

Romans



The Acts of Paul and Thecla

Syriac version: "He was a man of middling size, and his hair was scanty, and his legs were a little crooked, and his knees were projecting, and he had large eyes and his eyebrows met, and his nose was somewhat long, and he was full of grace and mercy; at one time he seemed like a man, and at another time he seemed like an angel."

AI generation of
Paul based on
description from
*The Acts of Paul
and Thecla*





Paul stuns me, and
should stun us all.

Phil. 3:5

...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

Phil. 3:5

...περιτομῇ ὀκταήμερος,
ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς
Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ
Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον
Φαρισαῖος

Jerusalem

167 BC



Jerusalem

167 BC



Outlaw:

- Circumcision
- Sabbath
- Torah study

Jerusalem

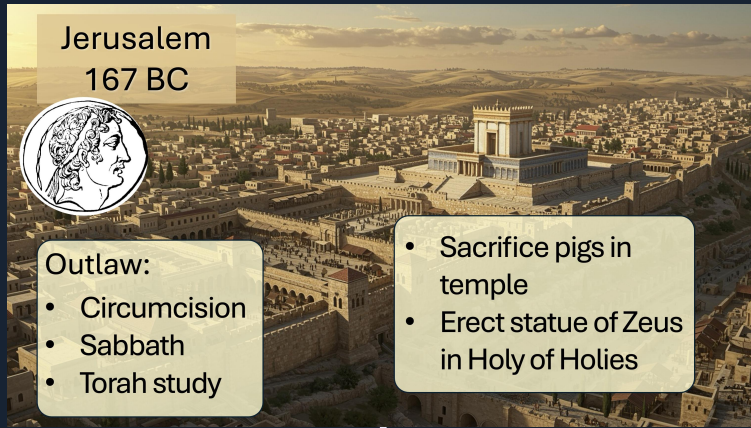
167 BC



Outlaw:

- Circumcision
- Sabbath
- Torah study

- Sacrifice pigs in temple
- Erect statue of Zeus in Holy of Holies



167BC



164BC

Jews
retake the
temple

Pharisees
emerge

150BC

How do we prevent
another catastrophe?

What went wrong?

Dear Director,
 I am writing to you regarding the information
 disclosed in the attached file regarding the

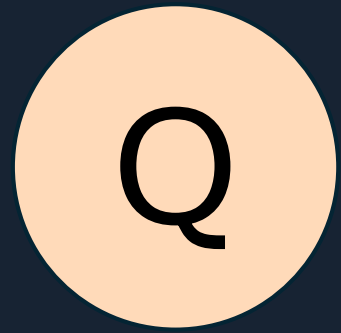


How do we prevent
another catastrophe?

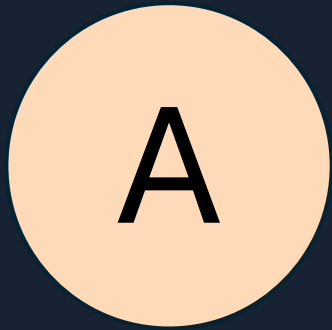
Pharisee's
Response:



"Make a fence around the Torah"
(Mishnah Avot 1:1)



How do we prevent
another catastrophe?



Meticulous Torah
observance to ensure
divine blessing



Paul was trained in
this tradition of
zealous precision

Acts 5:34

But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.

Acts 5:34

ἀναστὰς δέ τις ἐν τῷ
συνεδρίῳ Φαρισαῖος
ὀνόματι Γαμαλιήλ,
νομοδιδάσκαλος τίμιος
παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, ἐκέλευσεν
ἔξω βραχὺ τοὺς
ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι

Acts 23:6

Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees.

Acts 23:6

Γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων

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Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον
Φαρισαῖος

Acts 15:5

But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”

Acts 15:5

Ἐξανέστησαν δέ τινες
τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἵρέσεως
τῶν Φαρισαίων
πεπιστευκότες λέγοντες
ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν
αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε
τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον
Μωϋσέως



Paul stuns me, and
should stun us all.

