

LAW: THE WRONG WAY FOR A MAN TO BE JUSTIFIED

ROMANS 04:13-16

Introduction

A man is not justified by the law and its works. The law is the wrong way for a man to seek acceptance and justification by God.

- I. The unmistakable statement: the promise of the inheritance is not through the law but through faith (v. 13).
- II. The argument against the law's securing justification, salvation (vv. 14-15).
- III. The argument for faith (v. 16).

I. *Romans 04:13 The Promise, Faith vs. Law, Righteousness and Reward*

The unmistakable statement — the promise of the inheritance is not through the law but through faith. Note several things.

1. The promise involves inheriting the whole world. This is clear from several facts.
 - a. Canaan was the *promised land*, a type of heaven and a type of the new heavens and earth God is to recreate for Abraham and his seed or offspring (the believer).

Rom 4:13-14 *It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless.*

Heb 11:8-10 *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Heb 11:13, 14, 16 *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.... Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.*

Heb 13:14 *For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

- b. Abraham was promised that he would be the “father” of many nations. He is said to be the father of all believers from all nations of the earth (vv. 11-12). He and his offspring (believers) are promised a new world when Christ returns.
 - c. Christ is to inherit the world and be exalted as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, ruling and reigning forever and ever.
- => Abraham and his offspring (believers) are said to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

- => They shall all reign with Christ through all eternity. (See *Reward, Judging*, Mt. 19:28; Lk. 16:10-12 Rev. 14:13; 21:24-27.)

Mat 16:27 *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Mat 25:31-32 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

Luke 1:33 *“And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”*

1 Cor 15:25 *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*

2 Tim 4:1 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.*

Rev 21:1-7 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City,*

the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Isa 32:1 See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice.

Jer 23:5 "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."

Dan 7:14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

2. The "seed" or "offspring" of Abraham refers to *all believers*. This is clear from the promise that is said to be "guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring" (v. 16). Every true believer is an heir of the promise. If a man believes, he receives the most glorious promise: he will inherit the world.

Mat 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Gal 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

3. God does not give the promise through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.
 - a. A man will not receive an inheritance in the *new world* because he...
 - tried to keep the law
 - lived by good deeds
 - was moral and very religious
 - did some great works
 - was baptized and joined a church
 - b. A man will receive an inheritance in the *new world* because he...
 - believed God for righteousness, and God took his belief and *counted* it for righteousness

The point is clearly seen, and it is unmistakable:

Rom 4:3 *What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Rom 4:5 *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

Rom 4:13 *It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

II. Romans 04: 14–15 Salvation: Faith vs. the Law

The argument against the law’s securing justification or salvation. The promise of the inheritance does not come through the law. Three facts about the law show this.

1. Law voids faith; it erases any hope of ever receiving the promise. The reason can be simply stated: law demands perfection; law insists that it be obeyed. Law cries out, “violate and break me and you become guilty and condemned and are to be punished.”

No man can live perfectly righteous before God; no man can keep from coming short and breaking the law of God at some point. Therefore every man is a lawbreaker, imperfect and short of God’s glory, and is to be condemned and punished.

- a. If the promise of God’s inheritance is by law, then no man shall inherit the promise, for the promise is given only to the righteous; and no man is perfectly righteous. This, of course, means something. If the promise is by law, then no man has hope of ever receiving the promise, for he does not and cannot keep the law. The law erases the promise, makes it of no effect or value whatsoever.
- b. If the promise of God’s inheritance is by law, then faith is voided and has absolutely nothing to do with securing the promise. A man would have to keep his mind and eyes, and most tragic of all, his heart upon the law, for it would be the law that would determine whether or not the man received the promise. Faith would not be entering the picture; it would be voided, irrelevant, having nothing to do with receiving the promise.

Rom 3:19 *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.*

Rom 8:3 *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.*

Gal 2:19 *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.*

Heb 7:19 *(For the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

- c. This point is often overlooked. If the promise of God's inheritance comes by the law, then receiving the promise would have nothing to do with faith, nothing to do with...
- trusting the love of God
 - learning and knowing the love of God
 - focusing one's mind and thoughts upon God
 - knowing God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ

If God accepted us and gave us the promise of inheritance because we kept the law, then we would have to focus our lives upon the law. Believing and loving God and knowing God's Son would have nothing to do with our salvation. The law would force us to seek God by keeping the law. Faith would have nothing to do with the promise. The law would void faith and make useless and ineffective the love of God and the Son of God.

