

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In Romans, Paul writes like a lawyer, presenting the most systematic presentation of the gospel we find in the Bible. After the prologue he starts the BAD NEWS of our universal sin problem, concluding with “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This is followed by the GOOD NEWS.

The word “gospel” means “good news” and it is the news that God has made a way for us to be right (righteous) on the basis of two things. 1) On the divine side God in GRACE has taken care of our sin problem in the person of His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ. This is emphasized with the words REDEMPTION (meaning to set free with a price) and PROPITIATION (meaning appeasement of God’s wrath) both of which are provided in the person of Christ as seen in Romans 3:24-25.

But then 2) the provision for our sin problem in the person of Christ must be personally appropriated by faith alone. This is the human side of response – the response of faith. In Romans 3:21-31 Paul hammers home justification by faith alone apart from works. And then in 4:1-8 he illustrates it in the life of Abraham and David.

Abraham is the example of justified by faith alone and David is an example that the man of faith does not have sin imputed even if he should fall.

This combination illustrates that we are saved by faith alone and in that faith we have eternal security. The whole point is that we have justification by faith alone apart from works. Works neither contribute to our salvation nor keep us saved. We are saved by faith alone apart from anything we do!

Paul drives home this point in Romans 4:4-5 which are some of the strongest verses in the Bible that plainly state we are not saved by anything we do, but rather just by faith alone.

Slide # 2

Romans 4:4–5 (NKJV)

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does **not work** but **believes** on Him who **justifies the ungodly**, his **faith** is accounted for righteousness,

Note a true saving faith does not depend on self-works at all. It depends on NOTHING that I do, no sacraments, no prayers, no good works – NOTHING whatsoever that is done in the flesh. Rather, a saving faith believes on the Lord. And note God justifies (declares righteous) the UNGODLY who put their faith in Him. A sinner comes as he is. He does not clean himself up – because he can't. He simply believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and God on the basis of FAITH ALONE accounts him as righteous. This is justification by faith alone.

So why does Paul keep hammering on this truth that God's righteousness is credited to us by faith alone? I think it's because he knows how deeply embedded in the fallen human heart is the idea that we can do something to commend ourselves to God. The last two millennia of human history prove him to be right. All religions, including the major ones that go under the label of "Christian," are works-oriented. They teach what Paul explicitly and repeatedly denies here, that at least in part, we are saved by keeping religious rituals and by our good deeds. – **Steven Cole**

In the end, you have two kinds of people: Those who are TRYING to be saved and those who are TRUSTING in God for salvation. And those two are mutually exclusive. Those who are TRYING typically fall into one of two errors. 1) They often think they are good enough or can be good enough to somehow merit salvation; or 2) they think that religious observances, rites, and rituals will help them on to God.

Paul has already at great length proven that none are good and that all come short of God's standard. But the Jews were HEAVY into religious rituals and legal observations, to the point of putting their faith in these things instead of TRUSTING in God.

Romans 4:9–17 (NKJV)

9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Paul has just described “the blessedness” of the person “to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works” (v. 6) and “to whom the Lord shall not impute sin” (v. 8). This is a description of salvation based on faith alone. This person is BLESSED – they are in the blessed position of being right with God.

It is this idea of “blessedness” rooted in having a righteous standing before God on the basis of faith alone that drives this whole section we are studying this morning. This is the BIG IDEA in this whole context.

But now the question is this: Does this blessed position of having faith accounted for righteousness apply only to the circumcised (that is Jews) or does it also apply to the uncircumcised (that is believing Gentiles)?

The Jews put tremendous stock in the outward rite of circumcision. Ever since Abraham it had been the MARK that they were the special chosen people of God set apart from the Gentiles. So, the Jews commonly thought that their circumcision was a guarantee that they were saved and that no circumcised Jew would go to hell. But they were wrong on this and Paul is about to school them in this regard. Paul is about to show them that ungodly Gentiles are saved in the exact same way as religious Jews – namely by FAITH ALONE!