This is the Paul that
embraces Jesus as
Christ, does a 180 turn,
and writes Romans



Abraham was justified by faith

Abraham was justified by faith



God does the impossible

Abraham was justified by faith

God does the impossible



We rejoice with King David



Abraham was justified by faith

God does the impossible

We rejoice with King David

Rom. 3:20

For by works of the law
no human being will be
justified in his sight,
since through the law
comes knowledge of
sin.

Rom. 3:20

διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ
δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα
σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ
γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις
ἁμαρτίας.

Rom. 3:21

But now apart from law,
the righteousness of
God has been
manifested, although
the Law and the
Prophets bear witness
to it—

Rom. 3:21

Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου
δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ
πεφανέρωται
μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ
νόμου καὶ τῶν
προφητῶν,

Rom. 3:22

the righteousness of
God through faith in
Jesus Christ for all who
believe. For there is no
distinction:

Rom. 3:22

δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ
πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
εἰς πάντας τοὺς
πιστεύοντας. οὐ γάρ
ἐστιν διαστολή,

Rom. 3:27

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.

Rom. 3:27

Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις;
ἐξεκλείσθη. διὰ ποίου
νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί,
ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως.

Rom. 3:28

For we hold that one is
justified by faith apart
from works of the law.

Rom. 3:28

λογιζόμεθα γὰρ
δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει
ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων
νόμου.

Rom. 3:29

Or is God the God of
Jews only? Is he not the
God of Gentiles also?
Yes, of Gentiles also,

Rom. 3:29

ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς
μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν;
ναὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν,

Rom. 3:30

since God is one—who
will justify the
circumcised by faith
and the uncircumcised
through faith.

Rom. 3:30

εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεὸς ὃς
δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ
πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν
διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

Rom. 3:31

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Rom. 3:31

νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν
διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ
γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ νόμον
ἱστάνομεν.



Paul was trained in
this tradition of
zealous precision

Pharisee's
Response:



"Make a fence around the Torah"
(Mishnah Avot 1:1)

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Paul wasn't
abandoning the
Torah. He was
demonstrating its
harmony with
justification by faith!

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Rom. 3:31

הַמְבַטְלִים אֶפְּוֹא אֶנְחֵנוּ
אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה עַל־יְדֵי הָאֱמוּנָה
חֲלִילָה אֲךְ מִקִּיָּמִים אֶנְחֵנוּ
אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה:

The Torah was
Genesis -
Deuteronomy

Mt. 5:17

Do not think that I have come to abolish the **Law** or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Mt. 5:17

Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν **νόμον** ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

The Torah was
Genesis -
Deuteronomy

Rom. 4:1

What then shall we say
was gained by
Abraham, our
forefather according to
the flesh?

Rom. 4:1

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν
εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραὰμ τὸν
προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ
σάρκα;

The Torah was
Genesis -
Deuteronomy

Paul wasn't
abandoning the
Torah. He was
demonstrating its
harmony with
justification by faith!



Rom. 4:2

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:2

εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραὰμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη, ἔχει καύχημα, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν.

Rom. 4:3

For what does the
Scripture say?
“Abraham believed
God, and it was
counted to him as
righteousness.”

Rom. 4:3

τί γὰρ ἡ γραφή λέγει;
ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ
τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη
αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

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αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

I love the present tense!

Gen. 15:6

And he believed the
LORD, and he counted it
to him as
righteousness.

Gen. 15:6 (LXX)

καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ
τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη
αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

The backstory to Genesis 15 and God's unilateral covenant



Gen. 15:1

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

Gen. 15:1 (LXX)

Μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ἐγενήθη ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Ἀβραμ ἐν ὁράματι λέγων Μὴ φοβοῦ, Ἀβραμ· ἐγὼ ὑπερασπίζω σου· ὁ μισθός σου πολὺς ἔσται σφόδρα.

Gen. 15:6

And he **believed** the
LORD, and he counted it
to him as
righteousness.

