

Rom 207 - **By Faith Alone - Rom 4:1-12**

In Latin - the cry of the Reformation was Sola Fide - **Faith Alone**

All thru the centuries of man - we've seen

**Faith** turn to Religion - & **Faith** turn to Religion - again & again

But that's **NO different** than the Bible's account

that goes from Abraham - to the days when Romans was written

& **consider** Religion in our own day - & in our own culture

**Much** of which can be characterized by the story  
of the **well meaning Preacher;**

He had long departed from the **Real Truth** of the Gospel

but **his story** made sense to his "Religious" congregation

He **told of a frog that fell into a pail of milk**

& that frog tried every way he could to get out - *but to no avail*

**so he did** the only thing he could do -

he just kept paddling & paddling & paddling

until - vwa-lah - **all his effort** turned the milk into butter -

from which he could **launch himself** out of his predicament

**& so** - the Preacher told the congregation

just what they **wanted to hear**

**You just keep doin' your best - & you'll be accepted by God**

**Much of Religion** - ends up becoming about  
"Earning" or "Deserving" salvation from God - ***hasn't it ?***

But that's **not** new a *new* **misunderstanding**  
the Jewish community in Paul's day had that down pat

The Jewish leaders turned Abraham's **incredible faith** into total works

The **Mishnah** - a collection of the traditional Jewish laws,

**Says:** "*we find that Abraham our father  
performed the whole law before it was given*"

The **Book of Jubilees** - apx 100 BC - written by the Rabbis

**Says:** "*For Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord,  
well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life*"

**Those statements** sound So Good - So Righteous . . . .

There's just **One Problem** - Their NOT TRUE

First of all - **IF** Abraham ***performed the whole law*** -

& **IF** he was ***perfect in all his deeds*** -

his name **couldn't** have been Abraham - ***it would have to be Jesus***

**But Abraham** was a man with the **Sin Nature** just like you & me

& the **Bible records** a number of his Sinful Choices

Now - **we obviously** have an "off the chart" **respect**

for both the **Jewish** people - & for **Abraham** himself

But our **Deep Respect** is NOT for the Father of **WORKS**

BUT - for the Father of **FAITH**

& the **Apostle Paul** today -  
is going to *brilliantly* set forth

**Abraham** as the supreme example  
of *Salvation "Sola Fide"* - **BY FAITH ALONE**

## **Let's Pray**

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We know that **Abraham** (*tho not sinless*)  
was indeed a Man of **Great Obedience** & **Effort** for God

*But the question* in today's text is;  
**Did all** his great **works** **Justify** him before God

*Remember* - **Justified** means "***To be Declared Righteous***"

So - **Was** Abraham "**Declared Righteous**"  
**by** his **Obedience** & his **Efforts** for God

**Or** was he "**Declared Righteous**" (**Justified**) in a way  
that **you & I** can be **Equally Justified** today

**THAT** - is *the Big Question*  
& we begin to see *the Big Answer* - in **Rom 4:1**

## **Rom 4:1 - ESV**

***1 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?***

"***according to the flesh***" means - in **respect to himself**,  
or in **respect to his own efforts** - or **his own merit**

***"What was gained by Abraham in respect to his own efforts?"***

Then **Paul follows** that question with a Classic "**if - then**" statement

## **Rom 4:2 - ESV**

***2 For if Abraham was justified by works, [then] he has something to boast about, but not before God.***

**IF** Abraham ***gained anything*** by his own **efforts**,  
**IF** he was ***justified in any way*** by his own "**merits**"  
**THEN** - he ***would have*** something to "**boast**" about . . .

