

I. Case in Point (1-12)

Is Paul only addressing the Jews in this section? (vv. 12,16)

Why is the illustration of Abraham so important in emphasizing the main point of Rom 3:21-31?

In contrast to Rom 3:19-20,27

¹What then shall we say was gained by **Abraham, our forefather** according to the flesh?
²For if Abraham was **justified by works**, he has something **to boast about**, but not before God.
³For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.*”
⁴Now to the **one who works**, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.
⁵And to the **one who does not work** but *believes in him* who justifies the ungodly, his *faith is counted as righteousness*,
⁶just as **David** also speaks of the **blessing** of the one to whom God *counts righteousness* apart from works:
⁷“**Blessed** are those whose *lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered*; *Psalms 32:1-2*
⁸**blessed** is the man against whom the Lord will **not count his sin.**” Why/How were David’s sins forgiven/covered?
⁹Is this **blessing** then only for the **circumcised**, or also for the **uncircumcised**? For we say that **faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.**
¹⁰How then was it counted to him? Was it *before* or *after* he had been **circumcised**? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.
¹¹He 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,
¹²and 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.**

What is the stated contrast here? What is the implied contrast?

Abraham was found to be righteous:

- Before the Law
- Before he was circumcised
- Why is this important?

➤ Gen 15:5-6
 ➤ Gen 17:9-14
 ➤ Rom 2:25-29
 ➤ Gal 3:17-18

What is the relationship between David & Abraham in Paul’s argument? What is the “blessing?”

How could Abraham be found righteous through “faith,” **before** the resurrection of Christ? Was his faith different than Christian faith? How does this relate to **Romans 3:25**?
(Gen 12:3; John 8:56; Gal 3:16)

Does this mean that those of faith are **not** required to keep the laws of God?
Gal 5:13-26
James 2:14-26

Matt 22:34-40

Love God:
 Exo 20:3-11
 Deut 6:5;
 10:12-13;
 11:1
 John 14:15,
 21, 23-24

Love Neighbor:
 Exo 20:12-17
 Lev 19:18
 Rom 13:9,10
 Jam 2:8

II. Children of the Promise (13-26)

Who are the true children of the promise to Abraham?

- Gen 12:1-3
- Gen 15:1-6
- Gen 17:1-14
- Gen 22:17-18
- Gal 3:1-29

Eph 2:8-10

What made Abraham's faith so remarkable?
How does his faith benefit us today?
Heb 11:8-19

¹³For **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*.

¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the **heirs**, *faith is null* and the **promise is void**.

¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶That 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*,

¹⁷as 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.

¹⁸In hope *he believed against hope*, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “*So shall your offspring be*.”

¹⁹He 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*.

²⁰No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew *strong in his faith* as he gave glory to God,

²¹fully convinced that God was able to do what he had **promised**.

²²That is why his faith was “*counted to him as righteousness*.”

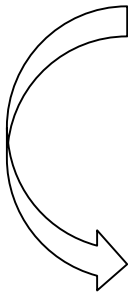
²³But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,

²⁴**but for ours also**. *It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord*,

²⁵who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our *justification*.

Why can the promise not be through the law?

How does the Law bring about wrath?
vv. 1:18; 2:5;
3:5,20;
5:20; 7:9



Romans Chapter 4 - Questions for Discussion

Memory Verse:

Romans 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ 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.

Righteousness Through Faith

1. Why is Abraham an ideal example of one who was justified by faith? (vv. 1-3, Gen 15:5,6)
2. What would it take for someone to be justified by a system of works (theoretically)? Is this possible with man? If someone were justified by works, what would that say about them and their relationship to salvation? (vv. 1-5; I John 1:8)
3. What is the stated contrast between verses 4 and 5? What is the implied contrast? What is meant by “work?” Is Paul saying that we should not worry with keeping the commandments of God?
4. How could Abraham be found righteous through “faith,” **before** the resurrection of Christ? Was his faith different than Christian faith? How does this relate to Romans 3:25? (v. 9)
5. What is significance of the fact that God recognized Abraham’s faith as righteousness **before** he was circumcised? (vv. 9-12; Gen 15:5-6; 17:25; Acts 15:1)
6. How can we follow in the footsteps of Abraham? What are the qualifications for being his heir? (vv. 12-17; Gen 12:3; 17:5; Gal 3:7-9)
7. How does the Law bring about wrath? (vv. 15; 3:20; 5:20; 7:9)
8. What made Abraham’s faith so remarkable? How does his faith benefit us today? (vv. 18-25)

Why Abraham as an Illustration of Justification by Faith:

The Illustration of Justification From the Old Testament (4:1–25)

The fact that in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed (1:17) could suggest that justification is a new thing, peculiar to the Christian era. To discover that it was already present in the OT serves to engender confidence in an ongoing purpose of God and in the basic unity of the Bible. "It is essential for the structure of faith that behind the appearance of Christ in an historical perspective a preceding activity of God appears" (L. Goppelt, "Paul and Heilsgeschichte," INT 21 [1967] 325).

