



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 52

Justified by Divine Power

Abraham was not justified by human effort!

Romans 4:18-25

Romans 4:9-17, *who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.²² And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

Romans, from chapter 3 verse 21 on to chapter 8 Paul is talking about that God has provided a salvation by Christ through His work as a free gift to those who believe, not by their own works.

Why Abraham?

Abraham would show the eternal truth of righteousness by grace through faith since Abraham was an Old Testament character.

By using Abraham, Paul is saying this is nothing new, this is something very old.

Abraham even preceded Moses.

Abraham even preceded the identity of the nation Israel.

Abraham really belongs in the patriarchal period, the very primitive time.

He appears early in the book of Genesis.

If Paul can establish that a man in the book of Genesis was saved by grace through faith and not of works, then he has given to us a timeless truth and nothing new at all.

He is not an example of a man who earned salvation by his good works but by grace through believing.

In simple child-like trust, in complete yielded to God, he took God's word at face value, believed God. By that act of faith, he received righteousness.

Romans chapter 4 can be divided up by three ways.

1. Justification by Faith not by works (V1-8)
2. Justification by Grace not Law (9-17)
3. Justification by God's power not human effort. (18-25)

3. Justification by God's Power not human effort.

This section gives testimony to Abraham's faith.

It is his faith to which God responds!

V 22, *And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

and based on his faith credits to him righteousness.

But this is not only for Abraham for everyone who put their faith.

V 23-25, *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

Abraham is a model of faith,
Abraham faith is defined,
Abraham is credited with righteousness,
Abraham becomes an example.

So, we too can have righteousness imputed to our account, apart from working for it simply by believing in the God who raised Christ who had satisfied Him with His sacrifice on the cross.

Now, with that in mind as kind of the overview, let us go back into the story of Abraham.

The story started out with the name Abram.

Abram means father of many!

No one has been more inappropriately named because Abram was the father of nobody.

At the age of 60, God came to Abram and called him out of idolatry in the city of Ur. Told him to go to a land that He would show him. God literally sovereignly plucked him out of all humanity.

“Leave your city, leave your idols, go to a land that I will show you.” We don’t really know what the means of divine communication was, but it was very effective.

We have no biblical record of the conversation that God had with Abram, but Abram obeyed. He left his home. He left his people. He left his land and took his wife and went on a journey with his servants to an utterly unknown destination. That is a big leap of faith.

Now, on the way to wherever he was supposed to be going, the land of promise, he stopped - he stopped in a place called Haran, and he stayed there for 15 years. So, this is a man who had a deferred promise, to put it mildly.

Fifteen years he was in Haran and finally after his father's death, after the 15 years is finished, he sets out for the land of promise.

Now, consider the picture.

- Sovereignly chosen by God,
- Told to leave everything familiar,
- everything precious,
- everything he had,
- go to a land about which he knew nothing, and
- on the way get stuck in a kind of no-man's land for 15 years.

Abram is a man who doesn't have to see an immediate fulfilment. He is a man who can defer that for which he waits. He is a man who knows how to live by faith.

God told him that He would bless the world through him. He would bless the world through Abram and through Abram's seed, but he had no seed.

He was the father of absolutely no one, no seed, only a promise. Here is a man operating in faith, headed to a country that keeps being deferred for years and being told he's going to be the father of many. But he keeps moving and he keeps believing.

He is looking for God to fulfil the promise.

He was waiting for the land,
He was waiting for the seed, and
All by faith.

He was living on hope.
He was living on a promise.

He made a complete break with the past, including idols, and turned to worship the true and living God.

Eventually, he arrives in Canaan, and when he arrives, his faith is tested again and again.

He finally gets to the land of promise but there's not a lot of promise that unfolds immediately.

There is a famine. He faces a famine.

There is a pharaoh, there is a fight, there is fear, there is foolishness, and there is postponed fulfilment. All through all of this, he held onto God's promise and really, it wasn't easy to do that.