10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

What was Abraham's experience? HOW did he come to have righteousness accounted to him? Did it happen after he was circumcised or before? Paul dogmatically states, “Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.” In fact, the record of Genesis shows that God accounted Abraham righteous on the basis of his faith in Genesis 15:6 took place at least 13 years before he was circumcised.

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Genesis 15:6 – Accounted Righteous.

Genesis 16:16 – 86 years old at the birth of Ishmael.

Genesis 17:24 – 99 years old when circumcised.

The point is Abraham was declared righteous by God on the basis of his belief LONG before he was ever circumcised. His circumcision, therefore, had NOTHING to do with making him righteous before God. Rather, he was justified by faith alone!

Note the order is **Faith, Justification, and then Circumcision**. If you get this order mixed up you will be messed up in your theology. Abraham first believed, and then that belief was accounted for righteousness, and then at least 13 years later, he was circumcised.

What Paul is doing is unpacking the principle he already stated in Romans 3:29-30...

Slide # 4

Romans 3:29–30 (NKJV)

29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? **Yes, of the Gentiles also,**

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised **by faith** and the uncircumcised **through faith**.

Amazingly, Abraham was, in effect, declared a righteous man by God while yet being in the state of a Gentile because the Jews considered an uncircumcised person to be an unclean Gentile. But here Paul lets the record clearly show that Abraham was accounted righteous LONG BEFORE he was circumcised simply on the basis of his faith ALONE!

Therefore, righteousness on the basis of FAITH ALONE is not merely a “Jewish reality” but rather one that applies to Gentiles as well. It applied to Abraham in his state of being a Gentile before he was in the state of being a Jew – that is, while he was still uncircumcised.

Thus, the argument of Paul really turns the Jewish boast of circumcision on its head.

It is not the Gentile who must come to Jewish circumcision for salvation, rather it is the Jew who must come to a Gentile type of faith, that is FAITH ALONE – just like Abraham had prior to being circumcised.

Therefore, the truth of justification by faith alone applies to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile.

So then, what was the purpose of circumcision? If it has nothing to do with justification, what purpose does it serve? Paul answers this question in verses 11 and 12.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

Circumcision as a sign of the covenant relationship began with Abraham but it also had special significance and meaning in relationship to Abraham personally. And God sovereignly worked in the timing of when it happened also for a very special purpose.

Once again we note how very important it is to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). The argument of Paul here is very precise because God did it exactly the way He did for a special reason.

To begin with, Abraham received circumcision as a sign and a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he already possessed as an uncircumcised man. He was not circumcised so he could become righteous, but because he already was righteous on the basis of faith.

Circumcision for Abraham was a **sign and a seal** of this righteous standing.

Signs point to something, and in this case, the sign pointed to the faith Abraham had and the righteousness that was accounted to him on that basis. **Seals** were used in Bible days to authenticate that a document was genuine. If a letter was issued from a king it would have the king's seal on it to serve as proof that it was from him. A sign points to something; whereas, a seal guarantees it. Thus, Abraham's circumcision pointed to his being righteous by faith and also served as God's validation. Abraham's circumcision uniquely had God's authenticating seal of his faith upon it.

Now, going forward, that could not be said of 8-day-old babies.

Going forward God instructed that Jewish babies were to be circumcised when they were 8 days old (cf. Genesis 17:12). Male babies 8 days old do not have faith! They were to be circumcised as a “*sign of the covenant*,” as God says in Genesis 17:11, but nothing is said that it would be a SEAL of the righteousness of their faith because, in truth, 8-day-old babies do not yet have faith.

Thus, circumcision serving as a seal of the righteousness of his faith is uniquely stated to be the case in relationship only to Abraham.

