



Trusting in the Truth of God

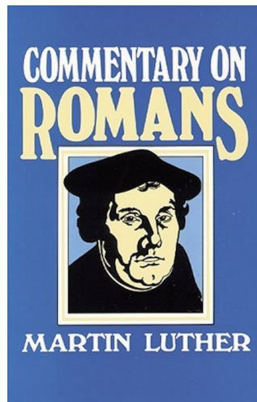
... let God be found **true**, though every man a liar ROMANS 3:4

Study 5a: JUSTIFIED by FAITH -- or FAITHFULNESS? (4:1-12)

4:1-8 How -- & when -- does God reckon men righteous? (8:1)

To believe God means to **trust Him** always and everywhere -- **Martin Luther**, *Romans*, p.66 (emphasis added)

We must notice in this passage how the Apostle dwells on the word **reckon** which occurs eleven times, showing the emphasis placed on it, and the importance of the idea in his mind. It is "a metaphor taken from accounts," and implies something put to a man's credit. Righteousness is "imputed" or "reckoned." God regards, reckons, accounts as righteous because of what Christ has done. He is "the Lord our Righteousness," [Jehovah Tsid Kenu] and His righteousness is put to our account through faith. -- **W. H. Griffith Thomas**, *Romans* p.169



4:9-12 What, then, is the significance of the sacrament of circumcision? (Jer. 31:31-35)

As the Christian Sacraments are, so was the Patriarchal Sacrament; it was "a sure testimony and effectual sign of God's grace and good will." But the grace and good will come not through the Sacrament as through a medium, but straight from God to the man who took God at His word. -- **H.C.G. Moule**, *Romans (Expositor's Bible)* p.113

Here was the Jew's fatal mistake. He practically took Isaac in his eight-days-old circumcision for the model of a saved man, and not Abraham in his faith. -- **James Stifler**, *Romans* p.76

Study 5b: WHOSE LOYALTY leads to SALVATION? (4:13-25)

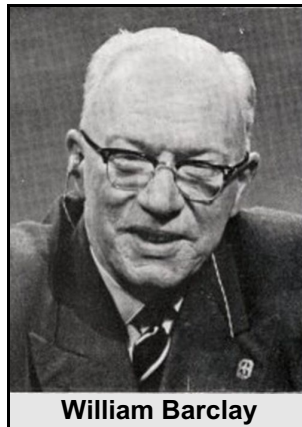
Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name,
because you alone are loyal? Rev.15:4 (NWT)

4:13-15 If righteousness is by Law (= obedience) under what would Christians stand? (James 2:10-13)

... the great majority of the Rabbis turned the Abraham story to suit their own beliefs. They held that because he was the only righteous man of his generation, *therefore* he was chosen to be the ancestor of God's special people. The immediate answer is, "But how could Abraham keep the law when he lived hundreds of years before it was given?" The Rabbis advanced the odd theory that he kept it by *intuition* or *anticipation*. ... The Rabbis were so in love with their theory of works that they insisted that it was because of his works that Abraham was chosen ... Here, again, we have the root cleavage between Jewish legalism and Christian faith. The basic thought of the Jews was that a man must *earn* God's favour. The basic thought of Christianity is that all a man can do is to take God at his word and stake everything on the faith that his promises are true.

-- **William Barclay**, *Letter to the Romans* (DSB, rev. 1975) pp.63-64

It has been well said that St. Paul and St. James are not soldiers of different armies fighting against each other, but soldiers of the same army fighting back to back against armies coming from opposite directions. -- **W. G. Thomas**, *op.cit.*, p.170



William Barclay

4:16-18 Who, according to Paul, are the seed of Abraham? (John 8:37,39)

Abraham, accordingly, is the true father of all who, like him, believe in God and take Him at His word. He is the father of uncircumcised believers, for he was himself uncircumcised when his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness; he is the father of circumcised believers too, not so much on the ground of their circumcision as on the ground of their faith. ... If, long after the promise was given, it had been made conditional on obedience to a law which was not mentioned in the original terms of the promise, the whole basis of the promise would have been nullified. The promise was a promise of blessing, and is fulfilled in the gospel. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Romans (Tyndale)* p.112

How can God speak of that which shall not be realized till so distant a future as if it were an already accomplished fact? The apostle uses this expression to penetrate to the very essence of Abraham's faith. In the eyes of God, the patriarch is already what he shall become. -- **Frederic Godet**, *Romans* p.179

4:19-21 What is one vital difference between weak and strong faith? (Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14-16; 24:1-14,31)

Faith ever finds its nutriment in the word of God, and can only be

strong as it feeds itself thereon. Weak faith is invariably due to a **lack of the food of the promises**. "God's ability is the foundation of faith's stability." -- **W. Griffith Thomas**, *op.cit.*, p.185 (emph.added)

There are two Greek words which mean *promise*. *Huposchesis* means a promise which is entered into upon conditions. "I promise to do this if you promise to do that." *Epaggelia* means a promise made out of the goodness of someone's heart quite unconditionally. It is *epaggelia* that Paul uses of the promise of God ... It is dependent not on our merit but only on God's own generous heart. -- **William Barclay**, *op.cit.*, p.68

4:22-25 With which 2 facts is faith primarily associated?
(10:9-10)

Christ's resurrection was indispensable in order to the act of faith in Christ's death. Compare v.1; I Cor.15:17. The death constitutes the atonement for guilt, but had Christ never risen from the dead, no man could have appropriated it, because there would have been no evidence that he had conquered death, and no living person in whom to believe. -- **William G.T. Shedd**, *Commentary on Romans* pp.108-109

*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken and will He not make it good?*
NUMBERS 23:19

Summary:

SEVEN ASPECTS of RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let us now concentrate attention upon this chapter, and observe the various elements and phases of righteousness brought into view.

- (a) Righteousness is associated no less than eleven times with reckoning (vers. 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24). God puts our Lord's righteousness to our account.
- (b) Righteousness is associated nine times with faith (vers. 3,5,9,13,14,16,20,22,24). Trust is the channel by means of which God's righteousness in Christ becomes ours.
- (c) Righteousness is said three times to be apart from works (vers. 2,5,6). Nothing that man can do can possibly provide an adequate righteousness.
- (d) Righteousness is said twice to be apart from circumcision (vers. 10,11). No outward ordinance or ecclesiastical rite can possibly guarantee righteousness; at most it can only prove and seal an already existing righteousness.
- (e) Righteousness is said three times to be apart from law (vers. 13,14,16). Law commands but cannot compel; it requires, but cannot provide righteousness.
- (f) Righteousness is said to be according to grace (ver. 16). This is the divine standard by which God provided Christ and wrought righteousness for man.
- (g) Righteousness is associated with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ (ver.25). In Him God has provided and bestows to every believer a perfect righteousness. As we contemplate the marvel and the glory of this divine gift how can we help doing as Abraham did: "giving glory to God"? **W. H. Griffith Thomas** *Romans* Vol 1 pp 188-189