2 Cor 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Phil 4:8-9 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2. Law brings or works wrath in three terrible ways.
- a. Law shouts out at a man, "Break me and you become guilty, condemned, and are to be punished." Such is antagonistic and stirs and aggravates anger and wrath. When God is seen as a legalistic Person who hovers over us, watching every move we make, there is a tendency to view God as stringent, demanding, condemnatory, upset, angry, vengeful and full of wrath against us. Why? Because we fail and come short ever so often. Therefore if God is legalistic, then He is hovering over us, and not a single one of us is going to inherit the promise. We are guilty and to be judged, and we are not going to be rewarded with an inheritance. Therefore, law works wrath between God and man; it keeps a man from being acceptable to God and from ever receiving the promise of God.
- b. Law works wrath in that it keeps a man tied up in knots, under pressure and tension and in a strain. The man who works to do the law struggles to do the right thing and guards against doing the wrong thing. He fights to avoid all the evil he can, wondering and worrying if he is ever doing enough to be acceptable to God.

Such a life is not full of love and joy and peace. There is no sense of purpose, meaning and significance, no sense of completeness and fulfilment. Such a life is filled with uneasiness and turmoil, uncertainty and insecurity. Such a life of legalism works wrath: it keeps tension between God and man and establishes and builds a strained and uneasy relationship.

c. Law works wrath in that it causes a man to focus his life upon the law and not upon God. His mind and attention and thoughts are...

- upon keeping the rules, not upon trusting God
- upon watching where he steps, not upon drawing near God
- upon avoiding errors, not upon learning the truth of God
- upon observing certain rituals, not upon fellowshiping with God
- upon practicing religion, not upon worshipping God

Rom 7:10-11 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

Gal 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Gal 3:12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."

Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

3. Law means transgression. There are three reasons for this.

a. If no law exists, there is no law to break; therefore, there is no transgression. But if there is a law, then breaking the law begins to exist; transgression becomes a reality, a living fact. Where there is no law, there is no transgression; where there is law, there is transgression. The point is this: the man who seeks God's acceptance by keeping the law lives in a world of transgression, of breaking the law and coming short of God's glory. The law means transgression, that a man fails and comes short of God's acceptance; therefore, it means that the legalist is guilty and condemned and is not to receive the promise of God. When a law exists, there is an urge within man to stretch it to its limits and to break it. This is one of the paradoxes of human nature. Man has that within himself, an *unregulated urge*...

- not to be regulated
- not to be restricted
- not to be ruled
- to do as he pleases
- to fulfil his urges
- not to be ordered around
- not to be governed
- to seek his own desires
- to fill his fleshly passions
- to see, have, hold and get more

When a law exists, it *tells* a man he can go this far and no farther. He must not go beyond this limit or he becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor (e.g. a speed sign).

The law actually pulls a man to go that far. It is within his nature to go to the limit, to do as much as he can. The urge within his nature even stirs him to stretch the law and to go beyond its limits.

- => The grass on the other side looks greener.
- => The melon on the other side of the fence is juicier.
- => The stolen fruits are sweeter.
- => The forbidden is more appealing.
- => The unknown is more exciting.

When law exists, there is transgression. Every man becomes guilty and is to be condemned and punished, not rewarded with the promise.

***Rom 7:5** For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.*

***Rom 7:8** But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.*

- c. When a law exists, it becomes an accuser, an antagonist. It shouts, “Break me and you become a law-breaker and are to be condemned and punished.” Now note: the law has no power to keep a person from transgressing; it can only shout: “Transgression!” The law is...
- not a power to save, but a rule to control and condemn
 - not a saviour, but a judge

This is the very problem with the law.

- => It can only accuse; it cannot deliver.
- => It can only point out sin; it cannot save from sin.
- => It can only show a man where he failed; it cannot show him how to keep from failing.
- => It can only condemn; it has no power to free.

The man who tries to live by law is left hopeless and helpless, for he transgresses and becomes a law-breaker. He is to be condemned, never receiving the inheritance of God’s promise.

***Rom 3:20** Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

***Rom 5:20** The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.*

***Rom 7:7** What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”*

Gal 3:19 *What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.*

Gal 3:24 *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

1 Tim 1:9 *We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers.*

III. Romans 04:16 Faith, Promise and Grace

The argument for faith. The promise of the inheritance comes through faith. Three facts about faith show this.