A sign is not the real thing, but it points to it. A seal authenticates or attests to the reality of something. A notary’s seal on a document attests that it is the real thing. – Steven Cole

A seal doesn’t make it so, it simply serves as a validation of something (cf. 1 Cor. 9:2). It has been stated that in the circumcision of Abraham “God was merely confirming and adding His signature to His earlier pronouncement” that Abraham was righteous by faith alone.

A seal is a confirmation of what is already in place. Circumcision for Abraham was an outward verification of an inward faith reality. It did not confer righteousness but only further confirmed it.

Now, going forward, the sign of circumcision was an outward indication that God was in a special covenant relationship with Israel as a people. However, God intended all along that outward physical reality have a corresponding inward heart reality. And in fact, the outward reality without an inward reality really counted for nothing. It was the inward heart reality that was of utmost importance.

Slide # 5

Deuteronomy 10:16 (NKJV)

16 Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Jeremiah 4:4 (NKJV)

4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”

Paul has already made the point clearly in Romans 2:28-29.

Slide # 6

Romans 2:28–29 (NKJV)

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 but he is a Jew who is one **inwardly**; and **circumcision is that of the heart**, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

Right here at Romans 4:11 there has been tremendous confusion brought in by those who claim that baptism is the counterpart to circumcision. It is true that there is some symbolic similarities between circumcision and baptism (cf. Col. 2:11-12), but there are also significant differences.

Covenant theologians see baptism as essentially corresponding to circumcision in the OT, and on this basis, they justify infant baptism. Furthermore, based on Romans 4:11 they claim baptism is a seal of the covenant. As a seal, baptism supposedly actually does something when it is administered to the child – namely seals them under the New Covenant.

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If the “seal” is related to getting saved, then how can this be reconciled with the affirmation that believers are saved by faith alone? If salvation is by faith alone, it seems to be double-speak to say that a sacrament, a physical ritual, is part of the process. These tensions within the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism result from the fact that Reformed theologians view baptism as a covenantal “seal”. – **Daniel C. Lane**

Physical circumcision related to Israel is completely distinct from believer's baptism in the NT Church Age. NEVER do we find infant baptism in the NT – only believer's baptism. And not only that if one was to be consistent only male babies should be baptized as only male babies were circumcised.

And baptism is never said to be a seal in the NT. In fact, circumcision as a SEAL was unique to Abraham and did not apply to Jewish babies in the OT because they had not yet even come to faith. You can't seal something which is not yet a reality. Sealing is a confirmation reality!

In the NT baptism is not said to be a seal, rather the Holy Spirit is said to be the believer's seal (cf. Eph. 1:13, 4:30).

Slide # 8

In the MacArthur Study Bible index under "Baptism" it has an entry: "Scriptures supporting infant baptism. Prov. 30:6."

Proverbs 30:6 (NKJV)

Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

One of the strongest points Paul makes in the NT is that circumcision has nothing to do with saving a person.

Slide # 9

Galatians 5:6 (NKJV)

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Galatians 6:15 (NKJV)

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Colossians 3:11 (NKJV)

11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Just as the Jews clung to circumcision as a means of salvation many professing Christians cling to baptism as a means of salvation.

No doctrine has been more instrumental in persuading lost people that they are really saved than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Here, Rome has taken the lead, but many Protestant churches have followed that lead using "covenant theology" as their justification for doing so. – **John Phillips**

Just as in the case of circumcision, to put your trust in a ritual (whether circumcision or baptism) is to hold to a false gospel. It's not Jesus plus circumcision that saves! It's not Jesus plus baptism that saves! It is Jesus alone – it is faith alone, in Jesus alone that saves!

Yet today, multitudes of professing Christians practice some form of baptismal regeneration; which in effect, is the same old error as that which Paul battled in the NT concerning circumcision.

However, don't misunderstand. Circumcision in the O.T. was important as a sign. Moses was negligent in circumcising his son and God nearly killed him for it as seen in Exodus 4:24-26. Likewise, in the N.T., baptism is important as an outward testimony as a sign of identification that follows faith. It is a command that we are to obey after we believe. We believe and are saved. Period. Nothing more is needed for salvation. However, if we truly believe, then we are commanded to outwardly identify with Christ in baptism.

