#### ## The Absoluteness of the Law (Romans 3:3-8)

> ILLUSTRATION: Two truck drivers were traveling together hauling a 12’4” high trailer when they come up on an underpass marked ‘Clearance 11’ 3”. The first man asked his partner, “What do you think?”’ The second checked around for police and seeing none suggested, “Let’s give it a try.”

### The Standard is an Unchanging Christ

We have made a distinction between the specific prescriptions given through Moses and the much more encompassing Mind of God. It is a great error to make the Law of Moses as the entire prescription of God’s will. The fullness of God’s Will is much larger than the Law given through Moses.

It is in Jesus, we see the fullness of God’s will. The Lord Jesus Christ is the standard of God’s expectation.

> Eph 4:11-16 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

For the purposes of our study we have defined The Law of God as:

>God’s standard of expectation for his creation.

God’s Law is governed by the nature of God. What is in the Law of God is because of Who God is. God is absolute and therefore His Law is absolute--his expectations of the behavior of humanity are absolute. (The majority of the time, Human self-government is anything but absolute.)

#### > 2 Samuel 22:31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. (Compare with Psalm 101)

#### ### If some do not believe, will God break his promise? vs. 3-4

Has God cancelled his covenant with Abraham because some Jews are bad? If some do not believe does it hinder God’s plan? Will unbelief cancel God’s faithfulness? See II Timothy 2:13

#### The Jews Cling to their Heritage as Abraham’s Children as their Warranty. (v. 3)

Their objection was even though some did not believe; nothing can nullify our special promises we have been given by God through Abraham. They were in effect saying no matter what else we are, we are Abraham’s seed and that will get us into heaven.

##### #### The answer: Absolutely Not! (v.4)

##### Will God be unfaithful because man is unfaithful? Absolutely Not!

##### > vs. 4&mdash;God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar...

> 2 Timothy 2:13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he \*\*cannot **deny himself\*\***.

It is not because, some Jews were unfaithful that requires faith in Jesus Christ. It is because the fullness of God’s plan of redemption has always been in Christ.

> Re 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

##### #### Illustrated from David’s Life

##### > ...That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. (v.4)

The Psalm of David is quoted which showed God to be righteous even when David was condemned for his sin. According to Psalm 51:4, God is just when He speaks and clear when He judges. This is used here to show that God is right to condemn the Jews because they rejected the Messiah who came from the seed of Abraham according to the promises. These promises they claimed would justify them in fact brought condemnation to the Jew because of their rejection of Jesus Christ.

#### ### If our sin commends God’s righteousness, how can He judge us?-Vs. 5-7

##### #### Let us first understand the meaning of the question.

Commend -To represent as worthy of notice, regard, or kindness; to speak in favor of; to recommend. – Webster The Gk. word carries the meaning of to exhibit (as in a conspicuous manner), or to introduce, to stand with or to come into existence.

We must rely on the context to help us understand the meaning of this question. This is posed as two questions in the text and has been simplified for the purpose of study. The question is literally asking: if our unrighteousness magnifies or brings attention to God’s righteousness and mercy; is God unrighteous if He judges us?

This is still awkward for us to understand. Remember God is dealing with the actual objections of the Jews. The objection is the same as the objection of many today. We could ask it this way: If God is so righteous why would He judge me for my sin and send me to hell? (Especially, because we are Abraham’s children.)

##### #### God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

The answer is: Certainly not. For if this principle is used then how could God pass judgment on the world? The world here is referring to the Gentiles. The Jews were still trying to excuse themselves from condemnation. It is proper for a righteous God to judge the unrighteous sinner&mdash;whether Jew or Gentile.

The truth is, God can judge the world because he is righteous.

#### ### Let us do evil that good may come? – Vs. 8

Some abuse the truth of God’s mercy and boast that their sinful lives and God’s unconditional acceptance, is illustrative of God’s great Mercy. Paul was NOT preaching this false doctrine, but was being accused of doing so.

This was an attack on Paul’s preaching of justification by faith. The Jews were saying: you tell us God justifies the wicked, so why not continue to be evil so good can come out of it?

##### Paul’s description of those who did preach this was: *whose damnation is just.* Since the accusation was not true Paul did not go into a detailed answer; he only affirms that God’s judgment on them is just.

### Application

Is it ever right to do wrong?