1. Faith brings grace. (See *Grace*, Tit. 2:11-15.) Grace (charis) means a gift, a free gift, a gift given without expecting anything in return. It means favour, approval, acceptance, goodwill, assistance, help, kindness — all freely given and given without expecting anything in return.

Picture the scene of a man broken over his sin. He may be a mild sinner or the worst sinner on earth, yet he comes to God. He...

- falls to his knees
- confesses his sin
- confesses his inadequacy to save himself
- cries for God to have mercy and to forgive his sin
- thanks God that He does forgive sin
- praises God for answering his prayer and forgiving his sin

Now, who is the *Saviour*, the *Deliverer*, the *Subject* who deserves the praise and the honour and the glory? The answer is obvious: God. God is the centre of the picture. This is the very reason salvation and all its promises are by grace through faith. Grace puts God in the centre. And when a man makes God the centre of his life, casting himself completely upon God and putting all his faith and trust in God, God is bound to hear and answer the man. Why? Because the man is honouring God completely, and the man who honours God is always acceptable and heard by God.

Now note: when a man *really believes* God, his faith brings the grace of God to him. It causes him to focus upon God, to centre his life upon the love of God, to see the presence of God, to secure the fellowship and companionship of God. to know the love, joy, peace, care and concern of God. Simply stated, it causes a man to seek a

personal relationship with God, a relationship of trust and dependence. Such is the life of grace, the grace that is given to man by faith. It is faith that honours and praises and glorifies God, and because it does, it brings the grace of God to man.

***Psa 115:1** Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.*

***Acts 15:11** No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”*

***Rom 3:24** And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

***Eph 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. (See Rom. 3:24; 5:15; 11:6; Eph. 2:4-10)*

***Titus 2:11** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*

2. Faith makes the promise sure, guarantees the promise. This is seen in the above point. When God is honoured and made the centre and focus of one's life and trust, that person can rest assured God will accept him and give him the promise of the inheritance. That man will inherit the earth.

***Titus 3:7** So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

3. Faith assures that the promise is for everyone, that it is available to all. The promise is not given to an exclusive club of people, to an exclusive nation or race or class of people. The promise is given to all, to every person on earth. If the promise was by law, then it would be only for those who have the law and are able to keep the law. What then would happen to the heathen who do not have the law and to the handicapped who are unable to do some of the things the law commands? They could never be saved if the promise came by the law. However, when the promise is given by the grace of God through faith, no man is exempt from the inheritance. Every man can be saved and inherit the promise of eternal life in the new heavens and earth, for every man can believe and trust God (the very thing that even a human father wants of his children).

***Luke 21:33** “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*

***Rom 4:13** It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

***Eph 2:4-7** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly*

realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

Heb 6:18 *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.*

Deu 7:9 *Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

Psa 111:7 *The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. ■*

TITUS 02:11–15 GRACE (CHARIS)

Grace is probably the most meaningful word in the language of men. The Bible means something far more than men mean by grace. To men the word “grace” means three things.

1. Grace is that something, that quality within a thing that is beautiful or joyful. It may be the fragrance of a flower, the rich green of the grass, the beauty of a lovely person.
2. Grace is anything that has loveliness. It may be a thought, an act, a word, a person.
3. Grace is a gift, a favour that someone might extend to a friend. The favour is always freely done, expecting nothing in return, and the favour is always done for a friend.

However, when the early Christians looked at what God had done for men, they had to add a deeper and much richer meaning to the word *grace*. For God had saved sinners, those who had acted against Him. Therefore, grace became the favour of God showered upon men — men who did not deserve His favour. Grace became the kindness and love that God freely gives to His *enemies* — men who are...

- “powerless” (Rom. 5:6). • “ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).
- “sinners” (Rom. 5:8). • “enemies” (Rom. 5:10).

No other word so expresses the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God. This is the distinctive difference between God’s grace and man’s grace. Whereas man sometimes does favours for his friends and thereby can be said to be gracious, God has done a thing unheard of among men: He has given His very own Son to die for His enemies (Rom. 5:8-10). (See notes, Jn. 21:15-17; Eph. 2:8-10.)

1. God's grace is not earned. It is something completely undeserved and unmerited.

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Titus 3:4-5 *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

2. God's grace is the free gift of God. God extends His grace toward man.

Rom 3:24 *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Eph 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.*

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

3. God's grace is the only way man can be saved.

Rom 5:15 *But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace, and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*

1 Cor 1:4 *I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

Titus 3:6-7 *[Salvation] whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

4. Grace means all the favours and gifts of God. It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives us and does for us, whether physical, material or spiritual (Jas. 1:17).

