

# ROMANS

*The Power of God is the Gospel*



SUNDAYS STARTING SEPT 13

10:55AM IN W246/247

TAUGHT BY VINNIE ANGELO



### Class Description

This elective-class will study through the book of Romans, which has been called one of the most important books in the Bible. In this great letter Paul not only teaches us about Christian "theology," but also how to establish a Christian "worldview" (meaning, how to think and make sense of the world in light of the God of Israel). And so we will explore themes like: Justification by faith, how Gentiles are now included intoYahweh's covenantal promises, and most importantly how the Gospel is the power of God for salvation!

Our class will also help train people (from new Christians to mature believers) in various Bible study methods, allowing for a stronger ability to read and interpret scripture!

For class details contact: [vinnieangelo@gmail.com](mailto:vinnieangelo@gmail.com)  
Teacher:Vinnie Angelo, M.A.

## Resources

### Resources: Media

### Resources: Books

## Recommended Reading

Read through Romans each week of the class (try to do it in one sitting). Over the course of the class, try to make two of your readings in differnt translations (e.g., ESV, NIV, NLT, etc)

[Romans ESV](#)

[Romans NIV](#)

[Romans NLT](#)

## Downloads

### Observation Sheet



## Helpful Resources

**Michael Horton (Westminster Seminary)**  
Dr. Horton gives a quick talk about the nature of biblical interpretation



**RC Sproul**  
Dr. Sproul gives an introduction to the book of Romans



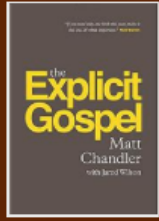


# TheologyClass.org

## Books on The Gospel/Romans:

Here are books written by three pastors who discuss the Gospel, and how God works in saving His people (and bringing glory to Himself).

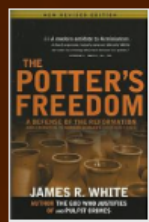
***"The Explicit Gospel"* by: Matt Chandler**  
(A popular book on the Gospel)



***"God is the Gospel"* by John Piper (2011)**  
(Piper reminds us that the gospel is about God, not about us)



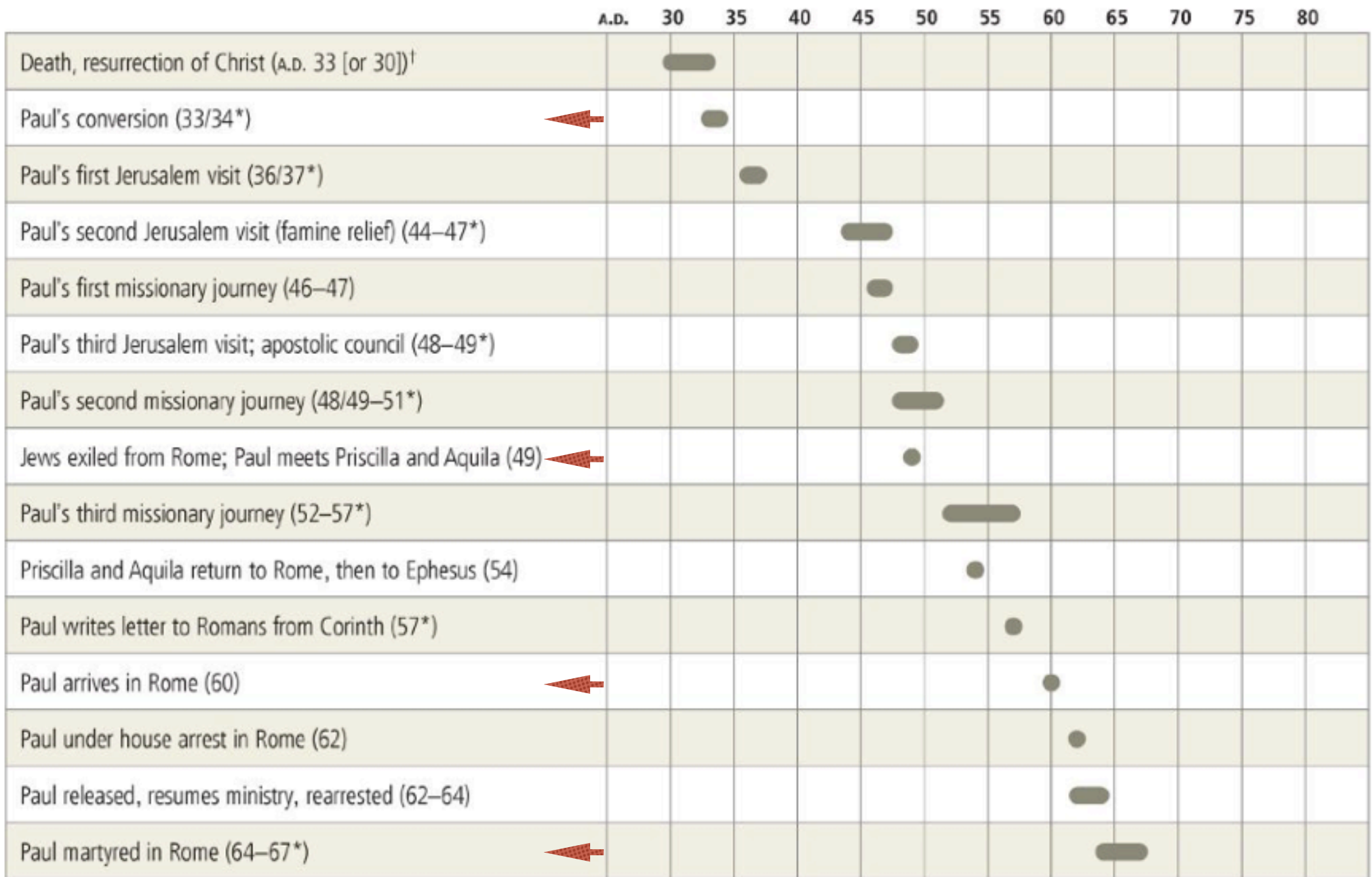
***"The Potter's Freedom"* by James R. White (2013)**  
(This is Dr. White's rebuttal to Norman Geisler, as White clearly presents the foundation of Reformed theology, and the freedom that God has in saving His elect)



