

# Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Words or Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Topic This Month: Romans 4

## Besides Those in the Body of Christ, Did God Respond to Others in Grace?

Yes, God often dealt with man in grace (unearned favor), even with Israel when they were under the Mosaic Law. Grace is God's preferred way to relate to man, because it's an aspect of His character. Let's skim thru the Bible for a glimpse of ways He used grace:

**-Genesis 1:26-28:** It was a free gift of grace when God gave dominion to man over all the earth to subdue it. Adam did not work to earn this!

**-Genesis 3:21-24: a)** God showed grace when He shed blood to make coats of skins to cover Adam and Eve after they sinned against Him. **b)** Was it also grace to put Adam out of Eden? If he had stayed in the Garden, Adam might have lived eternally in that fallen sin state: "...lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." (Verse 22)

**-Genesis 4:1-8:** God knew what Cain thought to do to Abel. In grace He warned him, "...sin lieth at the door," and instructed Cain in righteousness.

**-Genesis 6:1-7:** Was the flood also God's grace? If He had left man to continue his degenerating spiral of sin, mankind would have been destroyed. His gracious redemptive plan thru Christ would never have been accomplished.

**-Genesis 11:1-9:** God didn't allow man to continue to worship Satan and his angels in the 2nd heaven. The earth had become one in spiritual depravity. God knew, "...now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." (Vs 6) He graciously confounded the language and created the institution of government to deal with & slow down man's wickedness.

**-Genesis 12:1-3:** It was totally a gracious act to create the nation Israel to manifest His power and glory to teach and fulfill His will through Abraham's seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. This act of grace blessed the whole world.

**-Exodus 1-14:** Israel didn't do anything to earn God's love and gracious deliverance from slavery in Egypt, nor the rich provisions as they traveled.

**-Exodus 20,32: a)** Before Moses came down the mountain with the Law, Israel broke it by worshipping a calf. They should have been destroyed, but God manifested His grace, love, & patience. **b)** Was there a gracious purpose of the Law? Wasn't God teaching Israel they couldn't be righteous on their own? They needed Him as their Provider. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:3) and "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ..." (Gal. 3:24)

**-Matthew-John:** God's Son graciously humbled himself to be a man, offering himself as a sacrifice (Phil. 2) to a rebellious Nation and world. God's own religious leaders were led by their father the Devil (Jn. 8:44), beheading His prophet, John the Baptist. And, from a child (Matt. 2:13), through to the cross, they plotted to kill Jesus. Truly, the Lord Jesus' whole life was grace!

**-Luke 23:34:** Finally, the loving grace on the cross: "Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do..." What more can be said?

Yes, God's grace is seen through the Bible! As members of His Body, we're privileged to live in the dispensation of Gentile grace (Eph. 3:2)! **Further study:** Gen. 6:8,31:42; Ex. 33:12-17; & Judg. 2:14-19.

## Why do we Need Imputed Righteousness?

Many believe saints have the same sinless standing as Adam did in *Genesis 1*. While it is true Jesus Christ paid for all our sin, just being forgiven stops short of our full blessedness. If this is all we had, the moment after we believed and were saved, we'd sin again and fall just as Adam.

Oh, we have much, much more. Once we trust Christ, God forgives our sin (Rom. 6:2) so we're just before God, having a permanent at-one-ment (Rom. 5:8-11).

Imputed righteousness means that God graciously credits to our account His own, perfect righteousness: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." (Romans 3:22)

Read *Romans 4* to observe how Paul used Abraham and David as examples of His grace and imputed righteousness in the past:

**Abraham:** Verse 3: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

**David:** Verse 6-8: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Our depraved, fallen nature requires that we have God's righteousness to possess eternal life. What a blessedness indeed! And, what a confidence! Praise our Lord for His redemptive work!



Search it out!

## Romans 4: Quotations Are a Key Study Tool

Examine verses!



