

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

4:9 - 5:5

---

### Gods Righteousness Revealed Through Two Laws (Summary)

	<i>Giver / Author</i>	<i>Revealed By</i>	<i>Effective Power On Sinful Man</i>	<i>End Result For Those Who Pursue It</i>
<i>Law Of Works</i>	God	Conscience/ Written Word	Condemns	Death
<i>Law Of Faith</i>	God	Holy Spirit	Justifies	Life

*"For 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." " (Gal 3:10 ESV)*

*"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2 NASB95)*

### Abraham's Justification Declared Prior To The Sign Of Circumcision

**4:9-10)** *"Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised."*

**This blessing** - refers back to what Paul just declared a blessing from David in the Psalms; the person who knows their sin is forgiven and blotted out (vv.6-8).

**Circumcised vs. uncircumcised** - Jews vs. Gentiles as Paul is specifically referring to the outward sign here; Is the blessing of being declared righteous and having the knowledge of the forgiveness of sin given only to believing Jews or is it also for the believing Gentiles?

**Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.**- From Gen. 15:6 God said about Abraham that *"he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."* Paul is reiterating the fact that Abraham was declare righteous by God and then asks when that came; before or after the outward sign of the circumcision. He answers his own rhetorical question by stating that the declaration of righteousness came well before the sign of circumcision was given.

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

### 4:9 - 5:5

---

Circumcision as it pertains to the sign itself was not as superficial to the Jew as being the sign only; it was the entire “identity” of a Jew as experienced through the sign and the religious ceremonies through the law that was there entire way of life. Those clinging to their identity and works as a means of justification in the eyes of God would logically ask “why would God give the command to be circumcised and later the Mosaic law if His people are justified through faith alone?”

This not only addresses the question of the Judaisers at the time but also addresses the same motives that are at the core of all who would seek to add to faith in Christ in order to secure justification in the eyes of God. There are NO works, not even the outward sign of circumcision as a work that can add to (by completing) or take away from (by not completing) the gift of faith that is granted by God.

When Ishmael was born, Abraham was 86 years old (Gen 16:16). Circumcision was given as a sign / commandment to Abraham (Gen 17:9-14) when he was 99 years old; 13 years after Ishmael was born. But Abraham was declared righteous before Ishmael was even conceived. Historic facts prove that the declaration came well before the sign of circumcision or the giving of the Mosaic law.

### The Sign And Its Purpose

***4:11-12) "He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised."***

A manufacturer in the U.S.A. produces a product from conception to completion and then prints on the packaging “made in the U.S.A.”. Its not the seal that makes it true, the seal is simply the “sign” that being made in the U.S.A. is true of the product. The sign of circumcision was given to Abraham as a seal of what had already been declared about him by God; that he was righteous through faith.

***The purpose*** - God had from the beginning promised Abram that he would be the father of “many nations” and while he is the physical father of the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael, his “believing children” come from many nations of the world. It is through the same granted power of faith that both those who are of the circumcision and those that are not are considered righteous. Abram, by God’s grace, became the father or prototype of those who are justified through faith not just from the Jews but also from the Gentiles:

*"Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*  
(Eph 2:11-13 ESV)

This reality is one of the mysteries of the church that Paul defines in his epistles:

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

### 4:9 - 5:5

---

*"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:" (Eph 3:1-6 KJV)*

## The Promise Realized Through Faith

**4:13-15) "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression."**

**The promise...heir of the world** - The promise to Abraham was not the conditional blessings of the Mosaic law, rather it was the unconditional or unilateral promise (Gen 12; 15; 17) of God given to Abram. While Abraham was not perfect in his obedience, he did obey God, but not to seek justification. He obeyed because he believed what God had promised to him. If God intended to justify the adherents of the law which came hundreds of years later through Moses, then His initial law of faith would be made obsolete - **faith is null and the promise void**.

The law can always only bring upon humanity the wrath of God; whereas **where there is no law, there is no transgression**. This means that within the promise that is based on the law of faith, there is no law in effect, because Jesus Christ fulfilled the law and therefor made an end to the transgression and its penalty.

**4:16-17) "That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring--not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"--in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."**

**It depends on faith** - The justification that is credited to those who will stand in Gods presence depends on the law of faith; why? So that the promise and its fulfillment will be fully credited to God's grace. Because it comes from God it is **guaranteed** (can't fail) to all who have faith in Him who is able and willing to keep His promises.

Paul now adds to the understanding of the promise resting on God's grace and the fact that it is guaranteed by stating that God **gives life to the dead**. Just as Paul pointed out in Ephesians 2 that all believers were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph2:1-5), it is God who gives life to the spiritually dead. Abram was not in the grave when God called him forth, but he was in a spiritual grave and had no relationship with God. He was as Paul had described in chapter 3 not righteous or seeking after God.

Just as God spoke into existence all of creation from that which did not exist, the same is true of the law of faith. His relationship to His people is based on a "granted" or "created" faith - **calls into existence the things that do not exist**. Remember the context here is saving faith, not creation. If God did not call and then grant

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

### 4:9 - 5:5

---

faith to respond to that calling, there would be no people of God. Additionally God is able to declare His people righteous, when they had no righteousness of their own, because Jesus became our sin, when He had no sin of His own. Paul has demonstrated that the justification of God's people is through faith and not through the law (v.1-8) and that faith is according to God's grace as a gift and not according to the merits of the flesh (v.9-17). He will now again point to the circumstances of Abraham's life to demonstrate that it is the power of God that brings the promise to its fulfillment (v.18-25).