## Commentaries on Romans:

***"Romans" (Douglas Moo), NIV Application Commentary (2000)***  
A good balance of scholarly notes with practical application





\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810



Rom 15:14-33

**"From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum I have completed (or fulfilled) the gospel of Christ" (v. 19b)**



THE BACKWARD LOOK  
THE FOWARD LOOK



**"But now (at present) I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints" (v. 25a)**



**"But now...after many years, I have the desire to come to you [in Rome]..." (v. 23)**



**"As I am going on to Spain" (v. 24a)**





Rome

Three Taverns

Forum of Appius

Puteoli

Pompeii

Appian Way

Brundisium

Dyrrhachium

DALMATIA  
(ILLYRICUM)

MOESIA

THRACE

MACEDONIA

Thessalonica

Berea

Apollonia

Amphipolis

Larisa

Nicopolis

EPIRUS

Messana

SICILY

Rhegium

Syracuse

Mediterranean  
Sea

ACHAIA

Corinth

Athenae

Sparta

Jerusalem

0 100 200 mi

0 100 200 300 km



PORTUGAL  
IS A COUNTRY  
RIGHT NEXT  
TO SPAIN |





# Paul's Reasons for Romans:

- **1. Personal and Theological:**
  - Explain and defend the Gospel
  - Secure Support for Spanish Mission
- **2. Pastoral**
  - Heal the Conflict in the Roman Congregation (5 house churches)
  - Bring Jew and Gentile together
- **3. Theological and Pastoral**



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# I. 1:1-17 The Letter Opening

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- A. 1:1-7 Prescript
  - The Gospel's content is Jesus (God's Son)
    - It's about a person, not a concept
- Hab 2: 4 *“the righteous will live by faith”*
- Faith, obedience, grace (v5)



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# A. 1:1-7 Prescript

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- (v3) **A descendant of David**
- 2 Sam 7:12-16 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.  
13He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,  
15but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”



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## A. 1:1-7 Prescript

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- **The Son was fully human:** (Rm 1:3)
- **The Son was fully divine:** (Rm 1:4)
  - 1. The empty tomb is the great declaration of who Jesus is
  - 2. His resurrection / ascension were his path to his rightful place
    - To rule at God's right hand (Cf. Eph 1:19-22)
    - Sitting at the highest place, given the name above all other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... (Phil 2:9-10)



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## A. 1:1-7 Prescript

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- (v4) Declared with power to be the Son of God
  - Cf. Ps 2:7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."
- The Resurrection = Jesus is the Son of God **in power**
- The Gospel Call: *"Obey Christ and Trust Christ, and to love by the obedience that comes from faith"*



