

1. **Introduction:** To stand approved before God, we need (1.) the righteousness earned by Jesus by living a perfectly obedient life under the Law, and (2.) for God’s wrath against sin to be propitiated by Jesus paying sin’s due penalty.
 - Thus, we cannot rightfully claim the tiniest part of salvation to be the result of our doing.
 - God, through Jesus, paid the full price that made every aspect of salvation possible.
 - Having made salvation possible, God took the vital step and gave “faith” to enable us to believe and be saved. We belong to Him, and in Him, we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Paul says about our relationship with God, what do we have to boast about?
 - Romans 3:27-28: *Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
 - God is Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and all that is in it. He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He is Redeemer, Savior, and Friend of His people.
 - Boasting about our salvation is excluded because salvation is entirely of God, God’s gift for which we can claim no merit.
 - Boasting expresses Pride. Pride that arises from self-righteousness or conceit is sin. Pride was the sin of Satan, the very first sin, as recorded in Isaiah 14:13-14.
2. **Isaiah 14:13-14 (NASB):** *But you said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”*
 - What Satan said in his heart was a dreadful but perfect example of conceited Proudful boasting. Satan’s boast that Eve could be “more like God” was the temptation that convinced her to carry out her deadly sin.
 - Eve wanted to be “like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). But what happened is that rather than rise-up and become like God, she fell-down and became like Satan (who also knew about good and evil).
 - After the fall into sin, Eve had knowledge of good and evil, but it was perverted, fallen knowledge obtained through sinful actions. Bible scholars of the Middle Ages considered “pride” to be most-deadly of 7 deadly sins. The seven deadly sins included: Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy, and Pride.
 - C.S. Lewis in chapter 8 of **Mere Christianity** points out that Christianity’s recognition of the dangers of Pride makes Christianity different from other moral systems.

- Lewis says, no one is entirely free of the sin of Pride. Everyone dislikes actions of Pride by others, but people easily overlook their own actions of Pride.
 - Pride is competitive by its very nature. Pride takes no pleasure in having something, only in having more of it than others have. We say people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking. But the truth is they are only proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. It's the greater-than comparison that produces pride.
 - Jesus gave an example of the sin of Pride in a Luke 18:1-12 parable. A Pharisee filled with pride at his Law keeping is compared with a reviled tax collector who exhibits great humility and knows he needs God's mercy.
 - Quite likely the Pharisee did fast and tithe as he claimed. By the standards of law-keeping and devotion, he would appear far superior to the tax collector.
 - But, claiming that he, unlike other men, had no sin went too far. His claim was itself sin. Jesus said it was the humble tax collector was justified before God.
 - Salvation through grace by faith alone undercuts boasting about acquiring faith. We cannot boast that superior morality, good works, pious feelings, superiority in business or arts or anything we can imagine helps us to become righteous before God.
 - Jesus saves and He alone! We are saved from God's wrath at sin by the salvation work of Jesus, the God-man.
 - It is not works, not feelings, not knowledge, and not faith that saves. Faith is necessary to obtain salvation, but faith does not of itself save. Faith is the instrument God uses.
 - Therefore, Paul says, let there be no inkling of a notion of boasting.
 - The idea of atonement through the blood sacrifice of a substitute was introduced by God to the Israelites through the animal sacrifices He required beginning at the very time God gave them the Law.
3. **Romans 3:29-30: *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.***
- Paul emphasizes there is only one God and only one way of salvation for everyone.
 - Much of the world today holds this truth to be ridiculous and harmful to the tender feelings of non-Christians.
 - Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Before Jesus came in the flesh, Abraham was a justified believer. God counted his belief as righteousness because Jesus would earn that righteousness for him and pay the death penalty due Abraham's sins.
 - The truth is everyone who is justified is justified by faith (believing God) alone in Christ alone. The necessary faith to believe is God's gift to whomever He chooses.

- If a person **will come** to God in the way God has appointed – that is, to come through faith in Christ who died to pay the sin-penalty due – God **will receive** that person and never cast them out. Everyone **may come** “just as they are.” But many **will not come**.
 - The question is never “may I come” but always “will you come?”
4. **Romans 3:31**: *Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*
- Some people argue that if salvation is by grace through faith apart from the Law, then God’s Law is unnecessary.
 - Paul adamantly says No! Justification by grace through faith in Christ is in no way contrary to the Law but rather confirms the Law. What does Paul mean?
 - In God’s provision of justification by grace through faith in Christ and His salvation work, the validity of the Law is confirmed because every nuance of the Law is satisfied. Jesus met every demand of the Law.
 - Notice first that justification by grace through faith confirms the Law by showing the Law to be so high and holy that sinners cannot fulfill the Law. No one will ever be justified unless the Law’s requirements can be met in some other way.
 - Any person who has seriously attempted to fully obey the Law can only agree that it is humanly impossible to fully obey the Law.
 - Martin Luther tried with all his being to be obedient to the Law. He fell into despair when he realized it was impossible for him to do so.
 - The second point is that the Law specifies the death penalty for sin. Either the sinner or an “acceptable to God” substitute must bear that penalty.
 - Jesus is the lawful substitute for sinners who would believe in Him.
 - Under the Law, Jesus as their substitute, obediently took upon Himself the sins of believers and paid the penalty due for those sins through His death on the cross.
 - Only He could satisfy all the requirements necessary to be the lawful substitute for people whose collective sins were staggering in number, variety, and penalties due.
 - That is how seriously God takes His Law. Sin must be punished by death. The God-man, Jesus Christ, willingly became the lawful substitute for all who would believe.
 - That salvation is possible is due entirely to the Jesus’ perfect life under the Law and His vicarious sacrificial death paying the full penalty due sins for all who will believe.
 - Thirdly, justification is based on the true righteousness (perfectly fulfilling the Law) earned vicariously by Jesus and imputed by God to those who believe. That imputed righteousness satisfies the Law’s requirements.
 - In this way, God confirms the validity of the Law.
 - In Christ, God provided a righteousness of His own that satisfies the Law, a righteousness no person can earn by their own effort. It is a righteousness a

righteousness no one deserves, and no one can deserve it. It is a righteousness all of grace.

- This grace was made possible by Jesus willingly living a perfect life to earn righteousness that could be shared with believers, and in a manner consistent with the Law's demands, willing dying for believers to redeem them from sin and its death penalty.
- Jesus dying for His people redeemed them from sin in manner consistent with the Law's demands making it possible for sinners to be saved, "apart from themselves directly satisfying the Law, because Jesus satisfied the Law's demands on their behalf.
- Through simple faith, all the amazing benefits of salvation are acquired by sinners who confess their sins and believe in Christ and what He accomplished. God supplies even the necessary faith so that no one can boast of their salvation. God's holy Law is satisfied, and sinners are redeemed.
- In the next step, Paul gives the example of Abraham to show that he too was saved by grace through faith. Abraham is an example of a good (but not perfect) man whose good works were many. If Abraham could not be saved by his works (and he could not), which of us would dare argue that our works are sufficient for our salvation.
- **Next:** Continuing the story of how Abraham was saved by grace through faith.