

ROMANS 3:20-5:11 | THE CASE FULFILLED: A GOSPEL FOR ALL

ROMANS 3:31-4:25 | ADDRESSING THE SHOCK

Supplemental Resource, Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 20

ROMANS 4:9-22 | DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE ABRAHAMIC EXAMPLE

Supplemental Resource: The Bible Graphically Presented, pg. 25.

-verses 9-12, see session 10

VERSE 13 – BLACK

It is important to remember that Paul is giving an illustration of God giving a faith-based promise, and He did so in Abraham. The Abrahamic promise **was not...through the law, but through the righteousness of faith**. Abraham had a “faith righteousness” and not a “law righteousness.”

Sadly, standard Christian thought concludes that the salvation which we are offered today, under the dispensation of Grace, has always been offered in the same way. Such conclusion is *non sequiter* (“it does not follow”). This verse relates to **the promise, that he should be the heir of the world**, and should apply to that promise only. It is used to illustrate God’s *ability* to make faith-based promises, not to prove that this is what God has *always* done.

VERSE 14 – BLACK

Here we learn that the Abrahamic promise was unaffected by the Law, and the Law was therefore unrelated and served a different purpose. Israel was not promised an inheritance based on obedience to the Law. Rather, the Law was a stop-gap measure, providing national solidarity and a means of temporary personal and corporate righteousness until Messiah would come to fulfill the promises to Abraham. The Law could not void the faith-based righteousness upon which the Abrahamic promise was given.

VERSE 15 – BLACK

Paul’s argument that **the law worketh wrath** says that the Law could not be the basis of promise. This is the same argument as 3:20, and repeated many times in Scripture (Rom 5:20, 7:13, Col 2:14, Gal 3:10, 1 Cor 15:56, 2 Cor 3:7, 9). With all these negative words about the Law, why do churches continue to try to put men under the Law?

VERSE 16 – BLACK

The Jewish people were recipients of **the promise**, and, so that **the promise might be sure**, it was a promise to Isaac and Jacob (who were not **of the law**) as much as to those who were **of the law**.

Furthermore, the Abrahamic promise has been **sure** in the past 2000 years since the Law was set aside (with the destruction of the Temple).

Abraham being **the father of us all** should be taken as *all Jews, whether from before the law (such as Isaac) or after (such as Paul's audience)*. It should not be taken as *Abraham is the father of all peoples*. See verse 17 for more evidence of this claim.

VERSE 17 – BLACK

The parenthetical note of Abraham being **the father of many nations** is a quote of Genesis 17:5, but should not be construed to be a reference to *the father of the Gentiles* in this case. The context is to Abraham's **seed**, and the promised seed was through Isaac alone. As evidence, notice that in verse 16 Paul says that the promise is **not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham**. The pronoun **that** (used twice) is singular and refers to a particular portion of the **seed** (v. 16). There is the seed **that...is of the law** (the Jewish nation) as well as the seed **that is of the faith of Abraham** (Isaac, Jacob, etc.). The ESV does a disservice to the words, translating as, "not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham." This sounds much more like a reference to you and me and other Gentiles who have faith like Abraham.

The phrase **before him whom he believed...** is a completion of the phrase in verse 16 ending in **...to all the seed**. Someday the entire nation will stand **before him** (the Lord) **whom he** (Abraham) **believed**. Paul closes the thought with a benediction.

VERSES 18-22 – BLACK

These verses elaborate on Abraham's faith in the promise God gave him. They are the expanded version of Genesis 15:6.

ROMANS 4:23-25 | THE MORAL OF THE STORY

Supplemental Resource: The Bible Graphically Presented, pg. 26.

VERSES 23-25 – BLUE LETTERS

This section of verses must be taken as a whole, being one sentence, but it helps explain Genesis 15:6. The famous statement **was not written for his sake alone** (v. 23, speaking of Abraham's sake), **but for us also** (v. 24). Our premise has been that the first-person plural pronoun (**us**) is a reference to the Apostles, *unless otherwise clarified*. Here, the reference is clarified as to **us also, to whom it shall be imputed** (that is, righteousness shall be imputed). This changes the pronoun reference in this context from the Apostles to *those who have imputed righteousness*, thus including the Body of Christ.

But, as we have said before, this is certainly not proof that God has always offered salvation *by grace and through faith*. The Abrahamic statement was recorded so that we would realize that God *can* and *has* offered a grace-gift based on faith-alone. Paul now argues that *He is doing it again through Jesus Christ*.