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## A. 1:1-7 Prescript

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- **What's Paul's topic?**
  - *The Gospel*
- **What does Paul mean?**
  - *The Gospel's content is Jesus (God's Son)*
- **What does this mean for us?**

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## B. 1:8-15 Thanksgiving and Occasion: Paul and the Romans

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- 1. Expresses **thanks** for the Roman believers & the reputation of their faith (1:8)
- 2. Constantly **prayer** for them (1:9)
- 3. Expresses his desire to **visit** (1:10-15)



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## B. 1:8-15 Thanksgiving and Occasion: Paul and the Romans

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- Who is Paul sharing the Gospel with?
  - **TO CHRISTIANS (Cf. v6, 7, 15)**
- "The Gospel is the way people are **CALLED** to faith, and the way people **GROW** in faith" -Keller
- (Assignment: Read through the "preaching of the Gospel" in Acts)



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## B. 1:8-15 Thanksgiving and Occasion: Paul and the Romans

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- **What's Paul's topic?**
  - Thanksgiving for the Roman Christians
- **What does Paul mean?**
  - Seeks mutual encouragement for each other's faith, by preaching the Gospel!
- **What does this mean for us?**
  - Always seek to encourage one another; this happens by **PREACHING THE GOSPEL** to the saved!



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## C. 1:16-17 The Theme of the Letter

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- The Gospel is God's Power!

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- 
- For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”



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# 1. The Text

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For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for salvation  
To everyone who believes,  
to the Jew first  
and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed  
from faith for faith,  
as it is written,  
“The righteous (one) shall live by faith.”



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## 2. Paraphrase

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The gospel is God's power to save

- God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel
- And so God's Power (revealed in the Gospel) saves everyone who believes; Jew or Gentile
  - (it saves) those who believe/have faith, and these people obtain God's righteousness



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# DA Carson

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- "The Gospel is the announcement of what God has done, and must not be confused with our responses"

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# Gospel

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- A declaration of Good news
- Euangelion = Evangel



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# How to preach?

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- *"Preach the gospel and use words if necessary" (Assisi)*
- *"When one hears this frequently repeated slogan, one has to say, as gently but as firmly as one can, that this is smug nonsense...it makes about as much sense as telling a reporter he should broadcast the news but that words are optional...it is news, good news, to be proclaimed."*



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# Biblical uses of the Gospel:

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- OT: announcing of good news
  - political / military
- In 1 Century culture:
  - Emperors' births
  - Pax Romana



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# NT: *Euangelion* (76 uses)

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- **Matthew:** 4 times
  - The Gospel of the Kingdom (4:23; 9:35; 24:14)
  - The Gospel (26:13)
- **Mark** 8 times
  - The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah (1:1)
  - Jesus was proclaiming the Gospel of God (1:14)
  - The gospel is something so valuable that someone might suffer deprivation/lose life for the gospel's sake (8:35; 10:29)
  - The gospel will be preached in the whole world (13:10; 14:9)



- **Luke/John: 0 times**
- **1 Peter/Revelation 1 time each**
- **Acts: 3 times**
- The believers never stopped teaching and *preaching* that the Messiah is Jesus (8:4)



Speaker	Audience	Text	Summary
Peter	Crowds (Jews) at Pentecost	2:14-41	Call upon the name of the lord to be saved; God raised Jesus to loose the pangs of death; Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God; repent/believe/be baptized
Peter	Crowds (Jews) at the Temple area	3:12-26	God raised the author of life from the dead; faith in the name of God has made sick people well; repent/turn from sins to be restored
Peter	The Sanhedrin	4:5-12	By the name of Jesus (the one who's been resurrected) a man's been made well; there is salvation in no other name



Speaker	Audience	Text	Summary
Peter	Cornelius & household (Gentiles)	10:28-47	Preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is lord of all); God anointed Jesus who went on healing people; He was put to death but God raised him from the dead on the 3rd day; He is the judge and anyone who believes on his name will receive forgiveness of sins
Paul	Jews at Antioch of Pisidia	13:16-41	History of Israel (and the covenant); Jesus was killed, buried, and raised; everyone who believes is freed from what the law of Moses couldn't free
Paul	People at Athens	17:22-31	The people thought Paul was preaching "foreign deities" because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.



