

# God's Righteousness In Romans – Part 6

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As we continue to examine Paul's discussion of the righteousness of God in the book of Romans, it is important we do so remembering the sin we came from and the righteousness of God in His wrath against sin. A wrath that all mankind should face because all have sinned. But God's righteousness had a way for people to be spared that wrath and it wasn't by perfect law-keeping. God provided His Son, Jesus, as our sacrifice and in His perfect life, death, and resurrection, we can be declared righteous by our faith in His redeeming work.

Paul has much to say in Romans about being justified by faith and as he begins that discussion, he uses Abraham as an example of saving faith. In chapter 4 Paul seeks to show how in the Old Testament, as in the New, righteousness came through faith and not through Law-keeping. Abraham is an example of Old Testament "justification by faith" and is an example for all who would believe God. One point of note is that Abraham was declared righteous before the Law was even given to men. He could not be saved by Law-keeping, because the Law had not yet been given. He was saved by faith, faith in the promise of God. His faith, not his works, was reckoned to him as righteousness. Abraham was not the exception to salvation by faith, but an example of Old Testament salvation by faith. David also is pointed out as one who believed that his righteousness was in spite of his sin, and due to God's forgiveness by grace through faith (Romans 4:6-8).

Abraham is shown to be the "father of faith," not just for the Jews, but for all who believe God's promise and provision of salvation. Circumcision for Abraham was the fruit of his faith, not the root of it. Righteousness, living according to the standards of God's righteousness, as revealed in the Law, is the result of faith and not the result of works. Works are the result of righteousness, not the cause. So maintains Paul.

And how deep was Abraham's faith? Paul explains in chapter 4 that Abraham had what may be described as a "resurrection faith." Abraham knew that although God promised him and Sarah a son, this was physically impossible at their age in life. They were too old to bear a son. Abraham realized that when it came to child-bearing he and Sarah were "as good as dead." God would have to virtually "raise the dead" to provide them with the son He promised. And that is exactly what God did. Thus, Abraham's faith was in the promise of a God who was able to "raise the dead"; it was a resurrection faith. Abraham's "resurrection faith" will face its ultimate test on Mount Moriah, when God tests him by instructing him to sacrifice his son, Isaac (Genesis 22; see also Hebrews 11:17-19).

So, Paul has shown us that the gospel has not really changed from the Old Testament to the New. This is why both Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way, by the same gospel. This is why both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith, apart from Law-keeping. The Law only condemns; it only shows how far short of God's righteousness men fall. But faith rests in the person and in the promises of God. Faith believes God and receives the forgiveness of sins and the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ. That is, when that faith is properly acted on. Faith is not just a mental exercise on man's part but something to be acted on just as Abraham did with his faith. Paul will expand on this as we shall see in two weeks.