

Romans 4:5, Imputation of Divine Righteousness because of Faith in Christ, Not by Means of Works; Principles: Heathen: Outsider, Ethos, or Goy?

4. The definite article **τοῦ, toi** is used as a personal pronoun translated “to him,” followed by the negative conjunctive particle **μή, mē** and the present active participle of the verb **ἐργάζομαι, ergazomai**, all of which is translated, “But to him who does not work.”

present:	Aoristic: denotes an instant action that occurs in present time. The one who rejects salvation by works does so with an instantaneous rejection of the idea.
active:	The person who is positive to the gospel produces the action of not working for salvation.
participle:	Circumstantial: expresses an attendant circumstance. Not working for salvation but having faith in Christ results in salvation.
5. This is followed by another “but” that shows a contrast between the person who “does not work” but instead believes in Christ. The verb “to believe” is another aoristic present active participle this time of **πιστεύω, pisteuō** which is an action that occurs instantaneously.
6. Volition is a trigger that activates a thought, in this case to believe an idea that has been under consideration. The idea here is the gospel of salvation by faith, therefore to believe this means the person is convinced of its accuracy.
7. This may be described as instant adjustment to the justice of God. Remember that righteousness demands righteousness and righteousness approves faith response to the gospel. What righteousness demands justice must execute. Righteousness demands that justice impute divine righteousness to anyone who believes.
8. It is justice that is mankind’s point of contact with the integrity of God. For those who do not believe, justice must condemn that person because of his maladjustment to the divine justice.
9. The free-will decision to believe in Christ is nonmeritorious since it is directed toward the meritorious object of Christ. The issue in the Anglican Conflict is whether the free will of mankind will choose for or against God’s plan of salvation and, if so, to then choose for or against His plan for the Christian way of life.
10. In human history, the sovereignty of God and free will of man must coexist by divine decree.
11. Following the verb “to believe” is the definite article **τόν, ton** used as a personal pronoun for God and the preposition **ἐπί, epi** translated “on”: “But believes on the One.”
12. Next comes the verb which is another present active participle, this time of **δικαίωω, dikaiōō** which is translated “justifies.”

13. The present tense is static for a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing. Once justified, always justified! It is eternal in nature especially considering that immutable God produces the action of the verb which means that this act also includes the imputation of divine righteousness to the one who believes.
14. And who is it that is justified? A person who was previously unjust, unrighteous, and therefore an unbeliever, characterized here by the noun **ἀσεβής, asebēs**, “the ungodly.”
15. An unbeliever has no redeeming qualities and never will unless he takes the redemption solution. This quote is an excellent summary of salvation by faith alone:

The ἀσεβής [asebēs] is a person who has no claim to justification: if he is justified, it must be not on the ground of works, but freely, by God's grace, on which he relies through faith. Of course to believe in this grace of God is to do something; in that sense it is a work; but it is to do something which involves a complete renunciation of hope in anything we can do without God. It excludes merit, boasting, justification ἐξ ἔργων [ex ergōn: “by means of works”].¹

Romans 4:5a - But to him who does not work for salvation but believes on him who justifies the unbeliever ...

16. Paul now drives his point home: it is not to the one who works for salvation but rather to the one who simply believes in Christ that is justified. The one who believes is identified by the intensive pronoun **αὐτός, autos**, translated “his.” This emphasizes the importance of believing in Christ. It is followed by the noun **πίστις, pistis**: “His faith.” Faith is the catalyst that put the redemption solution in motion.
17. The results of his faith in Christ is stated next by the present active indicative of the verb **λογίζομαι, logizomai**: “to credit to one's account”:

present: Customary: denotes that which habitually occurs, or may reasonably be expected to occur. In this case the verb describes what happens every time a person believes in Christ for salvation.

NOTE: In Romans 4:3 Paul uses the aorist passive indicative to describe the process by which Abraham's faith resulted in justification:

In verse 3, the aorist tense is culminative which signifies effort or process and denotes the attainment of the end of such effort or process. When Abraham believed he received credit to his account of divine righteousness.

¹ James Denney, “St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans,” in *The Expositor's Greek Testament: Apostles, Romans, First Corinthians*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 2:616.

In verse three Paul describes the *process* by which Abraham had already been saved through faith in Messiah, whereas in verse 5 he describes the *result* of what happens when anyone believes in Christ for salvation.

- passive: This is the voice of grace: anyone who believes in Christ receives justification by means of grace; no person ever produces the action of being justified.
- indicative: Declarative: confirms the historical reality of what happens when a person believes in Christ: the imputation of divine righteousness which results in justification and vindication before the Supreme Court of Heaven.

18. What is credited to the account of the person who believes is stated in the prepositional phrase: **εἰς δικαιοσύνην, eis dikaiosunē**: “for righteousness.”

Romans 4:5 - But to him who does not work for salvation but believes on him who justifies the unbeliever his faith receives credit to his account for the imputation of divine righteousness resulting in justification.

19. Principles:

- 1) Faith is a nonmeritorious decision which directs its emphasis and trust toward the perfect object of Christ for salvation and eternal life.
- 2) This is the only way that anyone can receive credit from the justice of God and receive the imputation of divine righteousness.
- 3) Credit posted to our account in the form of divine righteousness is the only way a person can be justified by the integrity of God.
- 4) It is a lie right out of the heart of hell that followers of the world's sundried religions are all trying to reach the same God as are Christians.
- 5) First of all there is only one God: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3).
- 6) Any object of worship other than that of Jesus Christ, who Scripture identifies as the God of Israel and Head of the Church, is a false god.
- 7) Those who worship false gods are unbelievers and are often described as “heathen,” a word thought police regard as a politically incorrect reference. The word “heathen” in the New Testament Greek is the **ἔθνος, ethnos**, and means “people,” “mankind,” or “a nation.”
- 8) In the Jewish mind, anyone who does not worship *Athonai Elohim* is an “outsider.” The Jews were often looked upon by others as having an exclusive attitude. Christians have also been evaluated as having this disposition. The accusation is meant as a criticism but in reality it is an accurate assessment.

- 9) But why shouldn't any belief system be "exclusive?" Would not any legitimate *belief* system require its followers to subscribe to certain *exclusive* tenants that distinguish it from other belief systems?
- 10) And why would the heathen care whether we are exclusive or not? They have chosen to believe nothing which includes a rejection of not only Christ as Savior but also our contention that He is. They are hopelessly exclusive about this.
- 9) The Hebrew word that is translated "heathen" is the singular גוי *goy* plus its plural גוים *goyim*. The Greek noun *ethos* is its equivalent.
- 10) Those outside the community of believers must be defined in some fashion. *Ethnos* and *goy* are biblical terms translated "heathen" and each refers to a person who does not subscribe to the gospel of salvation or the theology of Judaism or Christianity.
- 11) In the book *UnChristian*, its writers, David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, addressed the problem of what to call those who are non-Christians in order to avoid political incorrectness. They decided on the term "outsiders," which is what *ethnos* and *goy* actually mean.
- 12) So if a person rejects the gospel of Christ he is obviously outside the belief system of Christianity and free to hold this exclusive opinion. If he wants to reject our exclusive doctrine that anyone may go to heaven if he believes in Christ alone through faith alone, then he may use his free will to do so.
- 13) After having decided to reject this exclusive means of salvation, he is free to maintain his exclusive position of unbelief and continue with his own ideas of the eternal future or lack of them.