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# NT: Euangelion (76 uses)

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- Paul: the rest of the times (60)



• 1 Cor 15:1-9 1Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.



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# The Gospel's power

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- This Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom 1:16)
- A sacred trust (1 Tim 1:11)
- The word of Truth (Eph 1:13)
- An authoritative pronouncement that requires a response (Rom 10:16; 2 Cor 11:4; 2 Thes 1:8)



"The noun Gospel (euangelion) in the NT denotes the "good news" of the saving intervention of God in Christ, referring usually to the message about Christ (1 Cor 15:1; Gal 1:11; 2:2) and, by extension, to the act of preaching that message (1 Cor 9:14); 2 Cor 2:12; 8:18; Phil 1:5; 4:3." - Moo



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# The content of the Gospel is Jesus!

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- It's that Jesus is Messiah and Lord
  - Messiah
  - Lord
- The Gospel Message: There is one God who now claims the world as his own, through the crucified and risen Jesus!

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# The Good News/How Jesus is Lord

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- God establishing His reign over his created (but rebellious) world
- Hope to bring peace to the earth doesn't come by Caesar, but by the Christ



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# The Good News/How Jesus is Lord

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- "preaching the Gospel" is not merely something done to the "unsaved" but to the church as well:
  - breaking down **racial barriers** in the church
  - **social justice** issues (God's peaceful reign involves bringing justice - righting wrongs - shalom)
- The Gospel unleashes God's power to rescue human beings (Jews / Gentiles) from sin and death



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## "Not ashamed"

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- Paul was not ashamed to proclaim the gospel because the gospel is God's saving power that accomplishes salvation for all who believe, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.
- The gospel reveals God's righteousness in declaring sinners to be righteous despite their misdeeds based on Jesus' sacrificial death



- "The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus lived a life of perfect righteousness, of perfect obedience to God, not for His own well being but for His people. He has done for me what I couldn't possibly do for myself. But not only has He lived that life of perfect obedience, He offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice and the righteousness of God." RC Sproul



- "The gospel is the dynamic for all heart-change, life-change, and social-change. Change won't happen through 'trying harder' but only through encountering with the radical grace of God." Tim Keller



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# (v16) First for the Jew, then for the Gentile

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- Equality

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## (v17) A righteousness of God

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- NIV (righteousness from God) "the right status" that God gives to the sinner who believes.
- making things right in the last days: Cf. Is 46:13; 51:5-6, 8; Ps 50



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## (v17) A righteousness of God

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- Establishing "right" in a world that has gone wrong.
- This righteousness is not moral, but legal
- Paul's not talking about God's "turning sinners into people who live 'right'" but to his act of proclaiming that "sinners are right before God - innocent in the divine court of justice" -Moo

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# (v17) The righteous will live by faith

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- Habakkuk 2:4
- "the righteous by faith shall live"



For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for salvation  
To everyone who believes,  
to the Jew first  
and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed  
from faith for faith,  
as it is written,  
“The righteous (one) shall live by faith.”



"The heart of the gospel is what God has done in Jesus, supremely in his death and resurrection. Period. It is not personal testimony about our repentance; it is not a few words about our faith response; it is not obedience; it is not the cultural mandate or any other mandate. Repentance, faith, and obedience are of course essential, and must be rightly related in the light of Scripture, but they are not the good news. The gospel is the good news about what God has done. Because of what God has done in Christ Jesus, the gospel necessarily includes the good that has been secured by Christ and his cross work. Thus it has a present and an eschatological dimension. We announce the gospel." DA Carson



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# What's Paul's topic?

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- The Gospel

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# What does Paul mean?

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- The Gospel is the source of God's Power to Save, because God's righteousness is revealed (to anyone who believes)



- The Gospel not only **forgives** us, but holds out the **hope of resurrection** existence (Col 1:22-23; 2 Thes 2:14; Rom 8; 1 Cor 15)
- The Gospel of the cross not only **justifies** us, it is the power of God that **transforms** us (1 Thes 1:5; 1 Cor 1:8)
- It not only draws **faith** from us, but **commands our obedience** (Rom 10:16; 1 Pet 4:17)
- It calls us not only to **preach the uniqueness** suffering of Christ, but also to **participate in his suffering** (1 Cor 9:23; Phil 3:9-10; 1 Thes 2:8-9; 2 Tim 1:8; Philemon 13)
- In it God himself is **vindicated** and his own **righteousness revealed** (Rom 1:17; 3:21-26)



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# What does this mean for us?