Abram was strategically located along the roads of the camel caravans that carried the commerce of the ancient world between Egypt and the north and east. He owned the wells, and his flocks and herds were great.

Genesis 13:2, *'Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold,'*

When the caravans of the rich merchants came into the land, either from the north or from the south, they stopped at Abram's wells.

The servants of Abram took good care of the needs of the camels and the servants of the traders. Food was sold to the travellers. In the evening time the merchants would have come to Abram's tent to pay their respects.

The question would have followed in a set pattern.

The guests would have said, 'Abram, how old are you?' '

How long have you been here?'

But maybe the most interesting question they ever would have asked would be,

How is it that you have the name Abram?

How many children do you have?’

It must have happened a hundred times.

Maybe it happened a thousand times?

Every time more galling than the time before. ‘Oh, father of many! Congratulations! And how many sons do you have?’

The humiliating answer had to come back, ‘None.’

Many a time there must have been the half-concealed snort of humour at the inappropriateness of the name and the fact that there were no children to back up such a name. Abram must have steeled himself for the question and the reply and hated the situation with great bitterness.

“Father of many, father of none, and it was a world of cloth and goatskins where everybody lived in tents and where there was little privacy from the eyes and none from the realm of the ears. There must have been many conversations on the subject.

Who was sterile, was it Abram or was it Sarah?

Was he really a full man, or was the patriarch somehow deficient?

He had no children and his name was ‘father of many.’

Certainly, there was desperation on the part of Abram, and there was desperation on the part of Sarah. There was a serious measure of embarrassment because of his name.

So, Sarah decided to sort of help the thing along a little bit, suggested Abram go into the servant girl by the name of Hagar and try to get her pregnant so that somehow, he could produce a child. At least they would know whether it was him or Sarah that was deficient.

Abram was so desperate about having the promised seed that he agreed to such a union. Hagar became pregnant and everybody knew that Sarah was the problem. She then felt despised. She didn’t realize that she couldn’t bear a child and she hated the handmaid who could, and the child born of the handmaid whose name was Ishmael. But Abram, he finally had an heir, he finally had a child. He was finally the father of somebody. He felt like a man at the age of 86.

Abram even cried to the Lord!

Genesis 17:18, *And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”*

He had a son born of natural powers!

When asked his name, he could say, "I am Abram and I have one son."

Thirteen years later, when he was 99 and feeble, God gave him another son. This is not the son by natural powers, this is the son by supernatural power.

God gave him the promise of an heir, the son of the promise, a son not of his natural ability but a son of the power of God. Amazingly, God changed his name.

Now, his first name, Abram, father of many, had built into it a promise. The promise at least initially began to become true when he had Ishmael, but it still was a stretch to view him as the father of many.

Now he has had the son of promise, a second son by the name of Isaac, and God changes his name by adding a "ha" in the middle, Abraham. That means father of multitudes.

Ishmael was the son of natural generation.

Isaac, of supernatural generation because Abraham was so old, and Sarah was barren.

Abram begot Ishmael in the power of human strength.

Abram begot Isaac in the power of God.

God gave life to the deadness of Sarah and the deadness of Abraham.

This message is so foundational to our understanding of the gospel.

Galatians 4:22, *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.*

One by the bondwoman, meaning Hagar, the slave.
The free woman being Sarah, his wife.

Galatians 4:23, *But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,*

Ishmael, then, illustrates the principle of the flesh, rejecting the promise of faith, and in the flesh, seeking to purchase the purposes of God by works.

Ishmael is the child of human effort.

Ishmael is the human-effort child while Isaac is the divine-provision child.

- Ishmael is the son born in the usual way and is a living representative of all those who have experienced only the natural birth, who have been born only into the slavery of sin.

- Isaac is a son born of faith by a supernatural miracle and is an illustration of all those who receive spiritual birth.

Galatians 4:24, *which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—*

A picture, for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves, she is Hagar.

Galatians 4:25-31, *for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—²⁶ but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷For it is written: “Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.” ²⁸Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. ²⁹But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” ³¹So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

Marvellous and simple analogy.