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Eph 2:7 *In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

Phil 4:19 *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

1 Tim 1:14 *The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. □*

ABRAHAM: THE EXAMPLE OF A MAN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE

ROMANS 04:17–25

Introduction

Abraham is the prime example or pattern that a person is justified by faith and by faith alone.

- I. The source of Abraham's faith (v. 17).
- II. The strength of Abraham's faith (vv. 18-22).
- III. The recording of Abraham's faith (vv. 23-25).

I. *Romans 04:17 Source of Faith*

The source of Abraham's faith was God and God alone. Note three points.

1. It was God Himself whom Abraham believed: "I have made you a father of many nations" (v.17; see Gen.17:1-5, esp. 4-5). Abraham had never had a son, not by Sarah. He was now about one hundred years old, and Sarah was close to the same age. They were both well beyond the years of having a son. Just think about it for a moment and the impossibility is clearly realized. If Abraham was ever to have a son, the son would have to come from God. God would have to be the source, for only God could do such an impossible thing. And note: despite the impossibility Abraham *believes God*. The source of Abraham's faith was God.

Mark 11:22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

2. It was the God who gives life to the dead whom Abraham believed. The source of Abraham's faith was...
 - the living and true God: the God who is omnipotent, possessing all power, the power to breathe life into *dead matter*.

The source of Abraham's faith was God: God who has the power to quicken, make alive, revive, animate, rejuvenate and animate what is dead. No matter how impossible the promise seemed, God was able to fulfil it because *He is God*, the One who possesses all power (omnipotent). God is able to give life and resurrect the dead; therefore, He is able to fulfil His promise.

John 5:24-25 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."

John 6:40 “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Acts 24:15 And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

2 Cor 4:14 Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

3. It was the God who creates who was the source of Abraham’s faith. Because God is God, that is, omnipotent, He is able to create. He can make something *out of nothing*. He needs nothing to create. He can speak things into existence just as He did when He created the world (Gen. 1:1, 3). Abraham believed this; he believed that if it was necessary God could create life in the organs of his and Sarah’s bodies. Abraham trusted and believed the promise of God. God was the source of his faith.

Thought 1. Note a fact often overlooked. Every promise made by God is a promise that only He can fulfil. He is not needed if man can meet and do whatever is needed. Therefore, if a man puts his faith in men, then all the hopes and promises that extend beyond this life will not be met. No man can fulfil the hope and promise of salvation from sin, death and hell. No man can fulfil the promise that we shall be “the heirs of the world,” that we shall receive eternal life in the new heavens and earth (see v. 13). Only God can fulfil the impossible promise of eternal life.

1 Th 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Mat 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Luke 1:37 “For nothing is impossible with God.”

Job 42:2 “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.”

II. Romans 04:18-22 Strength of Abraham’s Faith

The strength of Abraham’s faith. Note two very significant lessons.

1. Abraham’s faith was in *what God said*, the promise of a descendant or of a son. He had nothing else to go on but God’s Word: “just as it had been said to him.”

The phrase “against all hope, Abraham in hope believed” means that Abraham was past hope, beyond all human help and any possibility of having a son. His situation was beyond hope, yet he believed God; he placed his hope in God and in what God had said.

- a. Abraham was not weak in faith despite thinking about his own physical inability. His body was “good as dead”; he and Sarah were about one hundred years old. The word “*dead*” is a perfect participle in the Greek which means that his reproductive organs had stopped functioning and were dead forever and could never again function. Abraham could never have a son; it was not humanly possible. He and Sarah were almost one hundred years old, now sexually “dead.”

Abraham thought about the matter. The phrase “faced the fact” (*katanoeo*) means he fixed his thoughts, his mind, his attention upon the matter. But he did not give in to the thoughts. He was not weak in faith.

Thought 1. Just imagine the *personal relationship* Abraham must have had with God! To know God so well — loving and trusting God so strongly — that God could give him an experience so meaningful that Abraham would believe the promise without even staggering in faith.

Isa 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

Deu 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deu 10:12-13 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

- b. Abraham was strong in faith — not wavering regarding the promise of God. Instead he walked about glorifying and praising God for His glorious promise. The word “wavering” (*diakrino*) means he did not stagger, did not vacillate, did not question God’s ability to fulfil His promise.
- c. Abraham was fully convinced of God’s ability and God’s power. He knew God could overcome the difficulty of his body being “dead,” and he believed God could and would either...
- quicken and give life to his body, or
 - recreate his reproductive organs (v. 17).