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- How are we to deal with our own shame from the Gospel?



- 1. The gospel, by telling us our **salvation is free** and undeserved, is really insulting!
  - We are such spiritual failures; only way to gain salvation is for it to be a complete gift.
  - This offends moral / religious people who think their decency gives them an advantage over less moral people



- 2. The gospel is insulting by telling us that **Jesus died for us.**
  - We are so wicked that only the death of the Son of God could save us.
  - This offends the modern cult of self-expression and popular belief in the innate goodness of humanity.



- 3. The gospel, by telling us that trying to be good and spiritual isn't enough, insists that no "good" person will be saved, but **only those who come to God through Jesus.**
  - This offends the modern notion that any nice person anywhere can find God "in his own way."
  - We don't like losing autonomy.



- 4. The gospel tells us that **our salvation was accomplished by Jesus' suffering and serving** (not conquering and destroying), and that following him means to suffer and serve with him.
  - This offends people who want salvation to be an easy life
  - It also offends people who want their lives to be safe and comfortable.



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## II. 1:18-4:25 The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith

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- A. 1:18-3:20 The Universal Reign of Sin
  - 1. 1:18-32 All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin

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## 1. 1:18-32 All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin

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- All humans being (apart from the gospel) are under God's wrath
- "If you don't understand or believe in the wrath of God, the gospel will not thrill, empower, or move you" Keller



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## 1. 1:18-32 All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin

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- (v18) "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth"
- 1:18-4:25 "righteous / righteousness / justify" appears 24 times (it's the theme)
  - "faith / believe" 27 times



- Suppressing





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# EVERYONE WORSHIPS SOMETHING

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- When people refuse to acknowledge God as God we are changing the object of our worship
- "The human heart loves to make a good thing into a god thing" -Keller

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# Moral Absolutes:

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- Wrong is defined by:
  - I say it is?
  - Society / Majority says it is?
- No God = no moral absolutes
  - No one LIVES as though there is no God



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# (v18) The wrath of God

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- Stop suppressing the truth, and praise God as God
- God reveals his wrath not just against sexual behavior, but anything that is idolatrous
  - Gossip: (rumormonger, tale-bearer)
  - Greed (the constant desire and destructive drive for more) is just as destructive as sexual immorality (because it's indicative of idol worship)
  - Earning your righteousness through your morality



- "Seeking blessing and salvation through biblical morality is just as much idolatry - because you're setting up another ruler and savior other than God. It doesn't matter if it's sexually immorality, greed / increasing our possessions, rule keeping, none of these are more (or less) serious than the others." -Keller





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- "We only grasp the Gospel when we understand, as Paul did, that we are the worst sinner we know (1 Tim 1:15) - and that if Jesus came to die for us, there is no one that he would not die for." -Keller



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## The history of humanity exchanging God for something lesser

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1:23

**exchanged** the **glory of the immortal God**  
for images resembling mortal man  
and birds and animals and creeping things

1:25

they **exchanged** the **truth about God**  
for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the  
Creator

1:26 (For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions)

For their women **exchanged natural relations**  
for those that are contrary to nature



- **What's Paul's topic?**
  - God's righteous wrath against an unrighteous mankind
- **What does Paul mean?**
  - God is revealing his wrath against humankind, because humankind has rebelled against their Maker



- **What does this mean for us?**
  - We are flawed, we have rejected God (and love doing so), we make idols of everything that God created; we are hopelessly lost in this state. All people are actively seeking their own destruction. **ALL PEOPLE**



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## 2. 2:1-3:8 Jews Are Accountable to God for Sin

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- a. 2:1-16 The Jews and the Judgment of God
- b. 2:17-29 The Limitations of the Covenant



Paul echoes Amos (ch 1-2)





- "In it instructive to insert "Christian" for "Jew" and paraphrase verses 17-20: You call yourself a born-again Christian and you are sure you are right with God because you signed a commitment card, or walked down an aisle, or prayed a prayer, and you really cried that night. You remember you had strong feelings for God, so you must have been converted that night. And, hey, since then you have memorized dozens of Scripture verses, and you know the right answer to a large array of questions. And you've led other people to make a commitment to Christ in the Bible study you lead. And you want to get deep into the Bible - that's why you're (in this Romans class)." - Keller



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# YOU

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- Paul uses the singular (you) to address a "person" (from the 3rd person plural "they")
- Diatribe
- EVERYONE'S status before God (in judgment) is faulty
- the one standing in judgment is doing the SAME THINGS



- The self-righteous / religious pass judgment on others
- Condemning others while excusing ourselves is what allows us to hang onto both our self-righteousness AND our sin!