Ishmael equals flesh, human effort, natural power.

That equals Sinai, law, law keeping.

That is manifestly the religion of Jerusalem where they tried to earn their way to salvation to a right relationship with God.

All they ended up with was bondage.

Isaac illustrates supernatural power, spiritual power.

Isaac is like the Jerusalem above.

Isaac is connected to the promise and to the freedom of being liberated from sin by the fulfilment of that promise.

The contrast is simply between human effort and divine power.

Isaac is a child of divine power.

Ishmael is a child of human effort.

Sinai is the law, and if salvation comes by the law, it is by human effort, human power.

But salvation cannot come by the law, salvation comes by promise, comes by divine provision.

So, Paul shows us that Ishmael - analogically or as an illustration connects with Sinai, which connects with the law, which connects with natural effort.

Whereas Isaac connects with the Jerusalem that is above, divine power, divine presence, divine promise.

Abraham did not receive the promise by human effort. His human effort only brought Ishmael, and Ishmael brought nothing but trouble. The Middle East even today is full of Ishmaelites who profoundly hate the seed that came from Isaac.

Abraham finally received the son of promise, and the son of promise is an analogy of salvation by faith alone. Abraham made no contribution to that child on his own because he could not bring about the pregnancy of Sarah at the age of 99, nor could Sarah produce a child. There was no way for that to happen by human effort. It was Abraham's faith that was counted to him for righteousness.

What kind of faith is it that saves?

1. Abraham believed against hope.

Abraham believed what appeared to be unbelievable.

V 18, *who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."*

You know what an oxymoron is.

An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which opposite ideas are combined. The silence was deafening.

In an oxymoronic fashion, Abraham hoped against hope. He hoped when there was no reason to hope when hope didn't make any sense. Against all human ability, all reasonable expectation, he believed.

Hope is expectation for something that has been promised, that is anticipated, that is looked forward to.

God had told Abraham that he would become the father of many nations (Genesis chapter 12) and that was repeated through all of God's conversations with him, chapter 12 and right on through chapter 15, chapter 17, and so forth.

God's intention was to make him the father of many nations. Abraham believed that promise. God also said to him that He would give him land, He would give him a great land. Abraham believed that God would keep that promise.

He was a man who had hope when there was no human way to see that hope realized. He had no army to conquer the land. He had no capability to produce the child. But he believed the promise, and he hoped when there was absolutely no reason to hope.

So, 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.”*

God had told him they were going to be like the sand of the sea he believed that. According to what God had said, Abraham hoped for the fulfilment.

Genesis 15:2-6, *But Abram said, “Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”* ³*Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one^g born in my house is my heir!”* ⁴*And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”* ⁵*Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.”* And He said to him, *“So shall your descendants be.”* ⁶*And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

The moment of Abram’s salvation was when he believed something that was just plain unbelievable.

He believed in something he could not see.

He believed in something to which he could not make any contribution.

But he believed.

How strong was his belief?

He believed that promise for at least 25 years before it came to fulfilment.

Children that number like the stars or the sands of the sea, many nations, and through him to bless many nations, and to possess this massive land. All the years go by and he keeps believing.

If you go back to verse 19, it tells us a second thing about his faith.

One, he believed against hope, or he hoped against hope, or he believed when it seemed impossible.

2. Abraham was not weak in faith.

V 19, And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

Through all those years of having absolutely nothing to indicate that this massive promise could come to pass, his faith did not diminish. It was never without strength.

He did not doubt the God who had promised. His faith is strong.

V 20, *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

How can this be?

How can it be possible?

He and Sarah can't have children.

We don't know how God fully revealed Himself to Abraham, because it doesn't tell us in Scripture. But Abraham believed in this about God.

V 17, *(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;*

Abraham believed that this God who had plucked him up out of Ur was the Creator, He called into being things that didn't exist. That's creation, out of nothing.