***BUT - NOT BEFORE GOD !***

Meaning he **certainly didn't** have anything of **his own efforts**  
to **boast about** before God

& guys - if **Abraham didn't** have anything to **boast** about before God  
I guess **we** better be **real careful** - in how we **view ourselves**

***Wouldn't you Agree ??***

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**Now** Paul's **going to answer** a **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT question**

It's the answer that **strips away** all *Religious Earning* with God

It's the answer that **strips away** all of our *Pride & Boasting*

It's the answer that **brings** us *TRUE Righteousness* before God

### **Rom 4:3 - ESV**

***3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”***

*First of all* (as an aside) - let me give you the *Best 5-WORD Answer* to **ANY question** that *anyone could ever ask you* about God

***“What Does The Scripture say”***

**ANY question** about God - from **ANY person** - for **ANY reason** can be answered with *these 5 Words*

***“What Does The Scripture say”***

& then **the best thing** you could ever do with that question - is *Go Find Out* exactly what **DOES** the scripture say

& then - **there's just one more secret** about **answering questions** about God

If the Scriptures are **SILENT** on a question . . .

then you answer **THE SAME WAY** the Scriptures do - **BE SILENT**

**SAY** what the Scriptures *say*

**DON'T** Say, what the scriptures *don't say*

But - What **DOES** the scripture say about Abraham's Righteousness;

Was it his efforts or works  
that were counted to him as Righteousness ?? - - **NO !**

Right here in **V.3** - quoting from **Gen 15:6** - we have the ANSWER

**“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him  
as righteousness.”**

**What** was **"IT"** that was counted to Abraham as Righteousness ??

Abraham believed God, and **IT** (his Belief - *his Faith*)  
was counted to him as righteousness

***Now that is really - a very Big deal***

because Man's Desire to **EARN** something from God  
to **Deserve** to be accepted by God

**constantly** & repeatedly OVERTAKES the Bible's **clear claim**  
of **Salvation BY FAITH ALONE**

**Over & over again** - *thruout the centuries* - the Bible **shouts out**  
**SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE**

& then - **Man's Religion** begins to come in like a fog bank  
& slowly but surely - *over & over again . . .*

The **Bible's** battle cry of **FAITH ALONE**  
is **drowned out** by man's desire to **earn** his way to heaven

**Which** is really just a slap in the face  
to **God's** Free Gift of Salvation - isn't it ?

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**Just look** at the next Vs.

### **Rom 4:4 - ESV**

**4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.**

If you **work** to earn something - then what is "counted" to you is **not** a gift - it is your "due" - it's what you **deserve**

**So** if you show up before God some day (& you will)

& **you say** to him - *I've been a pretty good person  
I think you should accept me*

**then what you're saying is;**

*Hey God, your Son **didn't need** to die - I think **I've earned** enough righteousness myself - so, why don't you give me what I deserve*

**If you** make that mistake - I **promise** you . . .

you will **get** what you **deserve** - but you will NOT be happy with it

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Now - let's **re-wind** that "Meeting with God"

& when you show up on that day - you say instead

**All I have** is my Union with Christ - thru Faith in Him Alone

& any works I **have** Aren't mine  
but **Jesus** working thru me

Ooohhh - Now you're talking - Now you're ready for the  
**Well done** good & faithful servant" Welcoming Party

Guys - We need Righteousness "Counted" to us  
Because we can't earn it

& that Righteousness only comes  
by Faith in Him who justifies the ungodly

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Just as V.5 says;

### **Rom 4:5 - ESV**

***5 And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,***

*His faith - is **COUNTED** as righteousness*

This word "**Counted**" is a Critical Word in this passage -  
***What does that word mean ?***

Have you been "Counting" how many times  
we've seen the word "Counted"

V.5 - ***his faith is counted as righteousness***

V.4 - ***his wages are not counted as a gift***

V.3 - ***Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness***

**Three times** in Three Vs's - the word "Counted" is used  
& in this passage - a total of **8 TIMES** this word is used

**The GK word** is Logizomai (log\*id\*zom\*ahee)  
It's kinda hard, but a fun word to say

**The word means LIT:**

***"To put to one's account" "To impute, or to credit to a person"***



**Abraham's FAITH** was "imputed" or "credited" to him  
As Righteousness

**Our Sin** - both our sin nature & our sinful choices  
puts to our account - **UN-righteousness**

& **no matter if** we have a little or a lot  
our UN-Righteousness - **CANNOT** be **changed** to Righteousness