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# Israel the Teacher

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- Israel had a "teaching role" (to the world), to be a servant of the Lord, and a "light to the Gentiles" (Is 42:6-7; 49:6)
- This was fulfilled in Christ, and is to be carried out in the mission of the Church



• Jer 31:34 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”



- **What's Paul's topic?**
  - Imperfect people who judge other imperfect people
- **What does Paul mean?**
  - I need to be a light to the world (2:19), because God will judge me (and everyone) by the same standard I judge other people by (2:1-11). We can only keep the law (and do good) by the Spirit (2:29), and so don't be arrogant in your own goodness.



- **What does this mean for us?**
- The fatal weakness of "moralism" is that it cannot protect or prevent the heart from sinning; all it can do is seek to hide that sin. You can't be good enough, as hard as you try, because you're no better than the homosexual-child-rapist who beats up nice little grandmas and then steals from his victims in order to support his heroin habit.



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## c. 3:1-8 God's Faithfulness and the Judgment of Jews

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- (v5) God's righteousness
  - 1:17 the "righteousness of God" referred to "God's activity of putting sinners into right relationship with himself"
  - 3:4 "God's righteousness" is not His "saving righteousness" but his "personal righteousness"
- **Therefore:** "God's righteousness includes his always acting in accordance with his own nature"
- **Paul's point:** Human sin can never cancel God's faithfulness to his own standard of behavior



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## 3:1-8 is a Q & A session (Keller):

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- Q: Paul, are you saying that there is no advantage to biblical religion (v1)?
- A: No, I'm not saying that. There is great value in having and knowing the word of God (v2).
- Q: Yes, but those words have failed, haven't they, because so many haven't believed the gospel of righteousness revealed in God's Son Jesus. What has happened to the promises (v3a)?
- A: Despite his people's failure to believe, God's promises to save are advancing. Our faithlessness only reveals how committed to his truth he is (think of what he's done in order to be faithful to his promises!) (v3b-4).



- Q: But if unrighteousness is necessary for God's righteousness to be seen, how is it fair for him to judge us (v5)?
- A: On that basis, God would not judge anyone in the world. And we (ie: Paul and religious Jews) all agree God should judge (v6).
- Q: Well then, if me sinning makes God look better, that means that I should sin more, shouldn't I, so that his glory is more clearly seen (v7-8)?
- A: I've been accused of thinking this, and I certainly don't. And saying you're sinning so that God will love you is an attitude that is absolutely worthy of judgment (v8).



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## c. 3:1-8 God's Faithfulness and the Judgment of Jews

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- (v1) What advantage does the Jew have?
  - None!



**Ex 19:3-6** (Deut 7:6-13) <sup>3</sup>Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup>You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup>Now therefore, *if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant*, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup>and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”



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## (v5) God's righteousness

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- In 1:17 the "*righteousness of God*" referred to "God's activity of putting sinners into right relationship with himself"
- In 3:4 "*God's righteousness*" is his "personal righteousness"
  - The standard of measurement (for being in the right)
- "*God's righteousness* includes his always acting in accordance with his own nature"



---

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## 3. 3:9-20 The Guilty of All Humanity

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- (v9) "Under Sin"
- sin as a ruthless taskmaster and human beings as sin's helpless slaves
- LEGAL concept (Justification)



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(v9b-11) “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands;  
no one seeks for God

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- Ps 14:1-3 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God. They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.



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(v9b-11) “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands;  
no one seeks for God

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- **Depravity**
  - The effect of sin on humankind, making people incapable of wanting to do anything "good" (for the purpose of pleasing God).