He did not know what method God would use, but he knew God was able to do what He had promised. Abraham believed God; he was fully persuaded that the promise would be fulfilled.

Luke 3:8 “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

Acts 27:25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

Rom 4:20-21 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Deu 31:19 “Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them.”

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Isa 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Jer 17:7 “But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.”

2. Abraham’s faith was credited as righteousness (See *Credited*, Rom. 4:22; *Justification*, Rom. 4:22).

ROMANS 04: 22 CREDITED, IMPUTED (ELOGISTHE)

Credited means to reckon, to impute, to credit, to count, to compute, to ascribe, to deposit, to put to one’s account. Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness. Abraham deposited his faith with God, and God credited Abraham’s faith as righteousness. □

ROMANS 04: 22

JUSTIFICATION: FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS

This is why “it is credited to him as righteousness.” Romans 04:22

In simple terms *justification* means that God takes the believer’s faith and counts it as righteousness (Rom. 4:3; see Gen. 15:6)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*, God takes that person's faith and counts it for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God's glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ *is his Saviour*. Such belief honours God's Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honours God's Son, God accepts that person's faith for righteousness. God counts that person's faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. A person's belief — the right kind of belief — is critical.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*

III. Romans 04:23–25 Faith of Abraham

The recording of Abraham's faith is for two purposes.

1. That men might read the account. It was not recorded just to honour Abraham as a great man. It was written so that we might read and understand how we are to become acceptable to God.

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

1 John 1:1-3 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

Luke 1:3-4 *Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

2. That men might be counted righteous by believing. It is necessary to believe two things. (See *Justification through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Rom. 4:25.)
 - a. That God raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (see *Justification through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Rom. 4:25; *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Acts 1:3; *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:24).
 - b. That Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our justification (see *Christ Fulfills Law, Sin*, Rom 8:3; *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Acts 1:3.) ■

**ROMANS 04:25 JUSTIFICATION THROUGH
THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

*He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. **Romans 4:25***

Christ was delivered to death for our sins and raised again for our justification. He offered Himself as an *atonement* or *propitiation* for our sin. Atonement or propitiation means sacrifice, covering. (See notes, Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 2:1-2.) Christ offered Himself as our sacrifice, as our substitute, as the covering for our sins. God accepted the offering and the sacrifice of His life for us. The resurrection proves it.

1. The resurrection shouts loudly and clearly that God is satisfied with the settlement for sin which Christ made.
2. The resurrection declares the believer justified, free from sin, and righteous in God's eyes. (See *Credited*, Rom. 4:22; *Justification and Peace*, Rom. 5:1. See Rom. 4:5; 4:1-3; 4:1-25.)

***Acts 2:23-24** This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*

***Acts 2:31-32** Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.*

***Acts 10:39-41** "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen — by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."*

Acts 13:30 *But God raised him from the dead.*

Rom 1:4 *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Eph 1:20-21 *Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. □*

ACTS 01:03 RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Acts 01:03

Jesus appeared at least ten times after His resurrection before He ascended into heaven. There were apparently many more appearances not recorded (see Jn. 20:30-31; 21:25).

1. He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9-11; Jn.20:11-18).
2. He appeared to the women running to tell the disciples about the empty tomb (Mt. 28:8-10)
3. He appeared to Peter, probably to assure him of his restoration (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
4. He appeared to the two Emmaus disciples sometime in the early evening (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-42).
5. He appeared to the disciples with Thomas absent (Mk. 16:14; Lk.24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-25).
6. One week later, He appeared to the disciples who had gone fishing (Jn. 20).
7. He appeared to 500 believers (1 Cor. 15:6).
8. He appeared to the apostles (Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18).
9. He appeared to James, the Lord's half-brother (1 Cor. 15:7).
10. He appeared to the believers at His ascension (Mk. 16:19-20; Lk. 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

It should be remembered that since Jesus' ascension He has appeared at least two other times.

1. He appeared to Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:55-56).
2. He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3f). □

ACTS 02:24 RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Acts 02:24

This is a great verse dealing with the resurrection of Christ. Note three points.

