

Based on LCMS theology and resources, Romans 4:3—"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (ESV)—is a **foundational text for the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone**. It is interpreted as the scriptural proof that salvation is a gift, not a wage earned by works. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)]

Core Meaning of Romans 4:3 in LCMS Theology:

- **Justification by Faith Alone:** The verse demonstrates that Abraham was declared righteous by God based on his faith in God's promise, not on his own merits, works, or keeping of the law.
- **Imputed Righteousness:** "Credited" (or "accounted") means that righteousness is not inherently earned by man but is imputed—credited to our account by God. This is often described as an "alien righteousness" (the righteousness of Christ) being credited to the sinner.
- **The Object of Faith:** Abraham's faith was not just a general belief in God, but trust in God's promise of the Savior (the seed). Today, this means trusting in the finished work of Christ—His death and resurrection—for the forgiveness of sins.
- **Contrast with Works:** Paul uses this verse to contrast two ways of approaching God: works (which result in a debt owed by God) and faith (which receives righteousness as a free gift).
- **Continuity of Grace:** LCMS teaching emphasizes that there is only one covenant of grace, both in the Old and New Testaments. Abraham was saved by the same faith in the coming Messiah that Christians now have in the accomplished work of Jesus. [[5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#)]

Contextual Points in LCMS Resources:

- **Pre-Circumcision:** Abraham was declared righteous *before* he was circumcised, showing that sacraments/ceremonies are not the cause of justification, but rather signs and seals of the righteousness that comes by faith.
- **"Him Who Justifies the Ungodly":** Romans 4:5, which expands on this, is viewed as the "miracle" of justification—God declares righteous those who are, in themselves, ungodly.
- **Certainty of Salvation:** Because justification is entirely God's act (reckoning), it provides a "solid sure hope" for the believer, rather than the uncertainty that comes from relying on one's own works. [[1](#), [6](#), [9](#)]

In summary, for the LCMS, Romans 4:3 means that like Abraham, sinners are declared righteous by God solely on the basis of faith in His promise, which takes hold of the righteousness of Christ. [[1](#), [6](#), [12](#)]

All responses may include mistakes.

[1] <https://witness.lcms.org/2016/justification-our-chief-article/>

[2] <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2017/06/25/martin-luther-true-reformer-or-defender-of-erroneous-conscience/>

[3] <https://www.equip.org/articles/what-think-ye-of-rome-part-5-the-catholic-protestant-debate-on-justification/>

[4] <https://www.triadcc.org/blog/>

[5] <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/romans-4-3.html>

[6] <https://www.bibleref.com/Romans/4/Romans-4-3.html>

[7] <https://files.lcms.org/api/file/preview/C494B183-07F8-425C-AD9B-6D42903CD96E>

[8] <https://versebyversecommentary.com/2011/05/06/romans-43/>

[9] <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-4/>

[10] <https://resources.lcms.org/reading-study/books-essays-articles/comfort-in-the-righteousness-of-god/>

[11] <https://www.mljtrust.org/sermons/book-of-romans/abraham-justified-by-faith/>

[12] <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreedomInChristMovement/posts/1077029073616528/>