Gen. 15:6 (LXX)

καὶ **ἐπίστευσεν** Ἀβραμ
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ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ
τῷ θεῷ καὶ **ἐλογίσθη**
αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

“Counted” = λογίζομαι (*logizomai*)

An accounting term.

Put into the credits ledger

The Venmo logo, consisting of the word "venmo" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, is centered within a blue rounded rectangle.

venmo

Faith isn't righteousness; faith is the means to the free gift of righteousness

Rom. 4:4

Now to the one who works, his wages are not **counted** as a gift but as his due.

Rom. 4:4

τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ **λογίζεται** κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα,

Eph. 2:5

...even when we were
dead in our trespasses,
made us alive together
with Christ—by **grace**
you have been saved—

Eph. 2:5

καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς
τοῖς παραπτώμασιν
συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ
Χριστῷ, _ **χάριτί** ἐστε
σεσωσμένοι _

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Abraham was justified by faith

God does the impossible

We rejoice with King David

Abraham was justified by faith



God does the impossible

We rejoice with King David

Rom. 4:5

And to the one who
does not work but
believes in him who
justifies the ungodly,
his faith is counted as
righteousness,

Rom. 4:5

τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ
πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν
δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἄσεβῃ
λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ
εἰς δικαιοσύνην·

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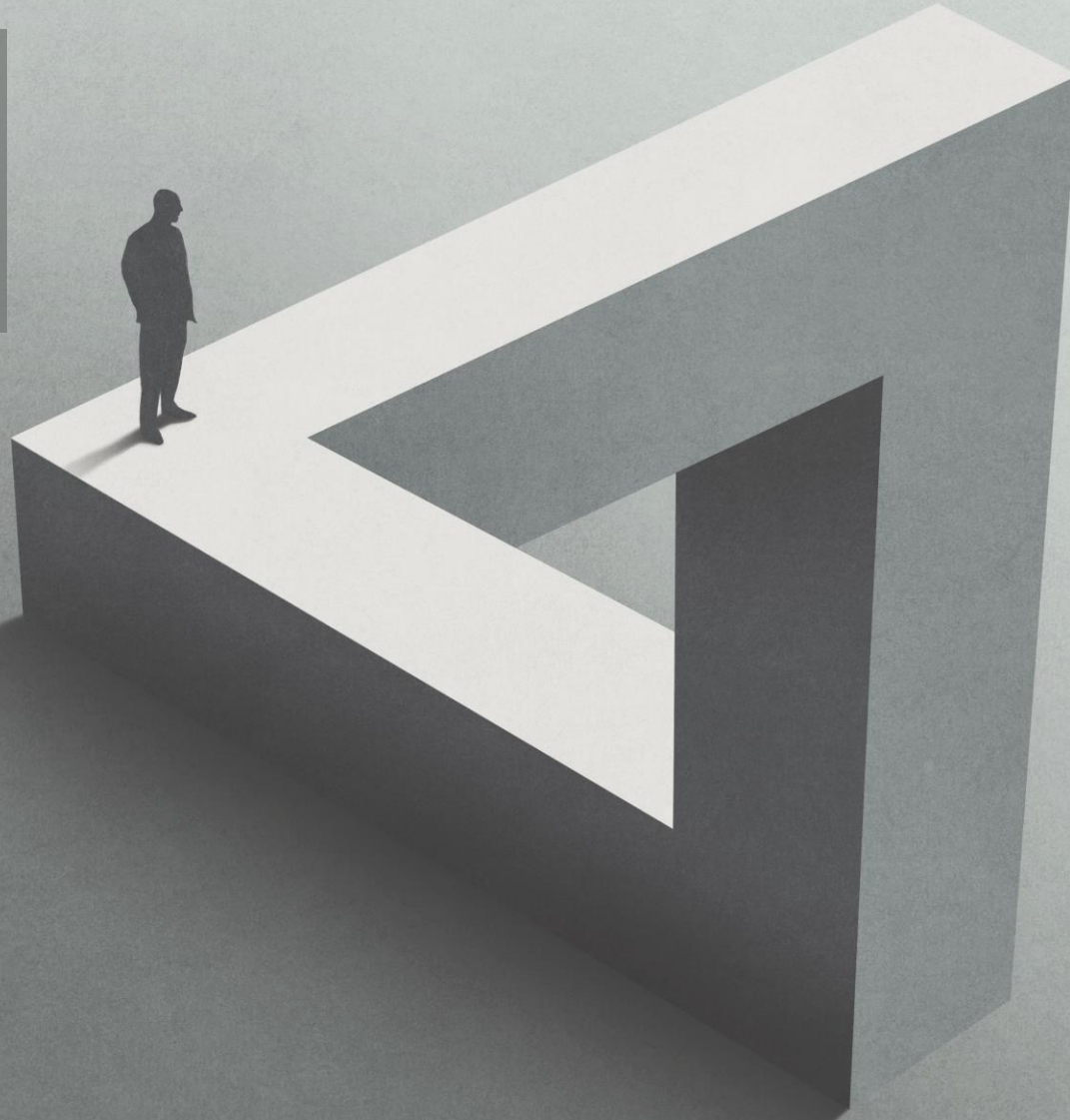
“Ungodly” = ἀσεβής (*asebēs*)

