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Series: The Book of Romans

# FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD

(103)

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[Romans 3:21-5:21](#)

(Continuation from 12/09/18)

## C. Logic: The Evidence that Faith Alone Justifies a Man, [Romans 4:1-8](#)

[Romans 4:1-8 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

<sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

<sup>5</sup> But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

<sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

<sup>8</sup> BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

**Introduction:** most people think they become acceptable to God by doing the best they can. Most actually believe they secure God’s approval by being reasonably good: by being a respectable and upright citizen and by occasionally helping others who are less fortunate. But note a startling fact: a man is not justified by works, but by faith. Logic proves the fact.

1. **The logic of Abraham’s justification (v.1-3).**
2. **The logic of the worker or laborer (v.4-5).**
3. **The logic of David’s “blessed man” (v.6-8).**

## DEEPER STUDY # 1

**(Romans 4:1-25) Abraham— Jews, the Seed— Justification— Righteousness— New**

**Creation:** Abraham held a unique position in the Jewish nation, for he was the founder of the nation. He was the man whom God had challenged to be a witness to the other nations of the world—a witness to the only living and true God. God had appeared to Abraham and challenged him to leave his home, his friends, his employment, and his country.

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God made two great promises if Abraham would follow God unquestionably: Abraham would become the father of a new nation, and all nations of the earth would be blessed by his seed ([Genesis 12:1-5](#); [Genesis 13:14-17](#); [Genesis 15:1-7](#); [Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19](#); [Genesis 22:15-18](#); [Genesis 26:2-5, 24](#); [Genesis 28:13-15](#); [Genesis 35:9-12](#)).

**Genesis 17:1-8 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> “Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.

<sup>2</sup> I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”

<sup>3</sup> Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,

<sup>4</sup> “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

<sup>5</sup> No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

<sup>6</sup> I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

<sup>7</sup> I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

<sup>8</sup> I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning’s, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

**([Genesis 17:1-27](#)) Introduction:** Abram was desperate. He had been wanting a son ever since his marriage to Sara, and they most likely had been married for over fifty years. Thus, Abram’s longing—his hopes and dreams—to have a son had been gnawing at him for over fifty years. But Sara had been unable to bear children.

In desperation, when Abram was an old man, Sara had suggested that Abram take her maid, Hagar, and try to bear a son through her before it was too late. This Abram did, and Ishmael was born. Abram's dreams for a son were finally realized in Ishmael. Did Abram ever expect to have another son, a son other than Ishmael? Not likely, for he was now ninety-nine years old, and Sara was eighty-nine, both well beyond childbearing years.

Abram was well aware of this fact; [Genesis 17:17](#) tells us this.

**Genesis 17:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

Apparently, Abram had felt that Ishmael was the son promised by God, that God was going to fulfill His promises through Ishmael. Abram loved Ishmael dearly. Note [Genesis 17:18](#), where Abram cried out for God to remember and bless Ishmael.

**Genesis 17:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> “And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!”

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Ishmael was thirteen years old, and because of Abram's life-long desire for a son, he no doubt loved Ishmael more deeply than the average father. The bond between them was probably closer than the bond between most fathers and sons. Apparently, Abram had become comfortable and settled in life, somewhat complacent and lethargic, slumbering and slacking off. Abram just accepted reality: he was too old to bear any more children, and Ishmael was the only child he had. Thus, he felt Ishmael was bound to be the son promised by God.

But as this passage so clearly reveals, this was not God's plan. Ishmael was not the promised seed, not the son promised to Abram. Thus, Abram's faith needed to be aroused once again. Abram needed God to arouse—stir, quicken, awaken—his faith to look beyond Ishmael...

- beyond the present
- beyond the physical
- beyond the possible

Abram needed to be renewed, to look at the impossible and to believe in the miraculous power and works of God. Note how this is exactly what we need. When a believer becomes comfortable—at ease, complacent, and lethargic—in life, he needs to be aroused by God. He needs a fresh, stirring experience with God similar to Abram's experience.

### **Genesis 17:15-19 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> "Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name.

<sup>16</sup> I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.*"

<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child?*"

<sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!"

<sup>19</sup> But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

**(Genesis 17:15-18) Sara— Family:** How can we arouse our faith, have a fresh, stirring experience with God? Step six is to change our relationship to our family.

