GOSPEL IN ROMANS · STUDY NOTES

Study 2: Reckoned righteous

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

God's provision of righteousness

Romans so far

All the world is guilty, including the privileged Jew. No one can save himself by obeying God's law.

The topic of this study is **"Reckoned righteous" (Romans 3:21–5:21)**. "Reckoned" means credited, or counted. A person is counted righteous by faith, even though in himself he is not. Believers are given Christ's righteousness as a gift.

God's provision of righteousness (3:21–31)

1. God's gift of righteousness is received by faith in Christ (3:21–22). This righteousness is given "to all who believe", like a coat or covering.

1 **Read Romans 3:21–22**

How do we receive God's righteousness? Is it something we become inside, or something God gives us?

2. This righteousness is made possible by the cross (3:24–26). Christ bore the believer's sin and turned away God's anger. Now that sin has been justly dealt with, God can justly justify us – declare us righteous.

Justify

To justify means to declare a person just, that is, righteous. It is not only the cancelling of sin.

2 **Read Romans 3:23–26**

What has everyone done (verse 23)? What does God freely give through Christ (verse 24)?

3. This righteousness is given without works (3:27–31). God's righteousness is not achieved but received – by faith. Gentiles may receive it too, because it does not come through the Jewish law.

3 **Read Romans 3:27–31**

Why can no Christian boast about being saved?

PART 2

Abraham was declared righteous

Abraham (4:1–25)

1. Abraham was declared righteous by faith (4:1–8). Paul quotes Genesis 15:6: "Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness." If it were by works, Abraham could have claimed salvation as wages he had earned (v. 4). But forgiveness is by faith, and therefore free, as David also taught (vv. 5–8).

4 **Read Romans 4:1–8**

How was Abraham made right with God? What does God do for the one who does not work but trusts Him (verse 5)?

See also: Genesis 15:6; Romans 6:23.

2. Abraham is proof that righteousness is given to Gentiles (4:9–12). He was declared righteous while still uncircumcised, that is, like a Gentile (v. 10). Circumcision was simply a sign, or symbol, of his faith (v. 11).

5 **Read Romans 4:9–12**

Was Abraham counted righteous before or after he was circumcised? What does that tell us about ceremonies such as baptism?

3. Abraham is the father of all who share his faith (4:13–25). Believers of every nation are Abraham's children (vv. 13–17). All who share his faith have the same gift of righteousness (vv. 18–22).

6 **Read Romans 4:13–25**

Whose father is Abraham (verses 16–17)? Why does God accept believers of every race and background in the same way?

See also: Galatians 3:28.

PART 3

The benefits of being reckoned righteous

Benefits (5:1–21)

1. Peace and privilege come to those declared righteous (5:1–5). Peace with God, and a new relationship with Him. Even trials are blessed, to produce a Christ-like character.

7 **Read Romans 5:1–5**

What do we have, now that we have been justified through faith? Which of these gifts do you most need to enjoy?

2. Salvation is assured by what we learn of God's love (5:6–11). Christ loved us when we were "enemies"; how "much more" now that we are friends! Especially as Christ's "life" now intercedes for us.

8 **Read Romans 5:6–11**

For whom did Christ die? If God loved us while we were His enemies, why can no true Christian be lost in the end?

3. The reversal of the misery caused by Adam's fall (5:12–21). Adam's sin, on behalf of mankind, brought death to all (vv. 12–14). Christ's obedience, on behalf of believers, brought the gift of His righteousness (vv. 15–19).

9 **Read Romans 5:12–21**

What did Adam's sin bring? What did Christ's obedience bring? What did it cost Christ?

To conclude

We are as pleasing to God as Jesus is, because we are clothed in His righteousness. God now wants us to be righteous in character too. This is the topic of the next study.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What is the difference between being made righteous inside and being declared righteous?