Abraham also believed this God not only had the power to create everything out of nothing, but He had the power to give life to that which was dead.

It is sufficient, then, to assume that God had so declared this and revealed Himself in this way as the Creator and as the life-giver to Abraham and he believed.

He believed in the God of creation!

He believed in the God of resurrection!!

The most formidable obstacles to fulfilling our plans would be nonexistence and death. It's kind of hard to work with what doesn't exist and it's extremely difficult to get past the obstacle of death. That is no problem for God because He can call into being what does not exist, and He can give life to what is dead.

Again, we don't know how God planned in his mind these confidences, but when God came to him at the age of 99 and said he would have the son that He had promised 25 years earlier, Abraham hadn't lost his faith.

It is an amazing kind of faith.

It's an amazing kind of faith when we compare it, very often with our very short-sighted, high-demand kind of faith, where if we don't see something immediately, we begin to wonder if it's ever going to happen.

So, as you look at the faith of Abraham,

- his trust in God was not that God loved him so much,
- it was not that God led him in a certain way,
- it was not that God had given him land,
- it was not that God had even given him the seed,
- he was able to believe God for what didn't exist.

Abraham was able to believe God that what was dead could come to life.

Hence, when God asked him to take Isaac up (**Genesis 22**) and put him on the altar and take his life, Abraham had no hesitation in doing that because he knew that God is a God who gives life to the dead.

That is the testimony of the writer of Hebrews to Abraham.

Hebrews 11:17-18, *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"*

Abraham considered that God can raise people even from the dead.

So, it may have not been a full New Testament revolved theology, but he had a very clear understanding of God as Creator, source of life, who could make things out of nothing and give life to those who were dead.

It was an unwavering faith. He could bring a life into existence, and He could bring back life from the dead.

3. Abraham had faith against reality of life.

V 19, *And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

Abraham contemplated.

Since he was about a hundred years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb. Her womb had always been dead, and now he was as good as dead.

He was not even weak in faith in the contemplation of the reality of his own deadness and the deadness of Sarah. That is the human impossibility. His own impotence and Sarah's barrenness was in his mind.

The Greek word is, ***katanoēō***, meaning to fix one's mind, to contemplate, to consider, to concentrate.

He is now in a state of deadness. He fixes his mind on that reality, but it never, ever diminishes his faith because he understands that this is a divine promise, this is not something that he has to pull off.

Though for a while he succumbed to Sarah's plot and plan. It was certainly a time of temptation and sin. But it was not the death of his faith.

Abraham still counted on a God who was omnipotent and could create out of nothing and revive what had been long dead.

This is the kind of faith that Noah had.

God told him to build a boat because it was going to rain, and there never had been rain in the history of the earth. Spent 120 years building a ship, but he believed in the God who could create. If God said there was going to be a flood, then God would create the flood.

Abraham had no personal capacity to make the promise happen. None whatsoever, but he was not weak in faith because he knew God and he knew how powerful the Creator God was. The key to everything for Abraham and his constant perspective was to focus on God.

4. Abraham's faith did not waver because of circumstances.

V 19, And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

Another thing it says about his faith, characterizing it, he was not doubtful because of circumstances outside of him.

Sarah's womb was dead. He contemplated his own situation, and he could make no contribution to this child.

Outside of him was Sarah - she could make no contribution, either.

Genesis 18:11, Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.

Scripture says her body was unable to produce a child, couldn't happen. The circumstances within him and the circumstances outside of him together made no contribution whatsoever. His faith, then, was purely on the creative and resurrection power of God, nothing other than that.

V 20, *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

No vacillating, no staggering, no wavering, he's fixed, steady, set, locked on.

Psalm 57:7, *My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.*

He has a full vision of God.

He's not expecting that he's going to make a contribution or Sarah's going to make a contribution.

I love the way the King James put it. “He staggered not at the promises of God but was strong in faith.”

The word for waver is *diakrinō*. It means to vacillate between two opinions. He doesn't flip-flop. He's not wavering. He's fixed, strong in faith. Literally, passive - he's been made strong in faith, it's a divine gift.