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#### ## The Unbending Authority of the Law (vs. 9-19)

#### The whole world is under the sentence of condemnation. – Vs. 9-20

* 1. The charge is levied against the sinner. – V. 9
     1. We have before proved both Jew and Gentile to be under sin.
     2. Witnesses are brought before the accused.
        1. The witness of creation – 1:20
        2. The witness of conscience – 2:15
        3. The witness of commandment – 3:19
  2. The indictment is read from the Scriptures. – Vs. 10-18

1. According to the rules of the court the indictment had to be written.

An indictment is a written accusation or formal charge of a crime or misdemeanor, preferred by a grand jury under oath to a court. - Webster

The Great Judge leaves no excuse for humanity and has Paul use the written Word

to indict the accused.

1. Paul used their own sacred text to condemn the Jews.

The Jew boasted that he possessed the Scripture; now God is using that same Word to expose their sin. God is making them accountable to His Word.

Faith and Righteousness - Go hand in hand If you see a man with righteousness, you see a man with faith. . NOTE Faith apart from righteousness is not scriptural. Righteousness - is absolutely essential. Mark 11:22 Righteousness: *Ability to think and act like God*. There are 2 kinds of Righteousness: 1. Imputed - Act of Grace (God reckons to our account) 2. Imparted - Grace to give or share. 1:17 - “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” Steps: I Cor. 1:30 There are degrees of faith. We are changed from belief to belief, faith to faith, glory to glory.“Metron” - Greek - Measure of faith, degree, portion. Measure of Faith: Saving *faith*. If you have Christ you have faith in your heart

1. Although the Gentile did not have the written word; they still had the same principals contained in the Word written on their heart
   1. The defense of the accused – V. 19
2. The accused has nothing to say; every mouth is stopped.
3. The Day of Judgment will be a day of silence.
   1. The verdict – V.20
4. GUILTY AS CHARGED!
5. No flesh is justified by deeds of law.

The article “the” is not present in the Gk. text. This law refers to more than Moses Law; there is also reference to moral law and the law of conscience. The Gentile did not posses Moses’ Law, but every man has the moral law of God written on his heart and testified to by his conscience.

1. The death penalty has been levied against the condemned. Rom.6:23

#### ## The True Purpose of the Law (vs. 20-30)

#### Salvation by grace through Christ Jesus. Vs. 21-31

#### ### The righteousness of God is manifested to men. – Vs. 21-23

#### To manifest is to show forth or to declare.

The meaning of justify is to declare righteous, to be placed in a right relationship with God. Paul is telling men the how they can be justified or declared righteous through Jesus Christ.

“Most important, justification does not mean that God makes us righteous, but that He declares us righteous. Justification is a legal matter. God puts the righteousness of Christ on our record in the place of our own sinfulness.” - Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary

#### Righteousness refers to moral purity.

It simply means to be right which is the opposite of being wrong. Sin is wrong and God is right. Applied to God it refers to the perfection or holiness of his nature; God is always right. The words righteousness and justify are closely related and are derived from the same Gk. root *dika.* Justify-*dikaio,* righteousness-*dikaiosune*

#### This righteousness is from God.

This is not earned righteousness or even righteous works. Justification is the righteousness of God put to the account of a man; that is God counting him righteous solely due to the righteousness of Christ. This passage is showing man the source of righteousness which only comes from God.

##### ### God’s method of Justification – V. 24

#### Given by the Grace of God

Sinful man does not deserve to be justified. Man deserves to die because of sin. God freely justifies those who receive the provision of Christ by faith. Salvation is a gift of God to those who receive the provision of Christ by faith.

#### Through the Redemption in Christ Jesus

Redemption means to purchase, to set free by the payment of a ransom. Jesus paid the price for our Salvation in His blood. Man is declared righteous solely on the merit of Jesus Christ.

##### ### The demands of the law have been satisfied. – V. 25

#### God still requires justice.

Justification is not merely God showing pity on the sinner and letting him go free without the penalty being paid. The word *propitiation* is used in reference to Christ satisfying the demands of the law. Propitiation is a reason for not executing judgment which is deserved. It corresponds to the Hebrew word rendered mercy seat which was the place the blood of atonement was sprinkled to satisfy the judgment of God. This sprinkled blood covered the Tables of the Law contained in the Ark. This is a figure of Him who was to come and shed Divine blood to satisfy the law. The blood of Jesus is the reason that judgment is not executed on the repentant sinner.