**4:18-21) "In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be. " He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. "**

In the second iteration of the promise (Gen 15) Abram while considering God's promise **"So shall your offspring be"** asked God how it could happen when he and Sarah were at the age they were and he had no actual children. God demonstrated to Abram that He would be faithful to bring to pass what He had promised by cutting a covenant in blood that God alone provided. Abrams' questioning wasn't based on doubt rather it was based on belief! He trusted God but also knew the physical reality of his own situation.

Paul says that **he did not weaken in faith... no unbelief made him waiver** even though he was as "good as dead" when it came to children. This demonstrates the power of God when it comes to faith. Abraham could not see the future nor was there any physically favorable conditions that would contribute to a "natural" belief in the promises God made to him. Non the less he was **fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised.**

This does not mean that Abraham didn't sin along the way, but he was strong in his faith and **gave glory to God** as he trusted in His promises. It is the full trust and faith in the character and Word of God that counts as righteousness in the sight of God.

**4:22-25) "That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness. " But the words "it was counted to him " were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. "**

**Not written for his sake alone, but for ours also** - This set the standard for all who would seek justification in the sight of God through history. As Paul writes in chapter 15 that the things written of in scripture were "written for our instruction.(v.4)" and here he links the justification of Abraham to the justification of all believers which comes through faith in God. While Abraham didn't have the gospel of Christ revealed to him, his sin was blotted out the same as any of God's people. With the advent of Christ; His death, burial and resurrection, the unconditional promises of God have been ratified in His blood. For Jews who would challenge this

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

### 4:9 - 5:5

---

with the need to be circumcised in order to come to faith in Christ, or to the unbelieving Jews who would claim that justification comes through the law, what was established in the past is demonstrated in the present, that the righteous are justified by faith and not through works. The sacrifice of His own body and blood may seem foolish to the natural mind, but to the believer we know through faith our sin is blotted out. Additionally we trust that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too will be raised; even though we can't see that now.

### Faith From God Endures

Since it has been established that our justification is through faith, it is now necessary to demonstrate that real faith endures and doesn't return to trusting in works to justify. This is important because while faith is the power of God that also produces good works, God must always be glorified through the believer acknowledging where the power comes from to do good works (Eph 2:10).

**5:1-2) "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."**

**Have been justified** - This reflects the once, for all time nature of justification. The positional justification of a believer is not a progressive process; it is instant and permanent.

**We have peace with God** - is expressed in an ongoing, permanent sense. Not only experienced at the moment of salvation peace is produced through the indwelling Spirit in a way that passes human understanding (Php 4:7). The believer doesn't have the weight of condemnation abiding on their conscience. By way of contrast, one who seeks justification through works is in a constant state of uncertainty and has not entered into the rest of the promises of God through Jesus Christ (Heb 3:12-4:13). God's peace is not based on circumstances and is not subjective. Circumstances change but God remains the same.

**We have also obtained access by faith into this grace** - This access to God was a foreign thought to the religious Jew who was well aware that only the high priest, once a year was allowed into the holy of holies and that after very careful preparation was made (Ex 19:9,20,21; 28:35). The author of Hebrews wrote that Jesus has gone before His people into the real holy of holies and has become the access for all believers into God's grace (Heb 6:17-20). We **stand** in His grace without the fear of being consumed by His glory.

**We rejoice in hope of the glory of God** - Here Paul links our hope to the glory of God. Glory is one of God's eternal, intrinsic attributes, so this is hope in His "revealed" glory. God's glory will ultimately be expressed in the revelation of Jesus Christ, His inexpressible gift to mankind:

*"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phl 2:9-11 ESV)*

# ROMANS

## Session\_7

### 4:9 - 5:5

---

*"And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." " (Rev 15:3-4 ESV)*

God's glory also is revealed in the resurrection of His people. Paul tells us that *"when Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory"*(Col 3:4). He writes to Titus that we are *"waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,"* (Tit 2:13). It is in connection with His appearing that we will receive our new bodies:

*"And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?" (Rom 8:23-24 ESV)*

**5:3-5) "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. "**

**Rejoice in our sufferings** - This is suffering that is specifically associated with suffering for the sake of Christ. We are told repeatedly as followers of Christ that we can expect this suffering (Mt 5:10-12; Jn 15:20; 2Cor 4:17; 1Th 3:3; 2Th 1:5; 2Ti 3:12; 1Pe 4:16,19). We have as our example our Lord Jesus who suffered specifically for us:

*"But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering." (Heb 2:9-10 ESV)*

**produces endurance...character...hope** - This is not a hypothetical, rather it is God's sovereign design at work in each of His children's lives to produce godly character. As stated in the Hebrews passage above, Jesus had to endure all manner of suffering in order to bring the Father glory through obedience and to establish Jesus as the perfect manifestation of the righteousness of God. Paul speaks of his personal suffering this way:

*"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom 8:16-18 ESV)*

**Holy Spirit** - Jesus promised that He would send a Helper (Jhn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) who is sent as a pledge or seal of our salvation (2Cor 1:22). God works through His Spirit to produce the endurance, character and hope in us (Php 2:12,13) that Paul is talking about here. In this hope there is no disappointment!