Sure, in his humanness, he struggled. But his faith was always triumphant.

Abraham fell to temptation and sin, but his faith was always triumphant.

- It was a real faith.
- It was a God-given faith, and
- it was strengthened in the struggle.

The more he struggled, the stronger his faith became. Even coming out of the whole situation with Ishmael, his faith was strong. God continued to affirm His covenant again and again with Abram. His faith grows in the midst of his struggle.

V 20, *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*

Giving glory to God.

Always God focused.

It seems impossible,
it seems like it can't happen, but I give all the glory to God.

He has the power, He has the plan, He made the promise, He keeps His Word. Nothing is too hard for Him.

All his hopes, all his dreams, all his expectations, all his anticipations, all his hopes and promises were bound up in God.

Abraham was such a true worshiper of God, even with that which was unrealized, he was such a true worshiper of God that in the midst of all the things that were not happening as the decades rolled by, he continued to glorify God. That is a marvellous kind of faith.

V 21, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform

God repeats His promise to Abraham again and again. Many times.

God goes through an amazing scenario to seal the covenant in blood. He is then convinced because God continues to reiterate His promise to him. This is the kind of faith that is the model faith of saving faith.

We have not yet received your inheritance.
We are like Abraham!

1 Peter 1:4, *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

Anybody seen it?

No.

We haven't received it.

It's waiting for us.

We have the promise of spiritual perfection in heaven.
We live in hope.

We can make no contribution to it.

We don't know how to get from here to there.

What did Thomas say to Jesus?

When Jesus said, "I'm going to go away"

John 14:5-6, *Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"* ⁶*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

If you want to go, there then you are dependent on the promises of God which are yet completely unfulfilled.

God keeps reiterating His promise to you like He did to Abraham on the pages of holy Scripture and by the confirming work of the Spirit of God in your life so that you live in hope.

When you struggle with sin, like Abraham did, and when you fall to temptation and when you doubt and have those moments of fear and wonder about those things, the Spirit of God comes alongside and comforts your heart and strengthens you and builds you up.

But you are like Abraham, you are strangers wandering in a foreign land, you are somewhere between Ur and Canaan. You are somewhere between here and heaven. You are stuck in Haran for your whole lifetime.

Why do you believe in the future?

Why do you believe in heaven?

Because you believe that the Creator created this and has the power to create that, and you also believe that the Creator is the life giver who raises the dead.

When we look at the faith of Abraham, it's not as different as some people might think from the necessary faith that we have, that our God can create heaven, can create a perfect

environment, can recreate us and raise our dead bodies to everlasting glory, as well as raise our dead souls from the deadness of sin.

Abraham lived just kind of the way we live, in the middle of a whole lot of repeated assurances from God.

You haven't seen it,

It hasn't come.

You haven't arrived.

When Abraham died, the fullness of the promise hadn't come to pass, either, because bound up in that promise was the greater Son who was the Messiah. Abraham saw His day and rejoiced, but he certainly never saw the Messiah. So, he died in hope, the way all believers die.

His whole life was the outworking of these great promises from a sovereign God who plucked him up out of nowhere, communicated to him who he was to the degree that Abraham sought only to glorify God and that he knew at the heart of glorifying God was believing Him, trusting Him, banking his life on God's promises even though he himself could make no contribution to it.

Do you know absolutely for a fact, unequivocally, that your sins are forgiven?

We believe that because the Bible tells you that if you put your trust in Christ, your sins will be forgiven.

But you can't see the transaction, so you live in hope, you live in faith.

That faith is based upon the promises of God.

The promises of God are trustworthy because there is evidence that God can make something out of nothing and that He has power to give life.

How do we know that?

Because He raised Christ from the dead.

When we are here on Earth and we are waiting for all the fulfillment to come in the future, we live the way Abraham lived.

We hope against hope, but we don't grow weak in faith when we don't get the realization of our promised inheritance.