But **God's Word says** - all the way back to Abraham  
If we will **put our full trust & faith** in Him - If we will believe Him

**He will - By His Grace & Thru our Faith;**

He will PUT to our account

He will IMPUTE to us

He will CREDIT to us - - - **HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS !**

& the one thing that we **MUST understand**  
that the Religious World **misses** so often

is that the **ONLY Level of Righteousness** that God can accept  
is **HIS OWN LEVEL** of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

You **can't show up** just being More Righteous than the next guy  
that does you no good at all

You **must show** up  
in the Righteousness that is **EQUAL** to Jesus Christ

& the Bible says the **ONLY WAY** for you to receive  
**that level** of Righteousness

is **THRU** putting your Faith in God's **Only Way of Salvation**

Which is exactly what Abraham did !

& he did it long before Jesus Christ actually Fulfilled  
the sacrifice necessary to complete this Accounting Transaction

& HERE is that Accounting Transaction - - -

Our SIN is put to HIS Account - & *Paid For by Him*  
& His RIGHTEOUSNESS is put to OUR Account

That is done;

BY God's GRACE - & THRU our FAITH - ALONE - *SOLA FIDE !*

When a man - or a woman - - or a church LEARNS:

that all we have, all we are, & all we do  
is BY God's Grace, & THRU our Faith

Then we will find ourselves

*praying, studying, worshipping, witnessing* - & working

Not because we're trying to Earn God's acceptance  
but because we're Responding

to the One Who *loves us so deeply*

that we've Given our Lives - IN RESPONSE

& then - - we begin doing

the right things, for the right reasons

Doesn't that make *more sense*

than trying to Earn our way *to God*

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Now **Paul** turns to **King David**  
probably the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important figure in Jewish History

After his sins of **Adultery & Murder**

King David **KNEW** there was nothing he could **DO**  
to make up for his sins

In **the OT law** there was **No Restitution** for these sins

They were punishable by Death  
& that was the **ONLY Righteous Response**

David's case was **hopeless** - there was **nothing** He could do  
No Effort - No Works - Could make him Righteous before God

His **only choice** was to Acknowledge his sin -  
& cast himself - In Faith - upon the **Mercy of God**

& when he did - he was **Forgiven, SOLA FIDE** - By Faith Alone

### **Rom 4:6 - ESV**

**6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom  
God counts righteousness apart from works:**

**There's our word "COUNTS"** again -

God "Counted" to David **Righteousness** apart from works

& **King David** knew - that altho he **deserved death**  
the Lord **did not COUNT** his sin against him

## Look at Rom 4:7-8 - ESV

7 *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*

8 *blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*

David's sin was "Not Counted" to him  
as far as Righteousness was concerned

Altho - it's important to point out  
that King David experienced dire consequences for his sin  
even tho he was Forgiven by God

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So - we've seen Righteousness "Counted" (put to - credited)  
to Abraham & to King David

Both THRU their faith - Neither because of their works

But they're both still of God's chosen people - the Jews  
what about us Gentiles ? - - *Does the same apply to us ??*

& Paul's going to use a very cool Historical Argument  
to prove that YES . . .

This same Righteousness by FAITH applies to us also

Rom 4:9-10 - ESV → →

## **Rom 4:9-10 - ESV**

***9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.***

***10 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.***

God declared **Abraham** righteous by his Faith Alone  
some **14 YEARS before** the Sign of Circumcision was received

**Actually** - Before God's Covenant with Abraham  
there were **NO HEBREW** or **JEWISH** people

**IN FACT** - Before God's Covenant with Abraham  
Abraham **WAS actually** a **Gentile**

because **his father** was a Gentile & a Pagan Idol worshipper

Abraham **received** his Righteousness **BY FAITH**

**Before** he was Circumcised - & really - before he was a **JEW**

& **his circumcision** was a "Sign" - a "Seal"

of the righteousness he had already received **BY FAITH**

## **Rom 4:11(A) - ESV**

***11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.***

This was **NOT by chance** - God wanted to make it clear  
that **Abraham's** Righteousness came **by FAITH ALONE**