#### PROPITIATION.

Propitiation properly signifies the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift. In the OT it is expressed by the verb kipper (ATONEMENT). The objection to propitiation arises largely from an objection to the whole idea of the wrath of God, which many exponents of this view relegate to the status of an archaism. They feel that modern men cannot hold such an idea. But the men of the OT had no such inhibitions. For them ‘God is angry with the wicked every day’ (Ps. 7:11, AV). They had no doubt that sin inevitably arouses the strongest reaction from God. He is vigorously opposed to evil in every shape and form while he may be ‘slow to anger’. - New Bible Dictionary

> Romans 3:25—*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

#### Let us look at the phrase for the remission of sins that are past.

In the Old Testament period, the blood of animals could never take away sin. - Heb. 10:4 The blood of animals, a shadow of the blood of Christ, was only temporary until the time when Jesus would come and offer Himself as the supreme sacrifice for sin. The literal translation of this phrase is: “God had passed over the sins that were past.” This He did knowing that Jesus would come and pay the price in full upon the cross. The blood of animals was like a credit until the price could be paid. No man was ever saved by the blood of an animal; all men have only been saved by the blood of Jesus both OT and NT.

### A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.- V. 28

#### Faith is the requirement to receive from God.

#### Works of the law cannot secure justification.

**## The Establishing of the Law (v. 31)**

Justification by faith establishes the Law.

Justification by faith is not against the Law of Moses. Salvation by faith in Christ satisfied the Law of God. Jesus completely fulfilled or established the demands of the Law. There is also a reference here the moral law. Faith does not void the moral law of God.

The ceremonial law has been fulfilled in Christ. We no longer need to offer goats and bulls to God, nor keep the ceremonial law. The moral law of God does not change. Justification by faith does not abolish the moral law of God.

The law of faith does not make the law useless or void, but establishes it. Faith does not remove or destroy the law, but excels the law. Faith is the pillar and ground of the truth built upon the law. The law brings the knowledge of sin to a man, and that man who has recognized his condition may be justified by faith. Without the law that man would have no knowledge of sin, and therefore would see no need for justification, redemption, or atonement. The law which was once broken is established through faith in the substitutionary work of Christ for through His righteousness it is SATISFIED.

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### IT IS OF FAITH THAT IT MIGHT BE BY GRACE - 4:1-25

Romans chapter four deals with Abraham’s Righteousness. Abraham is an example of justification by faith. Paul uses Abraham’s life to explain the doctrine of righteousness by faith. Abraham’s Faith is recorded.

* Abraham is mentioned as our Father (1:1; 1:12; 1:17)

1. Father as pertaining to flesh.
2. Father of circumcision.
3. Father of our faith.
4. Father of nations. (This was the promise of God to Him)

* Abraham is used to support Paul’s doctrine.

1. Mosaic Law was not the first step in act of Redemption.
2. History of chosen people did not begin at Sinai.
3. Covenant with Abraham extended beyond Mosaic covenant of works.
4. Covenant of Grace precedes covenant of works.
5. Whole chapter is occupied with God’s dealing with Abraham.

* Paul’s arguments are presented. (Verses 1-25)

1. Righteousness is by faith.
2. Righteousness is not obtained by works.
3. It is not acquired by circumcision.
4. You cannot gain it through adherence of the law. 4:13-17
5. Abraham’s faith shows us an example that we must follow.
6. Paul reasoned that righteousness by faith is the only way to please God.

#### **Justification by Faith is illustrated in the life of Abraham. – Vs. 1-8**

*Question:* What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? v.1

*Answer:* For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. v.13

##### Paul uses Abraham the Father of the nation of Israel to show the Jews the concept of justification by faith.

###### The Jews placed great confidence in Abraham the Father of their nation.

God is using the example of Abraham to prove to them how men are justified.

###### Paul was addressing the questions of the Jew.

What about Abraham our Father? What about the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, doesn’t that make us righteous? The Jews were holding to the covenant of Abraham which they believed guaranteed them eternal life.

###### What saith the Scripture? – V. 3

Paul was using the Scripture as the authority to refute the Questions of the Jews. So should the Christian today look to the Word of God as the final authority in settling questions. As much as possible it is good to answer the questions of people with the Bible.

