

## Abraham, Adam, & Jesus

Message 3 of 6 in the series: "Romans: Christianity 101"

### A. Paul wrote a lengthy letter to Christians who had established thriving churches in ancient Rome despite having very little instruction. Paul's desire was to help them grow strong in the Lord by teaching them what Christians believe and how Christians behave.

"This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News... **I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people...** One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. **For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord.**" Romans 1:1, 7a, & 10-11 (NLT)

Some important teachings in Paul's letter we've covered so far:

"The **wrath of God** is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ...people are without excuse." Romans 1:18-19 & 20b (NIV)

"For **everyone has sinned**; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." Romans 3:23 (NLT)

"For **no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands**. The law simply shows us how sinful we are." Romans 3:20 (NLT)

"Yet **God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus** when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood." Romans 3:24-25a (NLT)

"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. **It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes**—the Jew first and also the Gentile." Romans 1:16 (NLT)

### B. Even Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people, was declared righteous by God because of his faith, NOT his good deeds.

"Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, '**Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.**' When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. **But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners...** Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, 'That's how many descendants you will have!' And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. **He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous.**" Romans 4:1-5 & 18-22 (NLT) (*Genesis 15:5-6*)

**IMPORTANT!** God will count us as righteous, too, if we have faith/really believe that Jesus died in our place on the cross and rose again. "And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that **God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.**" Romans 4:23-25 (NLT)

### C. Jesus made it possible for us to have a loving, growing, personal relationship with God forever.

"Therefore, since **we have been made right in God's sight by faith**, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully **look forward to sharing God's glory**. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And **endurance develops strength of character**, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. **For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.**" Romans 5:1-5 (NLT)

When we repent of our sins and surrender our lives to Christ:

1. We **have been saved** from the penalty of sin. This is justification - to be declared righteous by God, acquitted, "just as if I'd never sinned." "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)
2. We **are being saved** from the controlling power of sin. This is sanctification - to be made holy, set apart for God's purposes. "Now may the God of peace **make you holy in every way** and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again."  
1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** God often uses trials to mature and refine us. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be **mature and complete**, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4 (NIV)

3. We **will be saved** from the presence of sin. This is glorification - the final, complete transformation of believers when Christ returns and gives us new bodies forever free of sin, sickness, and death.

**IMPORTANT!** God hasn't removed us from this sinful world yet because He wants more people to be saved. "The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."  
2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

**Good News!** God's love for us is outrageous! "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation (wrath).** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)

**D. Through Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, sin, condemnation, and death spread to the entire human race. But through Christ's death on the cross, forgiveness, a right relationship with God, and eternal life are available to everyone who believes.**

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. ...Now **Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.** But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for **all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.**" Romans 5:12 & 14b-19 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** As bad as sin is, God's grace is greater. "God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."  
Romans 5:20-21 (NLT)

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**Connect Group Questions:**

1. Read Genesis 12:1-4 & 15:1-6 & Romans 4:1-5 & 18-25. How much faith/trust do you think it took for Abraham to trust God's promises?
2. What's the difference between being made right with God through faith and being made right with God through works/human effort? (Ephesians 2:8-9)

3. Read Romans 5:1-5, and then discuss the following statements regarding what Salvation means:
  - We have been saved from the **penalty** of sin. This is justification - to be declared righteous by God, acquitted, "just as if I'd never sinned." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
  - We are being saved from the **controlling power** of sin. This is sanctification - to be made holy, set apart for God's purposes. (1 Thessalonians 5:23, James 1:2-4)
  - We will be saved from the **presence** of sin. This is glorification - the final, complete transformation of believers when Christ returns and gives us new bodies forever free of sin, sickness, and death. (Philippians 3:20-21) Why hasn't this happened yet? (2 Peter 3:9)
4. When did you first realize that God willingly sacrificed His own Son to rescue you while you were still a sinner? How did it make you feel? Why did He do this? (Romans 5:6-11, Matthew 9:12)
5. Read Romans 5:12-21. Compare/contrast Adam & Jesus. Why is it important for Christians to believe Adam is a real person and not just a mythological figure?
6. Discuss the following verse:

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:11-13 (NIV)