1. God raised up Christ. God knew that the very best way to save man from death was through the resurrection of His own Son from the dead.
2. The resurrection of Christ freed “him from the agony of death.” The word *agony* (*odinas*) means birth pangs. For the unbeliever, there is great pain in death, pain such as that experienced by a woman in giving birth. But man no longer has to suffer the pain of death nor fear suffering through it. Christ has conquered and abolished death, made it completely harmless. Death is actually the most glorious and joyful experience for the believer, an experience that simply explodes human imagination. (See Jn. 5:24; Heb. 2:14-15.)
3. It was impossible for death to hold Christ. Why? There are several significant reasons.
 - a. There was God’s set purpose and foreknowledge. God knew that the way of the cross and resurrection was the very best way to save the world. Therefore, nothing could stop God from following through with the death and resurrection of His Son. (See Acts 2:25-28.)
 - b. Jesus was approved by God. He had God’s approval, sanction, accreditation and endorsement. Jesus Christ was perfectly acceptable to God (see Acts. 2:22-24).
 - c. Jesus’ resurrection was foretold by Scripture, and Scripture must be fulfilled.
 - d. Jesus was *Life* itself. He possesses the very *being, essence, quality, substance* and *energy* of life. He is *The Life*, Life itself; therefore, He is the source of all life. All life finds its source in the energy and being of Christ Himself. Therefore, being Life, death could not engulf Him any more than darkness can engulf light. (See Jn. 1:4-5; Jn. 14:6.)
 - e. Jesus was sinless. Death exists or happens because everything is short of perfection — short of what it should be — short of *God’s glory*. This is true of man. Man dies because he falls “short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Sin is...
 - falling short
 - missing the mark
 - transgressing God’s glory

And it is sin that causes death. Therefore Jesus Christ, being sinless, did not have to die. He died because He *willed* to die for man.

The point is this: Jesus was sinless and perfect and righteous (Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:9; 2:22). He was the Ideal Man, the Sinless Man, the Perfect Man — the Ideal Pattern for all other men. Therefore, when He died for men, He died as the Ideal Man or the Ideal Pattern. And death cannot hold the Ideal Man, for the Ideal Man came short in nothing. He was not short in life; therefore, He was destined to live forever. He was Perfect Life and Perfect Man. As the Scripture says, “It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” (See Rom. 1:4.) □

ROMANS 08: 03

JESUS CHRIST FULFILS THE LAW AND CONDEMNS SIN

*For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man. **Romans 08:03***

Christ condemned sin in the sinful man in the flesh by three acts.

1. Christ pointed to sin and condemned it as being evil. The very fact that He never sinned points out that sin is contrary to God and to God’s nature. Christ rejected sin, and by rejecting it He showed that it was evil, that it was not to be touched. He condemned it as evil and unworthy of God and man.
2. Christ secured righteousness for all men. When He came into the world, He came with the same human nature, the same flesh that all men are born with — the same human nature, the same flesh with all its desires, passions and potential for evil. However, He never sinned, not once. Therefore, He secured a perfect righteousness; and because His righteousness is perfect and ideal, it becomes the model and pattern for all men. It stands for and covers the unrighteousness of all men. His perfect righteousness overcomes sin and its penalty — it condemns sin. It is to be noted that He condemned sin “in sinful man, in his flesh;” therefore, all flesh finds its perfection and ideal in His righteousness and perfection. All flesh finds its power to condemn sin “in Christ,” in His ideal righteousness.

John 8:46 “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me?”

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

Heb 7:26 *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 Pet 1:19 *But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

1 Pet 2:22 *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

1 John 3:5 *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.*

3. Christ allowed the law of sin and death to be enacted upon Him instead of upon the sinner. Man has sinned, so the natural consequence is corruption and death. However, Christ approached God and made two requests. First, He asked God to accept His *Ideal righteousness* for the unrighteousness of man. Second, He asked God to lay man’s sin and death upon Himself. He asked God to let Him bear the law of sin and death for man and to experience hell for man. He asked God to let Him condemn sin and death “in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). He was the perfect, ideal Man. Therefore, He could bear all the violations of the law and all the experiences of death for *all* men. God so purposed, and God bore the awful price of having to condemn sin and death in the death of His very own Son. Sin and its power have been made powerless. Death has been conquered (1 Cor. 15:1-58, esp. vs. 54-57), and he who had the power of death has been destroyed, that is, Satan. (See *Satan*, Jn. 16:11)

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Cor 15:3 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

2 Cor 5:15 *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

Heb 9:28 *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. □*