A harsh word!!!

Irreverent, impious, violating norms

God justifies even
those who actively
oppose to him!

Here's a
paradox



Rom. 4:5

God justifies the
ungodly

Ex. 23:7

I will not acquit the
wicked.

Isa. 5:23

acquit the guilty

Rom. 4:5

δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἄσεβῃ

Ex. 23:7 (LXX)

οὐ δικαιοῦσεις τὸν ἄσεβῃ

Isa. 5:23 (LXX)

δικαιοῦντες τὸν ἄσεβῃ

Rom. 4:3

For what does the
Scripture say?

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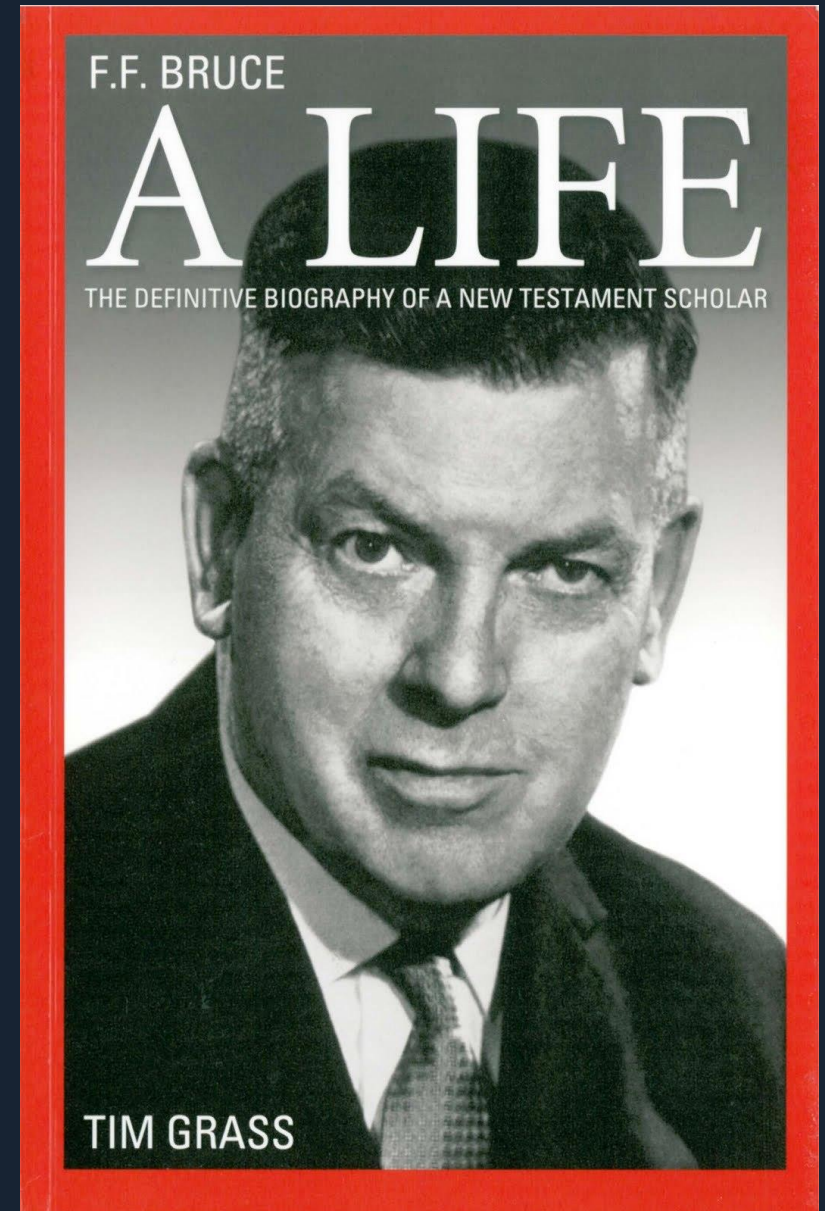
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“Ungodly” = ἀσεβής (*asebēs*)

