
 - c. the law was meant for the Israelites only.

10. If righteousness came by the works of the law then : (Value 6 points)
 - a. all the Jews would be the only ones to receive salvation.
 - b. faith would be useless.
 - c. all Gentiles could possibly be saved.

11. In regards to salvation, the law: (Value 6 points)
 - a. saves us.
 - b. makes us right before God, so He can accept us.
 - c. shows us that we are sinners.

12. Salvation has to be by grace because: (Value 5 points)
 - a. God's grace is free.
 - b. the law failed to make anyone righteous.
 - c. God's grace comes to us by His love.

13. **Mark two** things Abraham believed against all hope (all possibilities): (Value 10 points)
 - a. that God would give him a child regardless of Sarah's age.
 - b. that God would give him a child by a slave.
 - c. that God would raise up Isaac from the dead.
 - d. that God would give him a son in Isaac's place.

14. The meaning of "He staggered not" in Romans 4:20 is: (Value 5 points)
 - a. Abraham did not doubt God.
 - b. Abraham had a steady walk.
 - c. Abraham was a very strong man, physically.

15. The truth that is sealed and made sure by Christ's resurrection is that: (Value 5 points)
 - a. a person can be justified by faith in Christ.
 - b. everybody in this world will eventually be justified.
 - c. there is a heaven and hell.

16. Write the reference of the verse in Romans 4 that indicates that Abraham's righteousness did not come through the works of the law. (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)

Verse: _____

Decision Time

I realize that I have not believed as Abraham did. I have been trying to get to heaven through my own works and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I understand that without faith it is impossible to please God. I am bound for eternal punishment and separation from God. Knowing all this, I am repenting of my sin and by the power of God I am forsaking them. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for my sin and rose again from the dead on the third day. I believe He is living in heaven at this time.

Therefore I _____ receive Him as my personal Savior on this
_____ day of _____ 20__