

III. Salvation: Men accounted righteous by God through Christ (3:21--5:11).

- A. The righteousness of God imputed to man through Christ's death as a fullness of the Old Testament requirement. (3:21-30).
1. The righteousness of Christ forecasted in the Law was imputed to any who believe apart from any works under the Law, Jew or Gentile (since all are condemned). (3:21-23).
 2. This demonstrates God's rightness in that He gave the sacrifice to appease His wrath (God would be the justifier.) God endured the sins under the Law due to His patience, until the sacrifice came. (3:24-26).
 3. Thus self-glorification is eliminated and glorification of God is prominent since it is only by faith³⁷ that man receives righteousness, not by works (3:27-30).
- B. Imputed righteousness was the basis of salvation even in the Old Testament as it anticipated Christ (3:31--4:25)
1. Abraham expressed faith in Genesis 15:6 and thus was not accountable for works (4:1-5).
 2. In Psalm 31:1-2 David expresses the forgiveness of sins and sin thus is not accounted (4:6-8).
 3. Abraham received imputed righteousness prior to the Law, prior to his circumcision thus he became the father of those who come by faith and are not circumcised³⁸ (4:9-13).
 4. Abraham's faith in the promise of God is what brought forth his seed, and not his own body's efforts. And this seed is a copy of Abraham's faith, not simply physical (4:14-22).
 5. Thus the believer's faith is to copy Abraham's (4:23-24).

³⁶ The statement that all those under the Law were condemned that all the world might be also condemned is a reference back to the statement that God must judge the world under the same impartiality as the Jews (cf. 3:6).

³⁷ Note here that faith is always indicating virtually no deeds on the part of man. Faith is man's investment in God's activities revealed through His word.

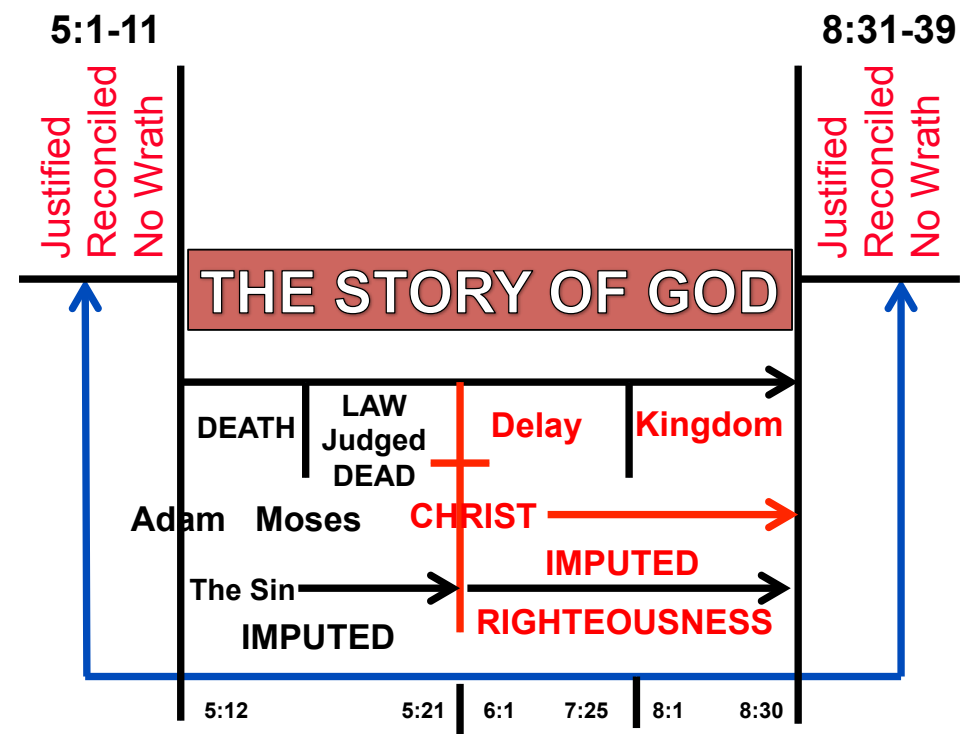
³⁸ "Where there is no law there is no violation," means that prior to the Law there was only the promise of God. When the Law came there were conditions placed on man's responsibility to perform. Thus, prior to the Law, man was to rest on God's promise. Following the Law the condemnation of man was the rule. It was not that man could not fail in response to the promise (as Abraham did), but that the responsibility for its fulfillment did not rest on Abraham but on God (unconditional). The responsibility for the Mosaic Covenant rested on the people (and thus Paul's point that the Law condemned, since man failed).

- C. Imputed righteousness brings propitiation from the wrath of God (4:25--5:11).

This particular section deals with the fact that their tribulations are not the wrath of God due to the fact that they are reconciled through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The other end of this bookend is in 8:31-39 where again he concludes that this love of God in Christ will keep them secure from ever being separated, and nothing can do that.

In between those sections is the very proof that they are not under wrath and NO amount of sin could separate them since they are reconciled through the substitutionary propitiatory sacrifice. Thus they are to walk, not as those under wrath, nor under Law, who must perform to be sons, but as those who are sons, have the character of God (eternal life), and never fear the wrath of God, since they are fully reconciled.

Thus the section from 5:12—8:39 is not speaking of a life which is dedicated to pursuing sinlessness in any practical sense. It is telling them that they are fully sanctified in Christ apart from any sins and thus are to walk in the perfection of their eternal life. (While the fighting of sin may be a part of the sanctificational walk, it is not dealt with here.) This part is assuring them of their goal of walking in the righteousness, the gift of God in Christ, and never pursuing self-righteousness.



This particular section is the answer to the accusation (likely here by Israel) that leaving the Law would incur wrath.

1. Jesus, who died as a substitute for our sins, was raised to demonstrate that we had been justified through His sacrifice (4:25).
2. Peace with God is established through the declaration of righteousness (5:1).
3. The time following what is revealed in Christ (death and resurrection demonstrating our justification) and what is yet to come in Christ (the Second Coming in judgment) is to be based on that knowledge of peace, and the fact that our character is developed as we endure persecution knowing³⁹ that the ultimate is coming (5:2-5).
4. The knowledge of peace is demonstrated in that God gave His Son as sacrifice for those who were helpless (5:6), sinners (5:8) and enemies (5:10). Thus, they are assured of the reconciliation (5:6-11).⁴⁰

³⁹ “Knowing” here is based on the Holy Spirit, who enlightens us (not through human wisdom) through the revelation through the apostles of imputed righteousness.

⁴⁰ The reasoning here is that if Christ had died for righteous men, then they would have had some merit before God which was their justification. If they should fall from that merit then they would again incur wrath. However, since he justified hopeless, helpless, enemies, they can do nothing worse to undue the reconciliation since they never deserved it in the first place (not being righteous). Thus the hope lies in the propitiatory sacrifice alone for the reconciliation as to its worthiness. Paul will end this argument in 8:32 with a similar argument.