

Introduction to the Writings of the Apostle Paul

by Kelly P. Merrill

The Book of Romans is the first of the epistles, or letters, we will be studying by Paul. Paul loves to wax wordy, he is highly educated, and he loves to talk in the negative. All of these things can make reading his letters difficult. I wrote a little about how to read the first six chapters of Romans in my Come, Follow Me lessons for [week 32](#). Follow the link in blue to learn more about how to read the Book of Romans.

Below is the fourth chapter of Romans on the left, with an explanation of the contents on the right. Hopefully, this little introduction to Paul's style of writing will help make your life easier for the rest of the New Testament.

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

It is when we exercise our faith in Christ that we are forgiven of our sins and become justified (reconciled) with the laws of God. This means that once we are forgiven of our sins the laws of God we violated can no longer condemn us, freeing us from the consequences of the violation of those laws. This state of justification (reconciliation) is what leads to us experiencing the peace and joy available only to those who live within the laws of happiness God has given us.

2 For if Abraham were justified by *the law of works*, he hath to glory *in himself*; but not of God.

Paul is pointing out that if Abraham had been able to become justified or reconciled to the laws of God by himself then he would have had grounds to glory in himself, but that would have excluded God from his becoming reconciled. Paul is trying to teach us that we cannot become reconciled or justified by ourselves. We need Christ to do that.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. *JST Gen. 15:9–12 (Appendix)*

Here is the JST of Genesis 15:9-12. It is just verse six in the KJV of this chapter.

9 *And Abram said, Lord God, how wilt thou give me this land for an everlasting inheritance?*

10 *And the Lord said, Though thou wast dead, yet am I not able to give it thee?*

11 *And if thou shalt die, yet thou shalt possess*

it, for the day cometh, that the Son of Man shall live; but how can he live if he be not dead? he must first be quickened.

12 And it came to pass, that Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad, and his soul found rest, and he believed in the Lord; and the Lord counted it unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him *who is justified by the law of works*, is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt.

This verse is pointing out a bit of logic to the readers. If we are able to justify ourselves before the laws of God without any assistance from God then the reward we would earn for doing so would be a just recompense, or payment, for what we did. In other words, if we can save ourselves from being condemned by the laws of God we violate then no grace is needed. This would be salvation by works alone.

5 But to him that *seeketh not to be justified by the law of works*, but believeth on him who justifieth *not* the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

To live by the law of works assumes that salvation can come from personal efforts, be that through the performances required by the law of Moses or simply through doing good deeds. In this verse Paul is saying that those who rely on God for their salvation, through their faith in Christ, are those whose faith is “counted for righteousness.” By definition, to be righteous means to be forgiven of your sins.

So those who don’t try to save themselves through just their own efforts, but believe on “him who justifieth not the ungodly” (Christ) are those whose faith leads to righteousness.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Even with all our weakness, Christ died for us. It is rare to find someone who will die for a righteous man, and a few will die for a good man. But God demonstrated his love for us by dying for us even though we are the worst of sinners.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for

us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Christ's blood is a representation of his all. He didn't just die in our place, he suffered for us, bled for us, and gave himself up to every form of pain for our welfare and benefit. His atonement/reconciliation made it possible for each of us to become justified before the law. But more than that, his sacrifice on our behalf allows us to be spared the punishment of God's laws when the day of judgment comes.

Even his enemies benefit from his sacrifice and death for us, but how much more so will we be blessed in the eternities because of our reconciliation with God?

Imagine how hard it would be to find joy in our relationship with God if we didn't have the atonement of Christ to reconcile us with His laws? Our only path or way back to our God is through Christ.

This passage has two main points. The first is found in verse 13. Without a law there is no sin. This sentiment is repeated using slightly different wording in chapter 5 of Romans as well.

The second point is that Adam is a figure or type of Christ. Actually, he is more of a counter type of Christ. As righteous as Adam was, his role in the plan of salvation is intimately tied to Christ's role.

Adam and Eve's action of eating the fruit caused death to come upon all of their posterity until the end of the world. That one act cut both them and their posterity off from the presence of God. And without someone to counter what their action created, we would all be separated from God for all eternity.

From Adam to Moses, and even beyond, no one's sin had quite the effect on humanity that

16 Therefore *ye are justified* of faith *and works, through* grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to *them only who are* of the law, but to *them also who are* of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Adam and Eve's transgression had. And just as Adam's action caused death to come upon all mankind, so did Christ's death and resurrection cause eternal life to come upon all of mankind. And more than that, his sacrifice opened the gift of grace for all of us so we can be forgiven of our sins. By one man came spiritual and physical death for all, and by one man came eternal life and the possibility of reconciliation with God for all.

The rest of the chapter talks on the same subject.

It is faith in Christ's reconciliation with God that provides us forgiveness of sin and justification before God and His laws. This promise of forgiveness was promised to be available to not only all of Abraham's posterity, but also to all those who share Abraham's faith in Christ. This makes Abraham the father of us all, if not literally, figuratively by adoption.

Verse 18 emphasizes that by the offense of one person (Adam) all mankind came under condemnation. And by the righteousness of one man (Christ) all mankind can receive grace, the enabling or strengthening power of Christ that brings reconciliation or justification to us all.

Just as sin brought death to all, grace brings righteousness and eternal life through Jesus Christ.