Belief in Christ is an all-or-nothing proposition. To believe in Christ for salvation is to believe in Him ALONE. To add anything to Christ, whether it be circumcision, baptism, sacraments, or good works of any kind is, in effect, a rejection of Christ. This type of faith does not save. The only kind of faith that saves is to place 100% trust in Christ ALONE for salvation.

But there is one more thing to note here in Romans 4:11 concerning Abraham's circumcision. God had a unique purpose in first bringing him to faith and then later having him be circumcised. And that PURPOSE was so that Abraham "*might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also*".

God intended for Abraham to be the prototype of all believers. He is the God-ordained model that justification is by faith alone! That is what it means when it says that he "***might be the father of all those who believe***".

When it says Abraham is the father of believing Gentiles, there is no thought of physical descent, of course. It simply means that these believers are his children because they imitate his faith.

- William MacDonald

He is the spiritual father of all believers in the sense that we as believers who follow after him share in the very same type of faith – that is a saving faith patterned after him. And note it was a faith not dependent upon circumcision or anything else other than the Word of God's promise. Abraham had the "righteousness of faith...while still uncircumcised." He is the God-ordained – the God-illustrated pattern of saving faith. And for that reason he is called "the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised".

As Gentile believers, we have righteousness imputed to us just like Abraham did – that is on the basis of faith alone.

Slide # 10

Galatians 3:6–7 (NKJV)

6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

But not only is Abraham the father of uncircumcised believers, he is also the father of circumcised believers.

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

Note the careful language here. Yes, Abraham was the physical father (through Isaac and then Jacob) of the physical Jews who were commonly called “the circumcision” because this outward sign which so definitely defined them (cf. Lk. 3:8; 16:24, 30; Jn. 8:39, 53, 56; Acts 7:2; Ja. 2:21).

But note the qualifier here. He is not talking about those who are merely circumcised but rather about those who also walk in the steps of the faith that Abraham while still uncircumcised. That is those who share in the same kind of faith that Abraham had prior to his circumcision. In other words, true believing Jews are saved by FAITH ALONE in the bare promise of God just like Abraham was saved. The outward sign of circumcision has nothing to do with their salvation and they don’t trust in it for salvation.

Abraham was not justified because he had been circumcised; he was circumcised because he had been justified. The same is true today with water baptism. A man is not saved because he has been water baptized; he is water baptized because he has been saved. It is not the rite that makes a person right in God’s sight. First you must be right in God’s sight (by faith) and then the rite becomes right! -
(Quoted from Middletown Bible Church Notes on Romans 4)

True believers whether Jewish or Gentile in background are all saved on the basis of FAITH ALONE just like Abraham who believed God’s promise in Genesis 15:6 and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

The nature of saving faith is the same in all cases – although now on this side of the cross we believe in the progressive revelation of God as seen in gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The object of our faith today is specifically the Person and Work of Jesus, but the nature of saving faith is the same!

Note that it specifically says those with saving faith “**walk in the steps of the faith**” of Abraham. This indicates that a saving faith is a living faith that walks. That is, it demonstrates itself in the life.

Note there is a difference between Abraham’s descendants and the spiritual children of Abraham.

Slide # 11

John 8:37 (NKJV)

37 “I know that you are **Abraham’s descendants**, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

John 8:39 (NKJV)

39 They answered and said to Him, “**Abraham is our father.**” Jesus said to them, “If you were **Abraham’s children**, you **would do the works of Abraham.**”

This shows very clearly that the concept of being Abraham’s children means that his children share in the same kind of faith he had and emulate his walk of faith. Like father – like child in terms of character – a character shaped by saving faith. They share in the same kind of faith and this then demonstrates itself in their life. So, these Jews in John 8 were indeed the descendants of Abraham but they were not his spiritual children.