1. Note that God honored Sara, greatly honored her. Did Abraham harbor feelings against Sara, secretly blaming her for not being able to bear children? Did he treat her like he should, in love and respect? Was his relationship with her as strong as it should have been? We know that he mistreated her on two occasions, once before this encounter with God and once after ([Genesis 12:11-16](#); [Genesis 20:2-18](#)).

Whatever the case, God honored Sara, and He instructed Abraham to so honor her.

- a. God gave *Sara* a new name, "**Sarah**," and He told Abraham to call Sara by that name. "**Sarah**" means *princess*. Abraham was hereafter to look upon Sarah as a princess, and he was to call and treat her like a princess. Some scholars say that "**Sara**" means *strife, contention, quarrelsome* (Herbert Lockyer. *All the Women of the Bible*. Grand

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Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967, p.155; *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol.1. Edited by H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, p.236). If so, then the name change to Sarah (princess) was of extreme significance to Abraham. Whereas his wife's name had signified strife and contention, now her name was to indicate the traits and character of a princess.

b. God blessed Sarah and appointed her to bear the promised seed ([Genesis 17:16](#)).

[Genesis 17:16 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> **“I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”**

Note that God said He would bless Sarah twice. And then Abraham heard the very words he had waited all his adult life to hear: Sarah was to bear him a son. And not only a son, but she was to be the mother of nations (plural); kings of peoples (plural) were to come from her.

**Note the plural:** only one nation, the Israelites, ever descended from Sarah. This must, therefore, refer to the spiritual people, the promised seed of believers from *every nation*, who were to believe God and His promises even as Abraham had. Sarah was, most definitely, to bear nations and kings of peoples (plural), bear the nation of Israel and the new race of believers from every nation of the earth. Sarah, Abraham's wife, was honored by God, greatly honored. Consequently, Abraham was to change his behavior, his relationship toward his wife: he was to call her *Sarah*, the princess, a woman worthy of honor from all the nations and kings of the earth.

[Genesis 22:15-18 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> **“Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,**

<sup>16</sup> **and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,**

<sup>17</sup> **indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”**

<sup>18</sup> **“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”**

[\(Genesis 22:15-18\) Covenant, Abrahamic— Promises, of God](#): one of the major steps to absolute surrender is having God's promises renewed to one's heart. The angel of the Lord called out to Abraham again, his voice apparently sounding out from heaven. Abraham was to be rewarded for his obedience, and no greater reward could be given.

**1. God gave Abraham a solemn oath, the most solemn oath He could give.** God swore by Himself; He staked His promises upon His own nature and name. God could swear by no greater name or person than Himself. He and He alone would stand behind the promises of His Word (cp. [Hebrews 6:13](#)).

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**Hebrews 6:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.”

Note why God was giving Abraham so great a confirmation of the promises: because Abraham had obeyed God, done exactly what God had told him to do: he had offered his son as a sacrifice to God (**Genesis 22:16**).

**Genesis 22:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> “And said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.”

2. God renewed the promise of *the promised seed*, meaning a great nation of people (**Genesis 22:17a**). Abraham’s descendants were to number as the stars of the sky and as the sand upon the seashore.

**Genesis 22:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> “**Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed** as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

Note that Abraham’s descendants were to possess the cities of their enemies (**Genesis 22:17c**). This most likely refers to the spiritual seed, the believers of the earth, who will rule and reign in the new heavens and earth.

**Genesis 22:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> “**Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.**”

3. God renewed the promise of *the promised seed*, meaning the Savior of the world.

**Thought 1.** The great promises of God are sure, guaranteed and confirmed by God Himself. God has sworn that He stands behind every single promise. Every promise will be fulfilled, literally and completely fulfilled. The omnipotent power of God guarantees their fulfillment.

**But note to whom the promises are given, who it is that will receive the promises of God: *the obedient*.** The person who follows and obeys God, who does exactly what God says, receives the promises of God. The person who sacrifices all, who absolutely surrenders himself to God, will have the promises of God take effect in his life.

**Romans 4:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> “And being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”

**2 Corinthians 1:20 (NASB)**

<sup>20</sup> “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore, also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.”

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**2 Timothy 2:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

**2 Peter 1:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

**1 John 2:25 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> “This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”

**1 Kings 8:56 (NASB)**

<sup>56</sup> “Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant.”