

# “THE BOOK OF ROMANS” Part 4 of 8

## Chapters 3 & 4

### Chapter 3 – All have sinned; Jews & Gentiles are all sinners; The law exposes sin;

#### The law of faith is the answer; Justification

So Paul sweeps both the ‘bad’ and ‘good’ sinners into one big heap saying that no-one is better than anyone else. **All are sinners** in the sight of God. Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin with the difference that the Jew have been given the oracles of God. But God’s laws weren’t given to save the Jew but to condemn him such that he might know sin. Indeed the whole world is guilty before God (v19) for by the law is the knowledge of sin (v20).

Paul then reveals the righteousness of God who is Jesus Christ manifest in the flesh (v22).

Furthermore, no one can be justified before God by trying to keep his laws. As Paul states, there is only one way to access God’s grace and that is by *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [Rom 3:24](#)*.

Paul then states that the only sacrifice that God will accept (called a propitiation) is the blood of Christ (25). God will justify those who believe in Jesus (v26).

Paul then introduces a law, other than Moses’ laws, and he calls it the law of faith (v27).

In summary then, God uses the first **three chapters** of Romans to establish the universal nature of man’s sin. But God’s laws have exposed sin. Why? It’s obvious that if there were no laws, there would be no sin. As a result, if the law exposes sin, it stands to reason that **laws can’t make sin ‘go away’**. God’s remedy is the law of faith.

### Chapters 4,5 = Justification

#### Ch. 4 – Abraham’s faith; Justified without works; Imputed righteousness

So in **chapter four**, Paul presents the unique and ‘two-sided’ Abraham who straddles the fence by having a foot in both camps of the Jew and the Gentile.

The Jews **have** Abraham as their physical ancestor but they **do not**, and will not, have his faith.

The Gentiles **do not have** Abraham as their ancestor but can **have** his faith.

The Jew was angry and incensed that the Gentile could have access to the grace of God the Father even though they weren’t Jews.

Paul aggravates the Jew further by having the Gentile call Abraham our father (v 1)

This was unforgivable to the Jewish race, who of all men, vigorously pursued their righteousness by the privileges they enjoyed as God's people, and they added them to the works they performed.

Back in chapter two, Paul tells them that a true Jew has been circumcised in the heart not just circumcised in the flesh. <sup>28</sup> *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: <sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart**, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. [Rom 2:28-29](#)*

So Paul makes it absolutely clear, that the Jew cannot be justified before God just because they are the physical heirs of Abraham and try to have a righteousness resulting from their works. If they wish to be genuine heirs of faith, they must be of Abraham's faith who was justified before God **without works**. As Paul says *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that **justifieth the ungodly**, his faith is counted for righteousness. [Rom 4:5](#)*. This is called **imputed righteousness**.

Now Abraham received this righteousness before he was circumcised as a Jew. How could this happen? God gave him a promise that couldn't be believed in the natural. God promised Abraham who was one hundred years old, and beyond the fertile stage necessary to have children, and his wife Sarah was dead in the womb, that he would be the father of many nations and countless children. Wow! Who'd believe that? Well, Abraham did and therefore God rewarded him by giving him a righteousness (imputed) that couldn't be gained by works. Abraham was given right-standing with God, not of any works he could do, but simply by believing that God would do what he said he would do. As Paul says, Abraham's belief, his faith, was counted to him for righteousness (v5). Though it seemed impossible in the natural, God eventually made it come true.

Paul ends up with the parallel of our situation in that, without works, a man can get to heaven by believing that Christ lived the perfect sinless life, and that Christ's blood can wash away the penalty of all sin (v24-25) by believing on him (v24). Just as Abraham was dead in the body but God let him give birth, we, spiritually speaking are dead in trespasses and sins, but we become born again.

**An aside:** God sees sin and demands a blood sacrifice. Under the Old Testament this was imperfect animal blood which was only a temporary payment and had to be repeatedly performed. Only God's blood could permanently satisfy God and what God's law demanded. **God dying on the cross, was the highest honour that he could pay his law.** The fact that a universe of people can get saved and go to heaven is a secondary consideration.

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