Slide # 12

Heretical View

Faith + Works = Justification

Biblical View

Faith = Justification + Works

Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe in that he exemplifies a saving faith that all true believers who follow after him emulate.

In the sovereignty of God Abraham is the perfect pattern or prototype because he perfectly intersects with uncircumcised believers as well as circumcised believers with the common denominator being FAITH ALONE is what saves. He is the perfect model in that he was saved as a Gentile without circumcision and yet at the same time it was through him that the covenant sign of circumcision was instituted.

Thus, Abraham is the father of all who believe – both of believing Gentiles and believing Jews. All true believers share in the same kind of faith that defined Abraham. Just like Abraham true believers are saved by faith alone but it is a living faith that then demonstrates itself in the life.

The Jews prided themselves on circumcision and the law. Paul has dealt with the issue of circumcision – showing it has nothing to do with saving a person and now in verses 13-17 he deals with the issue of the law.

13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

The promise here in context relates to Abraham being the father of all believers as just noted in verses 11 and 12. And the flow of thought leads to him being “a father of many nations” in verse 17. But all the way through those Abraham is the father of refers to his spiritual heirs – his spiritual children who share in his faith. This is really what Paul is dealing with in this context.

In the end, the world will be filled with believers who share in the faith of Abraham. Only these will go into the kingdom and in the end, the eternal kingdom will be comprised of only true believers (cf. Mt. 5:5). In this sense Abraham was promised to be “heir of the world” (cf. LK. 13:28-29).

This exact phrase “*heir of the world*” is not found anywhere in the Scriptures, but the context makes it clear that Paul is talking about spiritual heirs who share in Abraham’s faith. All those who will share in the world to come (so to speak) are those who have “the righteousness of faith” (cf. Heb. 11:10-16; Rev. 21-22). Note the promise is not only in regard to Abraham but also in relation to his seed who have the righteousness of faith.

Paul’s point is that those who will share in the world to come don’t arrive there by way of the law, but rather “through the righteousness of faith”. We are saved by faith and we will partake in the kingdom world on the basis of our faith. This is true of Abraham and true of all believers.

The historical reality is that the law was given 430 years after the time of Abraham as Paul says in Galatians 3:17.

Therefore, the law had nothing to do with saving Abraham. That is the point. Abraham was not saved on the basis of law-keeping, but rather by faith, and the same is true of all believers who follow after him.

Slide # 13

Galatians 3:26 (NKJV)

26 For you are **all sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

29 And if you are **Christ's**, then you are **Abraham's seed**, and **heirs according to the promise.**

14 For if those who are of the **law are heirs**, **faith is made void** and the **promise made of no effect**,

The promise is the Word of God and believers as they believe in God's Word (His promise) are accounted as righteous. This principle of entering into what God has promised by faith alone is diametrically opposed to being right with God on the basis of law-keeping.

You can't have it both ways. You are either heirs of God's promise by faith or by law keeping. It is one or the other. And Paul is very clear it is only by FAITH and not by law-keeping that we are heirs of God's promise.

Here is the problem with law-keeping. No one keeps it (Jn. 7:19). No one can keep it. Man's inability to keep the law would mean that God's promise could never be fulfilled.

If the condition of God fulfilling His promise is based on man keeping the law then the promise is made void because it is impossible for people to do this. Man's disobedience to the law would make the promise of no effect. There has to be another way – and there is – that is the way of FAITH.

The principle of faith is the opposite of the principle of law. Faith is a matter of believing while law is a matter of doing. The one cancels out the other. One is either saved by believing or by doing. It can't be both and it can't be by doing because of man's inability to keep the law.

15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

Here is what the law does! It brings wrath. It doesn't bring the blessedness of being right with God, rather it brings wrath (cf. Rom. 5:20). The principle is this. There are consequences for disobedience. If there is no law there is no transgression. Transgression means "stepping over". In disobedience it crosses the line of righteousness that God has drawn.