##### Abraham was justified by faith and not by works.

###### Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. – V. 3

###### Moses who was esteemed by the Jews as the writer of the Torah is called as a witness to the justification of Abraham by faith.

Genesis 15:6—*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness*

This is a passage the Jews would have been well familiar with. Paul is using their own Scriptures to preach to the Jews justification by faith. The word counted carries the same meaning in Hebrew as it does on Greek. Righteousness was put to his account by faith. This is the meaning of Justification. Abraham was justified by faith the same way the Christians are today. God gave Abraham a promise; he believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

###### God justifies the ungodly. – V. 5

Those who are not born-again are sinners and ungodly. The repentant sinner is declared righteous by God through the blood of Jesus. The ungodly do nothing to earn their salvation. They are justified totally by faith.

##### David is called as a witness for justification by faith.

Paul brings testimony from David to support the message of justification by faith.

David was esteemed by the Jews as their great king. This quotation from the Psalms confirms that men are only justified by faith and not works.

Psalms 32:1-2— *A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

David was thanking God that His sin was forgiven and the sin was not put to his account. If sin was not imputed to him and his sin was forgiven this means he was restored to a right relationship with God. Justification is the Divine action of being placed in a right relationship with God through Jesus. David did not earn justification it was received by faith.

#### **Abraham was justified by Grace. – Vs 9-17**

The Jews looked to circumcision and the Law as their source of righteousness Abraham was justified before he received the covenant of circumcision. He was counted as righteous in chapter 15 and he was 86 in chapter 16 when Ishmael was born. Chapter 17 records Abraham was circumcised when he was 99 years old.- Gen. 17: 24. It is quite clear that he was justified before he was circumcised. This passage is telling the Jews that Abraham was counted as righteous before he received the covenant of circumcision.

Circumcision did not justify Abraham. Circumcision was given as a sign of the promise. It was given as a seal of the righteousness of faith. It is a symbol of the cutting away of the flesh. There is no power of righteousness in a physical action. This is merely a sign of the work of God in much the same way that baptism is a sign of a completed work.

Abraham was counted as righteous by Grace totally separate from the Law. He was justified before the Law was given. This is further indication that he could not have been justified by the Law.

Abraham could not have earned any justification through keeping the Law since it had not yet been given to Moses. The Jews put so much emphasis on the Law; Paul is showing them that the Law had nothing to do with Abraham being counted as righteous.

The Law gives knowledge of sin. – V.15 *For where there is no law there is no transgression* refers to the fact that if there were no law then there would be no law to break. This also must have reference to the moral law as well as Moses Law.

Abraham was justified by faith through grace. – V.16 If he was not justified by the works of the law then the only alternative is that he was declared righteous by the grace of God. He did not earn justification; it was given to him without merit because of his faith.

He received the promise that he should be the heir of the world through the righteousness of faith. – V. 13 The righteousness of faith is in reference to justification by faith. Justification is the declaration of righteousness by faith. Abraham did nothing to receive the promise; it was given to him by grace.

The promise was to make of him a great nation and from his seed would all nations of the world be blessed. – Gen. 12:1-3 This is a prophecy of the nation of Israel that would descend from Abraham. Even more important it is a promise of the Messiah that would come to provide salvation to all both Jew and Gentile.

The Jew looked for an earthly inheritance. In the minds of most of the Jews, the Messiah would overthrow the Romans and re-establish the nation of Israel. Paul is showing them the provision of righteousness available not just to the Jew, but to the entire world through Jesus the Messiah.

#### **God will fulfill His Promise–Vs.18-25**

Abraham was given the promise of God. God promised Abraham he would have a son. Also, the Messiah would be a son of Abraham. Jesus fulfilled prophecy and was born according to his natural lineage as a descendant of Abraham.

Man has received the promise of justification by faith through Jesus Christ.

Abraham believed the promise of God. Against hope believed in hope.

Abraham believed in the promise of God regardless of the circumstances. Sarah was about 90 and Abraham was more than 100 years old. There was no natural way possible for them to have a child. Abraham staggered not at the promise of God. - V.20

Justification is a Divine activity. Man cannot justify himself any more than Abraham could produce a son. Justification is a work of God bestowed by grace in response to faith.