A harsh word!!!

Irreverent, impious, violating norms

God forbids in the
Law what he in fact
does in the cross



Rom. 4:5

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τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ
πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν
δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ
λογίζεται ἡ **πίστις** αὐτοῦ
εἰς δικαιοσύνην·

Abraham was justified by faith



God does the impossible

We rejoice with King David

Abraham was justified by faith

God does the impossible



We rejoice with King David

Rom. 4:6

just as David also
speaks of the **blessing**
of the one to whom God
counts righteousness
apart from works:

Rom. 4:6

καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει
τὸν **μακαρισμὸν** τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου ᾧ ὁ θεὸς
λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην
χωρὶς ἔργων·

“Blessing” = μακαρισμός (*makarismos*)
The peak of Greek felicity!
happy, fortunate, blessed
(especially b/c of circumstances)

Rom. 4:7

“Blessed are those
whose lawless deeds
are forgiven,
and whose sins are
covered;

Rom. 4:7

μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν
αἱ ἀνομίαι
καὶ ὧν ἐπεκαλύφθησαν
αἱ ἁμαρτίαι·

Rom. 4:8

blessed is the man
against whom the Lord
will not **count** his sin.”

Rom. 4:8

μακάριος ἄνθρωπος οὗ οὐ μὴ
λογίσηται κύριος
ἁμαρτίαν.

“Counted” = λογίζομαι (*logizomai*)

An accounting term.

Put into the credits ledger

Rom. 4:9

Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that **faith** was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

Rom. 4:9

Ὁ μακαρισμὸς οὖν οὗτος ἐπὶ τὴν περιτομὴν ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροβυστίαν; λέγομεν γάρ· ἐλογίσθη τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἡ **πίστις** εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

Rom. 4:3

For what does the
Scripture say?

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Rom. 4:10

How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

Rom. 4:10

πῶς οὖν ἐλογίσθη; ἐν
περιτομῇ ὄντι ἢ ἐν
ἀκροβυστία; οὐκ ἐν
περιτομῇ ἀλλ' ἐν
ἀκροβυστία·

The backstory to
Genesis 15

The backstory to
Genesis 17



Rom. 4:11

He received the sign of
circumcision as a seal
of the righteousness
that he had by faith
while he was still
uncircumcised.

Rom. 4:11

καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν
περιτομῆς σφραγίδα τῆς
δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως
τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ,

Rom. 4:11

The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,

Rom. 4:11

εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας, εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι [καὶ] αὐτοῖς [τὴν] δικαιοσύνην,



Rom. 4:12

and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Rom. 4:12

καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἴχνεσιν τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ.

Points for Home



The Bible SPEAKS!



We worship a
God who does
the impossible!



We rightly rejoice!



Romans