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(v9b-11) “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands;  
no one seeks for God

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- "This means that anyone who is truly seeking God has been sought by God. If no one is capable of seeking God, then any human who is truly searching for him must have already undergone some change inside them that is caused by God's Spirit, not their own" - Keller
- **"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"** - Jesus (John 6:44)



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(v20) "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law"

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- Observing the law (works of the law)
  - Cf. 3:28; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10



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# Paul's use of the "law"

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- **Popular view:** Jews believed they could be saved only by doing more good works than bad
- **Scholarly view:** Jewish theology was diverse, but many Jews believed that they were saved by God's grace, because God had chosen them (Covenant)



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# The Law

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- Moral
- Civil
- Ceremonial



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# Threefold Use of the Law (RC Sproul)

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- **The first purpose of the law is to be a *mirror*:**
  - *Reflects and mirrors* the perfect *righteousness* of God
  - *Tells us* much about *who God is*
  - *Illumines* human sinfulness
  - *Highlights our weakness* so that we might seek the strength found in Christ
  - A severe *schoolmaster* who drives us to Christ



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# Threefold Use of the Law (RC Sproul)

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- **A second purpose for the law is the *restraint of evil***
  - Cannot change human hearts.
  - It can serve to protect the righteous from the unjust.
- “...by means of its fearful denunciations and the consequent dread of punishment, to curb those who, unless forced, have no regard for rectitude and justice.” - Calvin
- A limited measure of justice until the last judgment



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# Threefold Use of the Law (RC Sproul)

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- **The third purpose of the law is to reveal what is pleasing to God.**
  - Enlightens us as to what is pleasing to our Father
  - The Christian delights in the law as God Himself delights in it. Jesus said, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (John 14:15).
- The highest function of the law: serve as an instrument for the people of God to give Him honor and glory



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# What's Paul's topic?

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- Religious Jews being just as lost as pagan Gentiles



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# What does Paul mean?

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- **Sin affects people in the following ways:**
  - **Legally** (all guilty)
  - **Our Minds** (we're corrupt & don't understand truth)
  - **Our Motives** (No one has natural motive to seek God)
  - **Our Wills** (All turned away from God)



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# What does Paul mean?

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- **Sin affects people in the following ways:**
  - **Our Tongues** (We lie to protect our own interests & to damage others)
  - **Our Relationships** (We push those down who get in our way; we're angry with others who get in the way of our worshiping idols; we don't have peace without ourselves / others)
  - **Our Relationship with God** (No one does good / has a fear of God or seeks after Him)



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# What does this mean for us?

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Left to my natural state (and abilities) I would never try to seek God. I need to constantly be reminded of my own self-centeredness and that I am not better than anyone for what God has done for me



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## B. 3:21-4:25 Justification by Faith

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- **Law:** Rule of Pauline interpretation: understand Law as Torah
- **Righteousness:** The process by which God acts to put people in right relationship with himself.
- **Justify:** what a judge does when he declares innocent the defendant in a trial



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# Universalism in 3:24?

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- (ESV / NIV) 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 **and are justified** by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
- (NIV11) **and all are justified** freely by his grace
- (NET) But **they are justified** freely by his grace
- (NASB) **being justified** as a gift by His grace
- (KJV) **Being justified** freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- (NLT) Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous



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# Universalism in 3:24?

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- For all have sinned and are lacking the glory of God, are justified freely (by) his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
- πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ



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(v24) "Through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"

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- "Redemption" = liberation through payment of a price
  - deliverance / deliver



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(v25) "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement"

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- (v25) "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement"
- "Atonement" = "propitiate" the wrath of the gods
- **Mercy seat** = the alter where blood was placed and atonement took place. Lev 16 (Lev 3:1, 13-15)



"The cross of Christ is this new covenant age where God deals with the sins of His People...no longer behind a veil, God's atoning work is now displayed for all to see." -Moo



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# What's Paul's topic?

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- The righteousness of God and faith in Jesus



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## b. 4:1-25 "By Faith Alone": Abraham

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- Righteousness / Justify (11 times, dikao in ch 4)



2if Abraham was justified by works then he'd have something to boast about

3But scripture says: "Abraham believed God, and it [that belief] was counted to him as righteousness."

4Because if people think they can be justified by their "works" then what they've "earned" is not a gift (rather they've earned something that someone else is obligated to pay them)

5But the person who (instead) trusts God (since God is the only one who can justify the ungodly), then that person's faith is counted as righteousness (because trusting God is the only thing you can do that's NOT a work). And like King David said, "God blesses those people who are not trying to please Him through their own works"

9This blessing is for both the Jewish person (who is circumcised) and also the Gentile (anyone who isn't circumcised)!

And so Abraham was made righteous by his faith (not by anything he did), and this righteousness happened before he was circumcised.



