

Abraham was made righteous because of his faith in God and His promise, nothing else. Even if you've been circumcised or baptized or ritualized or subscribe to a code of conduct, whatever, this doesn't make you right with God. You get right/just with God only by faith in Him. Abraham is our example. This way he would be the father of all who believe, no matter your race or works or the law or religious practices! Abraham: the father of Jewish Christians. Abraham the father of Gentile Christians. In **:16-25**, we take one more look at Abraham and his faith in "**God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.**" Incredible! This is one of the best descriptions of God, Abraham's God, our God, the God of the Bible. See **Gal. 3:28-29**. Abraham is our great example of justification by faith alone. Righteousness (God's justice) is satisfied by faith in God alone. It was true in the OT. It was true in the NT. It's always been true! It still is true! Not by works (human effort), not by law, not by circumcision (rituals). **Read 3:28**.

Read :16-22. JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH IN THE BIBLICAL GOD AND HIS WORD! **:16-17a For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, :17a (as it is written [in Gen. 17:5], "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU").** Therefore, righteousness comes by faith on an individual's part and grace on God's. God's promise makes it certain, guaranteed, to any person who is of the faith of Abraham. If salvation is given on the basis of the written Law, only the Jews from Moses on could have been saved. But it's of faith! God's salvation is available for all, at any time, by faith in Him. Evidence? Abraham! Any person who has faith in the Biblical God is part of Abraham's family. Thus Abraham is the father of all who have faith in God (**:11-12, :16-17, Gal. 3:29**). Faith is a choice, to trust God. The only thing Abraham had to offer was his belief in the word and character and power of God to do what He had promised.

We see in Whom Abraham's faith was in **:17b. ...in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.** The Bible's God, Abraham's God, and our God is the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist!! The amount of faith one exercises has nothing to do with it. We should talk about the Object of our faith, the God in whom our faith is fixed. It's a question of how big He is. Nothing baffles humans more than death and creation: we can't clear out a graveyard or create a new sun out of nothing. But the Biblical God can! The resurrection from the dead and creation reveal God's power and that He exists (1:4,20). This means any situation we face can be a time of new life. **Is anything too difficult for Yahweh? Gen. 18:14, Heb. 11:3.** As far as we know, Abraham had witnessed no miracle of God.

:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." Hope is the desire for something that might happen; faith is the firm confidence that it will happen, based on God's words. When all

hope, as a human possibility failed, Abraham placed his hope in God. What was his area to trust God? In the area of children. Why? Because he didn't have any when God made His promise! His situation was beyond hope yet He rested in God. According to God's promise of descendants, he turned to God, believed His promise, and as a result became the father of all believers. He believed God's words. It would be decades before God's promise was fulfilled. In fact, there would not be a nation in the usual sense of that term until nearly 600 years later! When God renamed him Abraham (**Gen. 17:5**) at age 99, it means "Father of many!" You can imagine: "Father of many, congratulations! And how many sons do you have?" And the answer was so humiliating to Abraham: "None!"

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:20-22 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, :21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. :22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. With regard to God's promise, he didn't waver through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully confident, persuaded, that God had power to do what He had promised. This was the faith which was credited to him as righteousness. He faced the facts, remembering who his God was. Waver = to distinguish, hesitate, doubt, to judge between two. Abraham wasn't divided in his mind by unbelief. Instead he actually grew stronger in faith as time went by. "Godly faith is not full understanding but full trust." The way to strengthen one's faith is to keep our eyes on the character and resources and words of God, not on the circumstances or problems. He was fully persuaded that God's power would match His promise. (Also see **Rom. 10:17**)

So here we have the mental image of one nearing 100, who couldn't produce children, and another nearing 90, barren, holding one another, laughing together, and believing God's word that by this time next year they'd be parents! Even named their son Isaac, which means laughter! Abraham believed God, and it made the books balance; it was credited to him as justice.

Later Abraham's obedience was simply a visible manifestation of his faith.

Read :23-25. NOW THESE WORDS WERE NOT WRITTEN FOR ABRAHAM ALONE BUT ALSO FOR US. **:23-24 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, :24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead...** This

acceptance by the God of Abraham, the father of all believers, is recorded so that we too might believe and claim the righteousness/justice of God through Jesus. Because of what Jesus has done, we're expected to! **:24b-25 Jesus...He who was delivered over because of our transgressions [Is. 53:4-5,12 paraphrase], and was raised because of our justification.** So we 'live' by His death and by His life. If we believe in and trust the God who can raise the dead and call into existence that which does not exist, if we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead—Jesus who was delivered to death for our sins and was raised from the dead for our justification—it will be credited to us also! Notice how **5:1** begins: **Therefore, having been** [once for all] **justified by faith...** God was able to be just and yet justify the ungodly. The same Jesus who died for our sins is the One who was raised to free us from the penalty and power of sin. We had deviated from the right path, turned aside from God's safe boundaries. Jesus had to die so that we could experience FHIDLS. But He was also raised to prove that God's just demands were fully satisfied. Will we place our faith in Jesus? Anyone can exercise such faith if they choose to. It depends on who your God is.