Taking time to look up quotes is most helpful when reading as it helps us to understand the fullness of what Paul is teaching. He often quotes from other books to provide clarity and background on a topic. This is tool #24 on page 23 of 'Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools,' now available on Amazon. Search for details from quotes provided in Romans 4.

**Quotations: When Scripture quotes an Old Testament verse, look back and find where it's located. A Bible publisher may include the reference for the quoted passage next to the verse or you can use a concordance or Bible app to look it up. Make time to read the passage within its context to gain clarity.**

**1. Romans 4:3 quotes Genesis 15:6:** Read *Genesis 15* to observe how Abram's thinking and faith matures.

Since Abram and Sarai were getting old, he tried to understand how God would bring forth a seed to produce a nation as numerous as the stars in heaven. Read on through *Genesis 16-17* to see the progressive way God unfolded his plan to Abram in order to teach him to trust, developing an unshakable faith. (*Gen. 22*)

**2. Romans 4:17 quotes Genesis 17:5:** Why is it important to see Abraham as our father also? It was important enough for God to change his name from Abram (high father) to Abraham (father of a multitude).

**3. Are there any other quotes in this chapter?** Search the Scriptures and look up the verses to gain detail.

**4. Romans 1-3:** Go back and skim through these chapters to count the number of times Paul quotes from the Old Testament. Paul does not rewrite prior Bible teaching, but uses it as needed to support & clarify his writing, especially in these early chapters of Romans.

## Was Abraham Really a Faithful Man?

Many saints observe that Abraham had some hiccups in his walk; but then again, we all have challenges yet are given grace, time, and God's Truth to learn to trust Him? It is quite interesting to read *Genesis 11-22* to examine the finer details of Abram's faith walk. For example, in *Genesis 12:1*, God calls him out of his country and kindred, but Abram didn't do all of God's directives immediately. He was given time and finally grew in faith, separating from his nephew: "*And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*" (*Gen. 13:8*). Abraham, as all of us, needed to learn to trust God by thinking on His Word in faith.

Abram was graciously given the time needed to digest and apply what God said to him. He gained understanding by thinking about God's teaching and learning from decisions, mistakes, and successes of life, developing a walk of faith. It is interesting to recall that Abram didn't have a spiritual support group such as the Body of Christ, a teacher/pattern as the Apostle Paul (*1 Tim. 1:16*), nor the completed Word. What he seemed to have was a few limited interactions with the LORD over time. It was enough.

In *Genesis 15* as time passed, Abram wondered when and how God would bring forth the promised seed. He comes up with 'his own idea' (*Vs. 3*): "*And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*" God then provides additional information to help him understand: "*And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*" (*Verse 4*) God filled in gaps in understanding to help him grow in faith so he could trust. Again in *Genesis 16*, Abram tries to 'help God' with his works, hearkening to Sarah to raise up seed with her maid, Hagar. Abraham learns God's full plan: the seed would be of his own bowels, but also with Sarah (*Gen. 17:16*). God alone would do this work!

Yes, Abraham was faithful. He learned faith through life's laboratory, that is, thinking the doctrine out and applying God's Word in daily living. "*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*" (*Rom. 4:19-20*) Abraham's faith progressed to even walk by faith to offer his son, the promised seed, as a sacrifice (*Gen. 22*). This is the faith God desires for us (*Romans 6-8*). God works the Word within us to develop conviction to be fully persuaded. God doesn't need our help. He is able!

## The Simplicity of Faith: to be Just and Sanctified

A thread that runs through the Bible is God's desire for a heart of faith. First, **to be justified unto eternal life**, we are to have faith in Christ's blood. *"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."* (Rom. 3:25) Faith is taking God at His Word. *"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."* (Rom. 4:21)

To be just, (made righteous), a person is to believe what God says. No work can be added as it would not be a free grace gift: *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* (Rom. 11:6).