Paul's fourth chapter is devoted almost exclusively to Abraham and God's dealings with him. The NT writers seem to turn to Abraham almost instinctively when discussing faith (Heb 11; James 2). If Paul can establish as true that the father of the nation of Israel was justified by faith rather than by works, he will have scored heavily, especially with his Jewish readers.¹

Romans 3:21–31 (ESV)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Boasting in Works:

Romans 3:19–20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

¹ Harrison, E. F. (1976). Romans. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans Through Galatians* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (47). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Abraham's Faith Compared to Christian Faith:

The nature of Abraham's faith was essentially the same as that of the NT believer despite the difference in time. (Abraham looked forward to something God would do, whereas the Christian looks back to what God has provided in Christ.) Can we go further and say that the object of faith is the same, implicit in the promise to Abraham, explicit in the gospel? It does seem that we are warranted in concluding that Abraham trusted in a promise that pointed to Christ (John 8:56; Gal 3:16), though at this time this may not have been clear to the patriarch. Much depends on how he understood the promise in Genesis 12:3. Abraham's faith was credited to him "as righteousness," which means that faith itself is not righteousness.²

Romans 3:25 (ESV)

²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Genesis 12:3 (ESV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

John 8:56 (ESV)

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."

Galatians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

Commandments of God:

Galatians 5:13–26 (ESV)

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵

² Harrison, E. F. (1976). Romans. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans Through Galatians* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (48). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

James 2:14-26 (ESV)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² **You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;** ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"— and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ **You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.** ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ **For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.**

It is impossible to divorce faith from doing. Faith without doing is not really faith. How do we know what the person of faith should be involved in doing? God's laws provide us with the roadmap for what we should do.

All of God's Commandments Deal with either Loving God or Loving Neighbor

Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV)

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ **And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."** ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ **And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Love God by Keeping Commandments

Deuteronomy – 4 speeches by Moses prior to the children of Israel entering the land of Canaan (1st speech talked about the failures of the first generation)

Chapter 4 – Reminds them of the Statutes, Rules, Commandments (three ways of saying the same thing)

Chapter 5 – Repeats the 10 Commandments for the current generation

Chapter 6 – Love God with ALL your heart, ALL your soul, All your Might

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Chapter 10 – Loving God = doing what God commanded

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 (ESV)

¹² "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, **to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,** ¹³ **and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?** ¹⁴ Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.

Chapter 11 – Loving God = doing what God commanded

Deuteronomy 11:1 (ESV)

¹ "You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always.

Jesus also equated the keeping of commandments to loving God

John 14:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

John 14:21 (ESV)

²¹ "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

John 14:23-24 (ESV)

²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

Someone says "I just want to Love God, I don't want all that Bible stuff." This is not loving God. We can divorce Loving God from doing.

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)

¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Romans 13:9-10 (ESV)

⁹The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

James 2:8 (ESV)

⁸If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

Righteous Before the Law / Before Circumcision → Blessing to David vs. Abraham

⁹⁻¹² *The issue discussed here is the importance of the time of God's declaration of righteousness on behalf of Abraham in relation to the time of his circumcision. By using the term "blessedness" from the opening of Psalm 32 Paul makes the transition from David back to Abraham. Are the uncircumcised able to share in this blessedness? As Strack and Billerbeck point out, the answer of the synagogue to such a question was that the blessedness was properly confined to the circumcision (Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 3:203); Paul dissents, arguing skillfully that the benefit David enjoyed was enjoyed by Abraham, and Abraham received it when he was still uncircumcised To all intents and purposes, he was like one of the Gentiles. This opens the door to the extension of the blessedness of justification to the Gentiles. Paul is still using the method of analogy regarding logizesthai ("credited"). As Genesis 15:6 had been explained with the aid of Psalm 32:1, 2, now the apostle reverses direction and explains Psalm 32 with the aid of Genesis 15. David, of course, was circumcised, but Abraham was not circumcised at the time of his being credited with righteousness on the basis of faith. According to the record, it was fourteen years later that he received the rite (Gen 17:24-26). Circumcision, then, was really a sign of what he previously had. It was a testimony to justifying faith, not something in which to take any pride (cf. 2:25-29). "We cannot doubt that circumcision was delayed in order to teach the believing Gentiles of future ages that they may claim Abraham as their father, and the righteousness of faith as their inheritance" (J.A. Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans [New York: Thomas Whittaker, 18928]). It could even be said that the Gentile has first claim on the patriarch, who was just like himself when justified. The Jew stands rebuffed for his pride and exclusiveness (cf. Acts 15:11; Gal 2:16). Obviously the apostle is not speaking in v. 12 of two groups, Jews and Gentiles, for he has finished speaking of Gentiles in the preceding verse. Here he refers to Jews in two categories-not only as circumcised but, what is more important, as believers who share the faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.³*

³ Harrison, E. F. (1976). Romans. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans Through Galatians* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (50). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Genesis 15:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 17:9–14 (ESV)

⁹ And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, ¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

Romans 2:25–29 (ESV)

²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Galatians 3:17–18 (ESV)

¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Children of the Promise:

Genesis 12:1–3 (ESV)

¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 15:1–6 (ESV)

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number

the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 17:1–14 (ESV)

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,⁴ “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Genesis 22:17–18 (ESV)

¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Galatians 3:1–29 (ESV)

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ 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.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

Law Brings Wrath:

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.

Romans 3:5 (ESV)

⁵ But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)

Romans 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 5:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

Romans 7:9 (ESV)

⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.

Grace / Faith:

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Faith of Abraham:

Hebrews 11:8–19 (ESV)

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.