The point is the law instead of helping us on to God further builds a case for God's wrath against those who disobey (cf. Acts 15:9-11). And the problem is, as Paul has already at length shown we all disobey the law – either God's moral law written on our hearts (2:15) or His written law as prescribed in the law of Moses (2:23-24). Thus, the law is not the way to be right with God – it just exposes our wrongness and calls for the punishment of it. For this reason Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 calls the law "the ministry of death" (2 Cor. 3:7); and "the ministry of condemnation" (3:9).

But God in His sovereign plan has made a way...

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Note that this verse is emphasizing that faith is in accordance with grace. The Greek literally reads, "therefore by faith in order that according to grace". This is important because some theologians want to make faith a matter of works saying that to tell people they must believe amounts to a "works salvation" because spiritually dead people can't believe.

I agree that on our own no one can come to faith. As Paul says in Romans 3:11, "***There is none who seeks after God.***" God is ever the seeker, but at some point when God is seeking, when God is speaking the onus does fall on human responsibility and human response. As Hebrews 3 says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7-8). Paul in Romans 1:5 and 16:25-26 describes this required response as "the obedience of faith".

And when people respond in FAITH to God's working in their hearts that is in accordance with grace – not contrary to it. Faith and grace go together. They are partners.

Grace is all God's doing but faith intersects with human response and human responsibility. There is mystery here. But I believe a faithful Biblicist holds to both realities because both are taught in the Bible.

Paul's point is that the position of blessedness – the state of being righteous before God is based on faith ALONE in the Word (or promise) of God which is in accordance with grace. It's not based on our works or law-keeping but rather on faith which appropriates the unmerited favor of God.

Slide # 14

God's promises to Abraham were founded on his faith so that it would be acknowledged that salvation was only through grace, that is, God's favor. - ***The Nelson Study Bible***

All the way through Romans 3 and 4 Paul's MAIN POINT is that justification is by FAITH ALONE which is non meritorious, which is in contrast to law-keeping and works which are merit based in orientation. Faith is according to grace while law is according to works. God's way of acquiring righteousness is by faith alone which is according to grace (cf. Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 2:8).

Slide # 15

Faith means trusting another, not in one's own efforts. Faith therefore corresponds exactly to grace. – ***ESV Study Bible***

It is faith which links us to that grace, that unmerited favor.
– ***John Phillips***

Salvation is of God, not man. It is of faith, and so, of grace; and thus, of God. – ***William Newell***

Slide # 16

Our human response can only be faith. For grace gives and faith takes. Faith's exclusive function is humbly to receive what grace offers. – ***John Stott***

Faith and grace can never be partners with law-keeping. Faith and grace can never be partners with circumcision or water baptism. Faith and grace can never work in partnership with good works in order to give us a right standing before God. Faith and grace are discriminatory. They will only work with each other. – ***Steven Lawson***

Salvation is by faith according to grace to the end “***the promise might be sure to all the seed***”. We can be sure! This faith/grace formula has surety – assurance – security written into it. If it were by law we could never be sure, because we can never count on self. It always fails. We always fail.

But since faith is according to grace, we can be sure because the promise of God never fails. God has promised security to those who believe in Him. In grace God will bring to pass what He has promised (cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-5).

And this applies to ALL believers – whether Gentile or Jew. Note that “the promise might be sure to all the seed [that is all believers] not only to those who are of the law [Jews] but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all”.

This is simply saying that all who share in Abraham’s kind of faith have the security that God will bring to pass what He has promised them and which they have believed.

And again, we have the emphasis that Abraham is “***the father of us all***” – that is the spiritual father (so to speak) of all true believers because all have a faith that is patterned after him – which is to say a faith based on the bare Word of God.

So note the emphasis being developed, which is that we are saved by faith alone (just like Abraham) and that this saving faith results in a secure, blessed relationship with the Lord. Saving faith is a place of security because it is according to grace and not dependent upon our works.