**& it was** for a very specific purpose  
that God **did it that way**

It was to make Abraham the **Father**  
**of ALL** who put their **Faith in God**

### **Rom 4:11(B)-12 - ESV**

***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, [that's us, the Gentiles]  
12 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.***  
[that's the truly believing Jews]

& so **God** - in His **perfect plan** of *faith*  
Made Abraham the Father of **ALL** who put their Faith in God  
Both **Gentiles** & **Jews**

**& that** is *wonderful news* to us - **Isn't it ?**

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**Now Remember** - Paul is **NOT** talking here  
about Obedience or Service to the Lord

He's talking about **ONE THING** - & One Thing **ONLY**

**& that is HOW God's Righteousness to COUNTED to us**

How it is Credited to our Account  
How we are Declared Righteous in God's Eyes

The **Obedience** & the **Service** to Jesus as our Lord **comes later**  
& the **Two** must **NOT** get out of ORDER

**FIRST** - Righteousness **THRU FAITH ALONE**

**THEN** - Service & Obedience **IN RESPONSE**

to the Free Gift of Righteousness

**I'd like to close** with an Illustration  
that Perfectly Demonstrates Salvation **by FAITH ALONE**

In **Jn 3:14-15** – The two versus *before*  
the most famous verse in the Bible

**Jesus Himself** choose the story  
of **Moses** lifting up the **serpent** in the wilderness  
to **explain** the awesome gift of salvation?

It's taken from **Num 21:4-9** - *please mark it - & read it later*

**The Israelites** 40 year trek in the Wilderness  
*was nearing its end*

**Moses** was making *the last push*  
to prepare the people **to enter** the promised land

& **the people**, of course, were **murmuring** and **complaining**

**When they Rebelled** against God this time  
He sent fiery serpents that bit the people

**& many of them were dying of the snake bites**

**But then** - those who were repentant - **came** to Moses  
& **acknowledged** their sin

& when **Moses** interceded for the people;  
the **Lord responded** with a seemingly absurd requirement  
for the people to be **saved**

He told Moses to **make a serpent** & put it on a **pole**  
And **all who looked** to the serpent would be saved

& **THAT** - is how they were **healed**  
of the consequence of their sin

& **then** - Jesus Christ used **THIS** example to lay the foundation  
for the **most famous Vs** in the Bible

**In Jn 3:14-15 we read**

***14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so  
must the Son of Man be lifted up,  
15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”***

In our **natural minds**  
this is an absurd treatment for a **lethal snake bite**

**No one** would suggest, for a moment,  
that there was any therapeutic value in looking to the serpent

& that is **Exactly** the POINT

**The people** of Israel were **NOT** told  
to **make any remedy** for themselves

**They were told** to cease from all human effort  
& turn only to a divine remedy

**Because** there is no human remedy for sin  
There is **nothing** we can **work-up** to save us

The bite is **100% fatal**,  
& **only** a **divine remedy** from God can save us

**In Spite** of this - **most religion** is built  
on our **desire to earn** (or make) **a remedy** for our sin



**But the Bible** is incredibly clear  
in the example that Jesus Christ himself used to **explain** salvation

**We must cease** from all human effort,  
& **look solely** to the remedy that God alone has provided

In the **days of Moses** - The **serpent** on that pole  
**was a picture** of Jesus Christ lifted up on the cross

& **as the serpent** on the pole was formed in the likeness  
**of that** which brought death to the people

**So Christ** - was hung on the cross,  
in the **likeness of sinful flesh**

& As **God** told Israel to **do something** that was humanly absurd  
in order to be saved

So the **True Gospel Message** can sound absurd  
to the "Religious" "Do it Yourself" mind

But **if you will** turn away  
from your works, your efforts, & your religion

& **If you will look** upon **Christ alone**,  
**dying** on the cross for your sin

If you will **simply Believe God**

*Looking to Christ alone*, in **total faith**

The Bible Says, **God** will "Count" Righteousness to you

He will **Declare you Righteous**

He will **Justify you** freely *by His grace*

& He will **create in you** good works - to **follow your faith**

**Let's Pray**