We are not discouraged because we can't create our own heaven.

We are not discouraged because we can't earn our own salvation.

We can't gain our own righteousness by our own works.

We don't waver in faith, we glorify God, and we live in a full faith and a full confidence.

V 21, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

That's how you live your life.

That's how Abraham lived his life.

That was Abraham's faith.

What was God's answer to Abraham's faith?

V 22, And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Everybody would think, except Christians, that you have to sort of earn your way.

How could someone be credited with righteousness that wasn't theirs?

The grandeur of Abraham's faith and the wonder of Abraham's faith was that it was all that God asked, and it was sufficient based upon Abraham trusting God to fulfil His promise.

It was enough for God to impute to Abraham His own righteousness, to credit to Abraham's account the very righteousness that belonged only to God. He is given divine righteousness, not that his faith earned it, his faith received it.

Justification this great doctrine of justification is the imputation of righteousness to undeserving sinners.

Romans 4:5, *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

God justifies the ungodly.

Justification is a gift of God, righteousness credited to our account so that before God, we are viewed as righteous, not because we earned it or deserved it, but because we believed that God would give it if we put our trust in Him.

Salvation is

- ✓ not by works, by faith,
- ✓ not by law, by grace,
- ✓ not by human power, by divine power.

Application of Abraham's faith:

V 23-25, *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

What does this mean to us?

These things were not recorded as mere historical facts but as illustrations for all people of all times of God's method of justification, that God credits righteousness to those who have faith.

So, this isn't just the story of Abraham, this is everybody's story.

That is the reason why we can be called by the apostle Paul, in the New Testament, the children of Abraham.

Not in a racial sense, but in a spiritual sense.

Here is an illustration of how anybody in any time is saved by believing in the promises of God.

The very one who was delivered over, crucified because of our transgressions, and raised because of our justification. The application of the story of Abraham is to everybody.

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, not by works.

Righteousness will be credited.

That is to say, from now on not a future.

It starts now and it will always be this way.

Righteousness will always be imputed to those who believe.

Abraham is living testimony to the great Old Testament truth.

The just shall live by faith.

The only way for any sinner to be saved is the way that Abraham was saved.

The only way for any of us to be made righteous before God is the way that Abraham became righteous before God.

Righteousness was imputed to him because he trusted in the revealed promises of God. It is the object of Abraham's faith that saves.

It is the object of Abraham's faith that saves, not the nature of his faith.

He's not saved because there's some meritorious faith.

He is saved because he puts his trust in God, the true God.

He fully believed in the God who could create out of nothing, the Creator God, he fully believed in the God who could raise the dead, and he utterly committed his life in submissive obedience to that trust.

He believed that God could raise him, could raise his son, could raise a child out of their deadness.

He believed that God had the power to do anything when it came to giving life.

He even believed that God would raise up one day a Redeemer - a Redeemer who was dead and came to life.

Did Abraham really believe in Christ?

John 8:56, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad.”*

Could it have been that in the occasion with Isaac God gave him some personal instruction that taking Isaac and laying him on the altar and then providing a ram out of the thicket as a substitute, could God have given him the full theological lesson of substitutionary atonement by a provision that God Himself would bring?

Then that God would raise that one from the dead, as Abraham believed He would have done in Isaac’s case if he had taken his life?

We are saved because we believe in the Creator God, the God who raises the dead.

Now, on this side of the cross, we believe in the God not who will raise the dead but who has raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, after His atonement on the cross for our transgressions.

What does it take to be a Christian?

Romans 10:9-10, *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

We are nothing but a lot of Abrahams in a way.

We are made right with God because we believe whatever God has said.

He didn't have the full picture, but he probably had a lot more than we know about what was to come.

On the other hand, we have the full story. Salvation comes to us.

This is the Christian message; this is the Christian gospel.

Not by something we do, not by our works, but by believing in what God has said to be true about Himself.

At any point in time, saving faith was faith in God to the full point of His self-revelation.