God brought Abraham to the place where he had no resources and was left only with God. And God will take every believer through that same process, to show us that without Him, we are empty; there is no life. There is no justification, there is no sanctification, there is no glorification. How has He been testing, stretching, emptying you, so you'll fix your eyes on Him alone?

This God makes life an adventure because we never know when He'll bring life to something that's dead—a marriage, an unbeliever, circumstances, job—or call into existence what's needed. These people or things may be touched by the grace of God and brought to life. He wants to produce things in our lives which don't exist without Him—salvation, satisfaction, meaning, purpose, love, abundant living, lives lived to the full. It all begins and continues by trusting God, asking Jesus to take over your life once for all and daily. Have you come to Him by faith in His person and work?

Reflecting on Romans 4:16-25: “Yes, I believe You, I trust You, and I'll act on Your word just as Abraham did.” Are these words you find yourself continually saying? What a God! How do you see yourself with “hopeless circumstances yet staggering possibilities?” As you concentrate on **4:17b**, what thoughts come to mind? How does the God described in the Bible impact your thinking and choices? If your life could be summed up like Abraham's in **:16-22**, how would your summary read? If you were writing someone, what are the lessons from this passage you would emphasize?

Let review the Romans Book Outline and see where we've been and where we're going.

***1:1-7** The writer Paul, his subject Jesus, and the readers 'saints in Rome'.

1:8-15 Paul's plans to visit the Roman Christians and why he's coming.

1:16-17 Paul's purpose in the writing Romans and the theme of the letter: The righteousness/justice of God.

***1:18** God's wrath against ungodliness and unrighteousness of mankind, and the sin that leads to all other sins: suppression of God's revealed truth.

1:19-32 The results of suppressing God's revealed truth: idolatry, dishonored bodies shown in sexual immorality, degrading passions shown in sexual perversion, and depraved thinking revealed in sins against one another.

2:1-16 Results of suppressing truth for 'moral' unbelievers.

2:17-3:8 Results of suppressing truth for 'religious' unbelievers.

3:9-20 Results for every person! Every person is guilty before God, every one!

***3:21-31** God's solution for mankind's rejection and all sins: Faith in Jesus & His work on the cross. Justified. Redeemed. Propitiated—all by faith in Jesus.

4:1-25 An OT example of being right with God by faith: Abraham. Not by works, not by a ritual, not by law, but his faith was in the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist! What a God!!

***5:1-8:39** The results of 3:21-4:25.

***5:1-6:23** The new identity of a justified/righteous person: a contrast between who he/she was IN Adam and who he/she is now IN Christ Jesus: our Lord, Savior, the Jewish Messiah. From being a sinner by nature to being a saint!

7:1-8:17a The new way to walk as a justified/righteous person: a contrast between how he/she walked when IN the flesh and how to walk now that he/she's IN the Spirit. Walk, not by law, not by flesh, but by the Spirit.

***8:17b-39** While waiting for the redemption of our bodies and our Lord's return, the groaning of God's creation, Christians, and the Spirit. Concentrate on the wonder of who the Biblical God is and what He's done out of His love.

***9:1-11:32** God's continued plans for the nation of Israel.

11:33-36 Again, the wonder of who the Biblical God is and what He's done.

12:1-15:13 The results of 5:1-8:39.

***12:1-2** The expected response to the Biblical God: By individual Christians.

12:3-21 ...by the Body of Christ: Use spiritual gifts and love one another.

(We could also look at **Eph. 4:1-16, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 1 Pet. 4:7-11, Acts 2:42-47.**)

13:1-7 ... by Christian citizens.

13:8-14 The Christian is to owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.

***14:1-15:13** How to respond to stumbling block (non-Biblical) issues for both weak and strong Christians.

***15:14-33** Paul's reasons for writing—to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and to tell them of his travel plans. I love **15:18**.

***16:1-16** (16 commands in these verses) Paul greets his friends in Rome.

(**16:17-20** How to deal with people who cause division.)

16:21-24 A farewell from Paul and his friends.

16:25-27 To Him who is able to establish you, the only wise God, through Jesus Christ: to Him be glory forever. AMEN!

Abraham was made righteous because of his faith in God and His promise, nothing else. Even if you've been circumcised or baptized or ritualized or subscribe to a code of conduct, whatever, this doesn't make you right with God. You get right/just with God only by faith in Him. Abraham is our example. This way he would be the father of all who believe, no matter your race or works or the law or religious practices! Abraham: the father of Jewish Christians. Abraham the father of Gentile Christians. In **:16-25**, we take one more look at Abraham and his faith in "**God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.**" Incredible! This is one of the best descriptions of God, Abraham's God, our God, the God of the Bible. See **Gal. 3:28-29**. Abraham is our great example of justification by faith alone. Righteousness (God's justice) is satisfied by faith in God alone. It was true in the OT. It was true in the NT. It's always been true! It still is true! Not by works (human effort), not by law, not by circumcision (rituals). **Read 3:28.**

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