11 And so, Abraham is the father of ALL PEOPLE who believe (not just the Jewish-circumcised ones)

13 God's promise to Abraham and Abraham's offspring (that he would be the heir of the world) also came through Abraham's righteousness of faith, and not by any work of the law / Torah / ethnicity

14 If only faithful Jews who follow Torah are to be the heirs of the promise, then faith is meaningless, and the promise is a waste. (15 and the Torah actually only brings God's wrath anyway)

16 But the promise to Abraham depends on faith so it can rest on grace; and by grace it's guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring (not merely Israelites who follow Torah, but to all people who have the same faith that Abraham had; this is why we call Abraham our "father" (and the "father of many nations"), because he is the father of anyone who has faith (Jew or Gentile, equally).



18 Abraham had hope in God's promise when there was no hope (because he didn't even have one offspring, let alone enough offspring to number the stars)

20 But Abraham never waivered, and instead he grew a strong faith and gave all the glory to God.

21 Abraham was completely convinced that God would do what he said he'd do!

22 And since Abraham completely trusted God (in faith), this is why we say his faith was "counted to him as righteousness"

23 But it wasn't just Abraham who was "counted righteous," no, this is for us too!

24 Anyone (Jew or Gentile) who believes in the God who raised Jesus from the dead - this Jesus who was delivered into death for our sin and raised in order to justify us before God - all those believers are also Abraham's offspring and inherit the promise!



**"If we stop trusting in ourselves as justifiers and start trusting God as justifier, the result is credited righteousness" -Keller**

**"If we compare other verses in which the same grammatical construction is used as in Gen 15:6 we arrive at the conclusion...that the [crediting] of Abram's faith as righteousness means 'to account him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.'"**

**-Moo**



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## Gen 12:1-3 Founder of the "people of promise"

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<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."



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## Gen 15:3-6 Abraham's belief was his righteousness

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<sup>3</sup>And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” <sup>4</sup>And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” <sup>5</sup>And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>6</sup>And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.



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Gen 17:4-11 OT calls circumcision a "sign of the covenant"

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4“Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations...<sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”



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Gen 17:4-11 OT calls circumcision a "sign of the covenant"

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<sup>9</sup>And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup>This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.



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# Abraham's promise:

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- Gen 12:1 To inherit the "land"
  - land = *eretz* (a specific land / planet earth)
- Paul's interpretation:
  - Rom 4:13 "His offspring would be heir of the world"
    - world = *kosmos* (planet earth)



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Abraham's Covenant wasn't about ethnic-exclusivity, but faith-exclusivity!

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- "If Abraham was able to gain this righteousness without the law (since he was not yet circumcised), then Gentiles who exhibit parallel faith without the law are living in a manner reminiscent of Abraham. And as such they too may be considered people who enjoy the same blessings that Abraham enjoyed." -Gary Burge (Jesus and the Land)



## Galatians 3

6just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? 7Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” 9So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” 11Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” 12But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” 13Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— 14so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.



15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.



21Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. 22But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

23Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.



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# The Temporary Means of God

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- "The (Holy) Land, like the Torah, was a temporary stage in the long purpose of the God of Abraham. It was not a bad thing done away with, but a good and necessary thing now fulfilled in Christ and the Spirit. It is as though, in fact, the Land were a great advance metaphor for the design of God that his people should eventually bring the whole world into submission to his healing reign. God's whole purpose now goes beyond Jerusalem and the Land to the whole world."

NT Wright



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# What's Paul's topic?

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- Abraham was righteous because he believed



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# What does Paul mean?

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- Abraham wasn't made right before God because he was faithful to the Torah (he didn't even have the Torah). Rather, Abraham and his offspring will inherit the world because of the grace that rests on faith (16). If Abraham tried to WORK for his inheritance then it would be something he earned and that Yahweh was obligated to give him. But God isn't obligated to do anything except that which His nature requires (specifically, being faithful).



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# What does this mean for us?

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- (1) Our commitment to religion and moralism isn't going to help us in the sight of God. Living out the Messiah's "ethic" is what the Christian ought to strive for, but once the "practice" of the faith becomes more emphasized / important than the object of the faith, then you have legalism.



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# What does this mean for us?

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- (2) While we might have great historical interest in things like the "Holy Land," we don't need to have a theological interest in it (meaning, there isn't anything "extra spiritual" about Palestine). The promises given that Abraham's "descendants" will inherit the promise land was fulfilled in the Messiah and experienced by His people every minute of every day, at each corner of the kosmos!