Slide # 17

Abraham had righteousness put to his account on the basis of **FAITH ALONE** – Rom. 4:3.

David as a man of faith did **NOT have his sin imputed** to his account – Rom. 4:8.

The promise of righteousness on the basis of faith according to grace is made **SURE** to all who share in the faith of Abraham – Rom. 4:16.

The law was only officially given only to the Jews – who couldn’t keep it anyway. But God’s promise is attained by faith according to grace so that it may be guaranteed to all who believe whether they be Jew or Gentile. That little word “*all*” at the end of verse 16 is all important because it emphasizes Gentiles who come by faith are securely saved just as much as Jews.

There is no difference! And then Paul continues his thought into verse 17.

17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

The first part of verse 17 is a parenthetical quote from Genesis 17:5 to reinforce the idea of what Paul has just said about Abraham being “the father of us all”.

Slide # 18

Genesis 17:5 (NKJV)

5 No longer shall your name be called **Abram**, but your name shall be **Abraham**; for I have made you a father of many nations.

The name Abram means “exalted father” but God at this point (prior to the birth of Isaac) gave him the name Abraham meaning “father of a multitude”. As quoted here the application relates to all those of faith who would follow Abraham from a multitude of nations.

Note the verse does NOT say “*I will make you*” but rather “***I have made you***” meaning that God would certainly bring this promise to pass. It is so certain that it is spoken of as having already been accomplished by God.

After the parenthetical thought, Paul continues his thought from verse 16, which is that Abraham is the father of us all (believers) “in the presence of Him whom he believed – God”.

What makes Abraham the father of the many was that he believed in God and then the end of verse 17 describes the nature of his faith. It is God Who gives life to the dead and calls those things that do not exist as though they did.

In the immediate context, both Abraham and Sarah are shown to have been reproductively dead. For God to bring forth the promised child eventuating in a multitude of descendants would necessitate a miraculous intervention. This would involve God doing the impossible – namely, giving life to the dead and bringing into existence those things that were previously non-existent. Both of these are descriptive of the miraculous!

And Abraham’s faith was in relation to this promise.

The nature of Abraham's faith involved believing in God to do the impossible to make him the father of a multitude. This was FAITH in the bare Word of God that required a supernatural act of God to bring it to pass. This defined the nature of Abraham's faith that all true believers now share in.

As a footnote we see that Abraham's faith was in response to divine revelation. Faith is taking God at His Word. Authentic biblical faith only exists as a response to divine revelation. As Romans 10:17 says, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Looking to the end of the chapter we see this kind of faith is represented in believing in the resurrection of Christ which also involved God doing the impossible by giving life to the dead (cf. Rom. 4:23-25).

Paul throughout this whole context affirms the PRIORITY of Abraham's faith. He was justified by faith ALONE. And his faith came first, before works, circumcision, or the law. Thus, his faith was distinct from any outward works, religious rites or rituals, and from any legal code or law.

Abraham was saved by FAITH ALONE which is in perfect accord with GRACE. As such Abraham is the premiere example of saving faith in all the Bible – so much so that he is called "the father of all those who believe" (cf. Rom. 4:11,12, 16, 17).

The simple message of the Gospel is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31). That's the only requirement. Why does God do it that way? Romans 4:16 says: ***"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace."***

If there were any other requirement than belief, then it wouldn't be by grace. What if God said, "Everybody who wants to be saved, run around the block"? Well, some people can't run. What if He said, "Everybody who wants to be saved read a chapter in the Bible"? Some people can't read. Or, "Everybody who wants to be saved, give a hundred dollars"? Some people don't have a hundred dollars. It's by faith that you are saved, that it might be of grace. – ***Adrian Rogers***

Indeed, the only requirement that God demands is FAITH – Faith in the gospel or our Lord Jesus Christ. In the end for all eternity there are those saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and then there are all others who will be lost forever.

Paul in Romans 1:16 said the gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes". Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?