

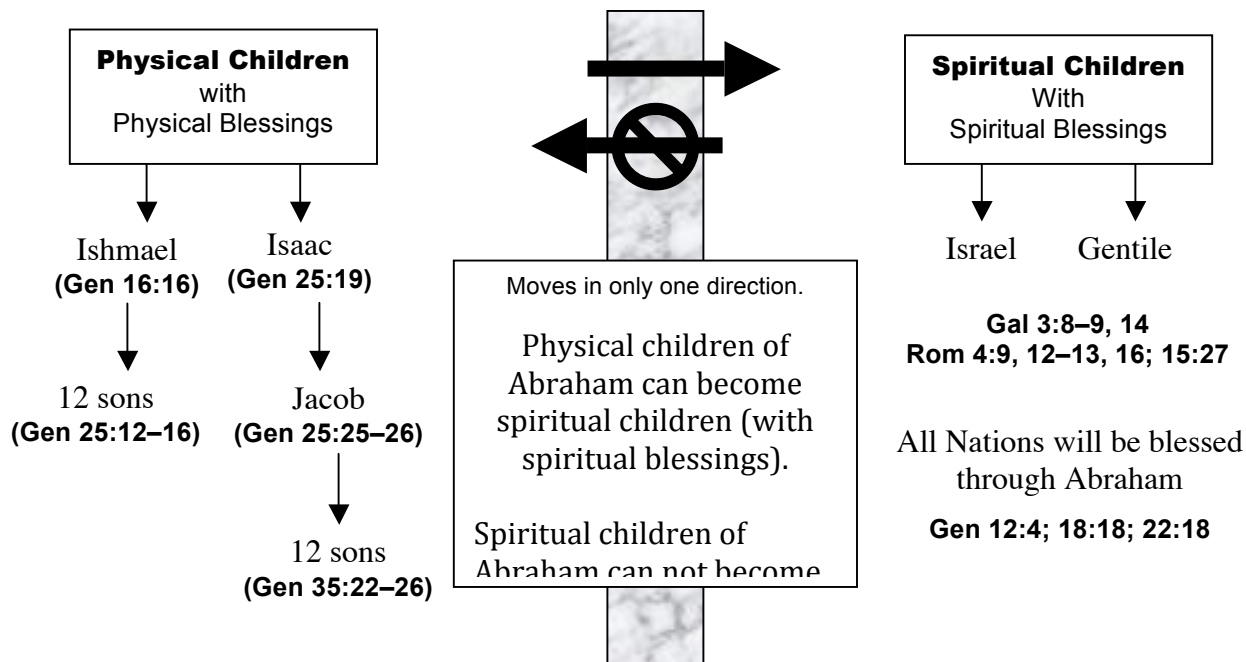
### Righteousness apart from the Law

Romans 4:16—25

Those who are declared righteous by God are considered to be Abraham’s offspring because he was declared righteous by faith, not by any works of the Law. This includes anyone of any nationality.

#### Verse 16

A summary of verses 1—15 restating that it was Abraham’s faith before the Law was given that made him the father of all who believe including those under the Law (Israel) and those not under the Law (the Gentiles). Stam makes a point in his commentary on Romans that as Abraham is called our father, Sarah could be called the mother of us all since she is the woman of grace whereas Hagar is the woman of Law (Galatians 4:22—31).



There is a strong connection between Law and Works. The Law required works and spelled out what those works were to be. Individuals within Israel could not decide on their own what works they would do to please God, but they needed to do the works exactly as spelled out in the Mosaic Law.

There is also a strong connection between Faith and Grace. It is because of God’s grace that we have faith. Faith is never by works or else it would be granted on the basis of a debt. It is always bestowed freely (Ephesians 2:8—9).

#### Verse 17

Again the emphasis is on Abraham being the father of many nations (Genesis 17:5). This is not something Abraham worked at to receive, but it was given to him, bestowed upon him by God. God is all-powerful and able to take the deadness of Abraham and Sarah’s reproductive ability and produce a life. Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 90. God caused something that could not happen to happen. Physically

this meant the birth of Isaac. Isaac would not have been born unless God made it happen. This also refers to those who come to God by faith. They would not have been “born” unless God did the work.

### **Verses 18—21**

Event though it was physically impossible for Abraham and Sarah to conceive a child, Abraham had the faith that God would work it out so that he would be the father of many nations. He believed God because he had faith in God. He held on to that promise for 25 years waiting for God to work and trusting that He would make happen what He promised. Even though Abraham took matters into his own hands when Ishmael was conceived, he seemingly never wavered in trusting that what God promised about being a great nation would come to be.

Not only did he not waver in his faith but was strengthened in his faith. His strengthening in the faith is attributed to a work of God. God gave him what he needed to have the faith to believe what God promised.

### **Verses 22—25**

Verses 18—21 explain exactly why Abraham was credited with righteousness. It was because of his faith—demonstrated with his works. If he said he had faith in God but did not do what God told him to do he really did not have faith. But yet, it was because of his faith and not his works that God imputed righteousness. If Abraham had done the works God required of him to gain his faith then he would have been declared righteous by his works instead of his faith. No one is ever declared righteous by their works.

Abraham is an example as to how God works with Israel and with us. Israel could not please God through the works of the Law. They needed to come to Him in faith and then do the works of the Law to prove their faith. If they truly had the faith, they would do the works however, doing the works did not prove they were doing them out of faith. Many in Israel were trying to obtain righteousness by doing works instead of doing works to demonstrate their faith.

**James 2:20—26** <sup>20</sup>But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; <sup>23</sup>and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup>For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

In this Dispensation of the Age of Grace the requirements of a works demonstration have been eliminated. We no longer are under Law meaning we are not required to do the works of the Law. Neither are we required to do any other work to prove our faith. I believe any work was tied up in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We are to believe in the person of Jesus Christ and his works. Israel was to believe in the person of Jesus Christ (as Messiah) and then do the works of the Law as a demonstration of their faith. Any works we do are in services to the Lord but are not tied to our faith and subsequent imputed righteousness.

**Romans 3:21—28** <sup>21</sup>But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (The idea that righteousness comes about through faith and also looking at prophesy concerning Jesus' death, burial and resurrection) <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup>whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup>Where then is boasting? It is excluded By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

The writings stating that Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith were not written for his benefit but for ours. Abraham was dead at the time these things were recorded so he could not be the main focus of the statement about his imputed righteousness. Paul clearly states it was written for our benefit. Those who have the same faith as Abraham will have the same imputed righteousness.

Our position in Christ is summarily explained in verse 25. First, Jesus Christ was given over to be put to death. The verb *delivered* is in the passive voice meaning the action was being performed upon Jesus by God. God the Father actually caused Jesus to be handed over to die so our sins could be eradicated.

**Romans 8:32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

However, Christ is also credited with giving up Himself for our sins.

**Ephesians 5:2** and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

In light of this we can see that the Father and the Son were in full agreement that Jesus needed to die for our sins. He went voluntarily.

Christ's death on the cross took all sins away. They were once covered but now were done away with. This action is not just for those sins that were committed up to the death of Christ but all sins were forgiven.

The verb *raised* is also in the passive voice so God the Father was the one causing Jesus to be raised from the dead. This was done so we could be justified and therefore declared righteous. If Jesus did not rise from the dead then our position in Him would mean nothing. Our hope of eternal life rests in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have been buried with Him and likewise are raised with Him. We are fully identified with Him.

**1 Corinthians 15:17** <sup>17</sup>and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Originally taught at Bethesda Sunday School December 20, 2009  
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