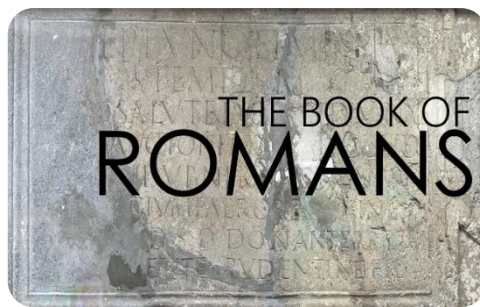


ROMANS 4 vs 1

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Paul is a good teacher; he told us about critics... those who want to play God... as if God isn't capable of doing His job; who confuse His patient restraint and longsuffering for ineptness. Paul says, we need to **change our thinking**. Paul told us about the law of faith -- written on our hearts, even the law of hamartia; the law of missing the mark.



In chapter 3, Paul emphasized... God spoke; committing His lively sayings to people He chose; but what if some did not believe? **What will we say then?** Is God right for settling scores? There is no one who does right; no, not one. (Plan B)

But now the rightness of God is measured without the law; by the faith of Jesus Christ; so the right Judge has two ways to gauge rightness: by the law of one's performance; or, by the law of one's faith. Paul says: Now, in Christ Jesus is the new and better way; the way of faith! Paul has us ask good questions:

1 What will we say then

that Abraham our father, pertaining to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works / dikaios... was judicially determined to be right! When Paul wrote, they knew the Old Testament: that God promised Abraham if he left his country and went to a new place God would show him; there Abraham would be blessed by God and become... a blessing to the whole world. Later, God promised Abraham that his seed would be as numerous as the dust of the earth; and how was that to happen, since he didn't have one child? Still, Abraham said, **Amen!** And for 60 years, he was excited to do his part. When we hear Abraham give God a rousing **Amen**; he also got to work. And it is funny, Paul says, what work other than ___ did Abraham our father of faith have to do?

If Abraham was credited to be right by works / by doing what it takes to make babies, **he has a reason to boast; but not before God /** so was something going on with Abraham, that we don't see?

3 For what does the scripture say? Abraham **amened God, and was credited to him / logizomai**, used 11 times in this chapter; primarily to calculate or judiciously impute and since this word is in the middle voice, then the one who is the subject of this action, it is for their benefit... so we could say:

Abraham amened God, and was personally credited for doing what is right / dikaiosyne... Abraham **believed** what the Lord God promised him... he knew God was not a man to lie: His promises carried weight and Abraham continued in that **amen**... in the many years passing in between; as the Lord God added promise to promise... challenging and strengthening Abraham's **amen**... Abraham's confidence to trust God who speaks to His creation; who walks with His people; and guides them... no matter how things looked as he walked through the desert of northern Syria; the LORD calls **Abraham, my friend**.

4 Now to him who works... the reward is not personally credited as a favor,

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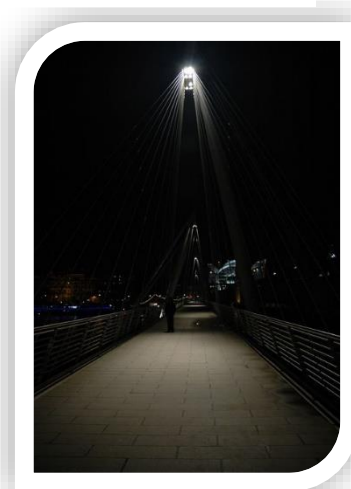
but of debt / God is not indebted to anybody. He will do His job as Creator of His creation; He is not an absent Father. He will generously make His Spirit and all the necessary resources available to any who call His Name; even where 2 or 3 will gather in His Name. Paul knew what everyone knows: **if you work, you get paid**; but this chapter is not about that cursed day to day drudgery assigned to all men. This has to do with pursuing the kingdom of God; learning His ways; why the Lord gives many talents and then says, occupy until I come again. We are people of God; not His puppets, and we will do many things in a lifetime. God doesn't care if we are teachers, poets, farmers, doctors or musicians. Great! Go for it! God values freedom. But don't forget there is a God in heaven; and where is He in the mix?

Now to him who works... the reward is **not personally credited as a favor, but of debt.**

⁵ But to him who does not work, but believes Him who credited the no-sense one

/ so Paul talks about the activity of the heart; hopefully you have one. The Lord talks to the good, the goofy and the ungodly. Dr. Dallas Willard of USC said, pay attention to the university studies done throughout the world on: intrusive, aggressive, involuntary thoughts that invade our life experience each day; good and bad thoughts classified in 3 major groups: things related to sex, things related to death, and things related to God. Of those 3 groups what is related to God, is most prominent on the minds of people around the world.