Second, **to be functionally sanctified** (attain holy living), a saint often believes that God desires him to 'just try his best' to live as a Christian. However, this isn't God's way, but is a common, grievous misunderstanding called self-righteousness. Israel made this mistake. Why were their efforts unacceptable? *"Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at the stumbling stone."* (Rom.9:32)

God does not want a believer to trust in his own ability and effort to live godly; this is man-made religion. *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."* (Isaiah 64:6) This looks good to others and oneself, but is an offense to God: *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* (Romans 2:28-29)

How do we walk by faith? Rest in the power of God and His Word within us. This is letting the life of Christ live in you. This faith is taught in the doctrine Christ gave to Paul, the gospel of Christ. (continued)

## "...And Grace Will Lead Them Home..."

**"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound... la da, la da, da daa."** We've trained and loved our children into adulthood. Did we get it all right? Probably not. The young adult years present a journey of 'COMING TO BELIEVE' which is prompted by a nagging question: "What do 'I' believe?" They know what WE believe, but now, they are asking themselves, "What do 'I' believe?" (Rom. 4:22-25; 6:17)

Jesus says, *"...I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE..."* (John 14:6). Can our young people SEE the Word working its TRUTHs into our lives, resulting in abundant life regardless of circumstances? Are we truly God's living epistles (2 Corinthians 3:2-3) that they can clearly read and interpret life by? Do our lives give them reason to revisit their faith from an adult perspective? If not, there is no better day like today to begin working God's Word into our everyday lives. (Romans 6:22) The highest compliment we can receive is, "Mom and Dad, we see you believing what you read in God's Word and we see you living what you believe."

Are we living the GRACE life by honoring their freedom to choose and figure it out? (Joshua 24:15) Can we truly love our young adult children in the middle of their journey? God does; can we? God is not punishing, pushy, or controlling. Neither should we. We are entrusted with the gift of encouragement and love to empower them. Love never fails: *"Charity never faileth..."* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) Don't panic if they seem to be searching for TRUTH in all the wrong places. The Prodigal son returned home after a series of life's experiences, as well as a serious time of reflection. Trust the process. (Luke 15:11-24)

Parents, we've had our journey too, if we bravely remember. The journey is just as important as the destination. What we learn on the journey matures us and establishes TRUTH in our lives to live by (Wisdom). Encourage them to keep on searching. Tell them we are confident that they will figure it out as they turn to the Truth. Why? *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11) **"... and GRACE will lead them home."** (Proverbs 22:6)

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Stamp

**To:**

**“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...”. (Romans 3:24)**

## **The Simplicity of Faith: to be Just and Sanctified** (Continued)

The grace doctrines in Paul’s epistles teach us some things about walking by faith. Just a few verses to read, think on, and apply:

**II Corinthians 12:9-10:** We can glory in every challenge and struggle, seeing God’s marvelous power work within us, Now, we can rest from our works, living by what God teaches us in spite of fear, not knowing how it will turn out, simply trusting: *“...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”*

**Galatians 2:20a:** The Word can work in/through us as we yield: *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...”*

**Galatians 2:20b:** We can be fully persuaded Christ was faithful to accomplish what God desired at the cross. His life is made manifest in our clay vessels: *“...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*

So then, what does it look like to live a holy life by faith? A saint will be thoughtful and reflective on what he is doing, while desiring to live a life that is pleasing to God. As the believer purposes to know God and His Word, reading and meditating upon it through the day, he rests in God’s wisdom and power deposited within him. He can look for ways to apply what he has learned in the details of life. Trust enables us to walk by faith, even when it is inconvenient, uncomfortable, or when we have fear. When we’re weak, He is strong.

As experience is gained by applying sound doctrine, God’s magnificent power rests upon us. Any mistakes made are merely opportunities to learn and grow. There’s no need for self-condemnation or to stay focused on the past. For God has gloriously made it so mistakes can also be for our benefit and learning (*Romans 8:28*).

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