2. How does Abraham's story encourage you?

3. Which benefit of being reckoned righteous means most to you?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 2

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GOSPEL IN ROMANS · STUDY 2 · MEMORY VERSE

“But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Romans 3:21–22** *21But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, as attested by the Law and the Prophets. 22And this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no distinction,*

2 **Romans 3:23–26** *23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25God presented Him as an atoning sacrifice in His blood through faith, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had passed over the sins committed beforehand. 26He did this to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and to justify the one who has faith in Jesus.*

3 **Romans 3:27–31** *27Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of works? No, but on that of faith. 28For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law. 29Is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Certainly not! Instead, we uphold the law.*

4 **Romans 4:1–8** *1What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has discovered? 2If Abraham was indeed justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. 3For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 4Now the wages of the worker are not credited as a gift, but as an obligation. 5However, to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. 6And David speaks likewise of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7"Blessed are they whose lawless acts are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

5 **Romans 4:9–12** *9Is this blessing only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10In what context was it credited? Was it after his circumcision, or before? It was not after, but before. 11And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but are not circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*

6 **Romans 4:13–25** *13For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world was not given through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14For if those who live by the law are heirs, faith is useless and the promise is worthless, 15because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law, there is no transgression. 16Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may rest on grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the presence of God, in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being what does not yet exist. 18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19Without weakening in his faith, he acknowledged the decrepitness of his body (since he was about a hundred years old) and the lifelessness of Sarah's womb. 20Yet he did not waver through disbelief in the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God was able to do what He had promised. 22This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23Now the words "it was credited to him" were written not only for Abraham, 24but also for us, to whom righteousness will be credited—for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was delivered over to death for our trespasses and was raised to life for our justification.*

7 **Romans 5:1–5** *1Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.*

8 **Romans 5:6–11** *6For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9Therefore, since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him! 10For if, when we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! 11Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

9 **Romans 5:12–21** *[12]Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death was passed on to all men, because all sinned. [13]For sin was in the world before the law was given; but sin is not taken into account when there is no law. [14]Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the way that Adam transgressed. He is a pattern of the One to come. [15]But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many! [16]Again, the gift is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment that followed one sin brought condemnation, but the gift that followed many trespasses brought justification. [17]For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! [18]So then, just as one trespass brought condemnation for all men, so also one act of righteousness brought justification and life for all men. [19]For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. [20]The law came in so that the trespass would increase; but where sin increased, grace increased all the more, [21]so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 2: Reckoned righteous

> **Memory verse:** “But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- Explain justification: God credits Christ's righteousness to believers, by faith, on the basis of the cross.
- Show from Abraham that this has always been God's way, for Jew and Gentile.
- Rejoice in the benefits: peace with God, secure salvation, the reversal of Adam's fall.

Suggested timing (about 75 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (4 min); Romans 3:21–22, 3:23–26, 3:27–31.
- **25 min** Part 2 video (4 min); Romans 4:1–8, 4:9–12, 4:13–25.
- **20 min** Part 3 video (4 min); Romans 5:1–5, 5:6–11, 5:12–21.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- The "coat" picture helps: righteousness is credited (imputed), not first produced in us.
- On 4:9–12: the authors apply it to baptism; baptism is a sign, not the means of salvation.
- 5:6–11 is the authors' basis for the believer's security; let the group enjoy the "how much more".

Answers to watch for

- **3:21–22:** righteousness through faith in Christ to all who believe.
- **3:23–26:** justified freely by grace through the redemption in Christ; God is just and the justifier.
- **3:27–31:** boasting excluded; justified by faith apart from works.
- **4:1–8:** Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness; wages vs gift.
- **4:9–12:** credited before circumcision; circumcision a sign and seal.
- **4:13–25:** Abraham fully persuaded; written also for us who believe.
- **5:1–5:** peace with God; access to grace; suffering produces perseverance, character and hope.
- **5:6–11:** Christ died for us while we were sinners; how much more shall we be saved.
- **5:12–21:** through Adam condemnation; through Christ righteousness and life.