In 1885 Samuel Trevor Francis was standing on a footbridge spanning the Thames River; it was night and he was at a low point in life... mesmerized by the current flowing beneath. Suddenly, he heard: Jump! Thankfully, instead he went home startled awake and penned the great hymn: Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus... sung throughout the world for 100 years.



ungodly: = asebes, a = neg. particle + sebes = **no sense**. Its opposite **godly** = eusebes: **good sense**. Here Paul talks about those with **no-sense**, those from the goofy to the malignantly evil,

his faith is personally credited as doing right.

⁶ Even as David also describes the blessing to the one God personally credits **doing right... apart from works,**

⁷ saying, Blessed are they whose hideous guilt is forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not personally credit sin -- Psalm 32:1-2 ...you can hear every good-sensed person shout, Amen.

Next, Paul anticipates those strangers, whose curiosity has risen, hearing Good News for the first time...

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⁹ Does this blessing then come to the circumcised only? or to the uncircumcised also? / is it to the Jewish folks only, or to Gentiles too? And Paul answers...

for we say, faith was personally credited to Abraham for doing right. -- Genesis 15:6.

¹⁰ Then how was it personally credited? when he was circumcised, or uncircumcised?

Not when circumcised, but when uncircumcised / the Lord gave Abraham his promises before he was circumcised; not after he was delicately trimmed. Abraham was **not Jewish**; he was Hebrew. The Lord gave him promises before he exited the old country; near ancient Babylon is where Abraham's journey of faith began... walking with the Lord heading west; and it started when Abraham said, **Amen!**

¹¹ **And he received the sign of circumcision** / if you think about it... it's quite funny, most men like to brag and publicly display their badges and emblems of achievement for the widest audience of admirers; God knows how to stifle arrogance, doesn't He? It's as if God said, this is between Me and you!

So, he got trimmed as a seal of doing right for his faith, while he was yet uncircumcised; uncut: that he become the father of all who faith,

though they are **not** circumcised; that rightness be personally credited to them also:

¹² **and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham,** while he was yet uncircumcised.

¹³ **For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed,, that he would be heir of the world,**

was **not** through the law, but through the rightness of faithing / the promise God made with Abraham when he was 30 years old, was not based on a decree or checklist of: things to do. Abram had to trust God who said: he would be the father of many nations...who kept waiting when he was 50 years old, and 85 and 100 years old; though he had the promise, and he knew the process, he still didn't have a child from Sarah.

¹⁴ **For if those of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is of no effect** / legalists love to measure what they can observe... especially if they are the standard; and what they do... is the measurement; but that cancels faith, it is empty; and the promise is credited to nobody:

¹⁵ **because the law brings wrath, for where no law is, there is no violation** / J.B. Philips says: Law can produce no promise; only the threat of wrath to come: ponder this phrase, try to imagine a place where no law exists; if the law is not delineated, who can be held accountable? Imagine no law on the freeway... it's an incredible thought, isn't it?

where **no law is, there is no violation** / but there definitely is one big mess.

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¹⁶ So, it is **of faith**, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise be certain to all the inheritors, not to those only who are of the law, but also to those who are of **the faith of Abraham**; who is the father of us all,

¹⁷ as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations before Him of whom he faithed, even God, who gives life to the dead, calling into being what does not exist / Abraham was 100 years old when God fulfilled the promise to him.

¹⁸ who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, so will your seed be -- Genesis 21:12

¹⁹ And without being weak in faith, he considered his own body as good as dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb:

²⁰ regarding the promise he did not waiver in unbelief; but he was empowered **by faith**, giving glory to God;

²¹ and being fully persuaded what He had promised, He was also able to perform.

²² So, it was personally credited to him for doing right.

²³ Now this was not written for his sake only, that it was personally credited to him;

²⁴ but also for us, as to whom it will be personally credited, **if we believe Him** who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

He is our righteousness.

²⁵ who was delivered up for our hideous guilt, and was raised again for our justification;

Isaiah said: because He poured out His soul unto death... and He bore the sin of many

Paul says when you learn what God did for us, doing the dirty work and heavy lifting, do what Abraham did: Thank Him and nail it down with an **Amen!**

What will we say then that Abraham our father has found?

Grace upon grace; amazing grace! Simply for his faith. **To God be the glory! Amen!**