

Interlocked Series

Lesson #10.3

December 26, 2023

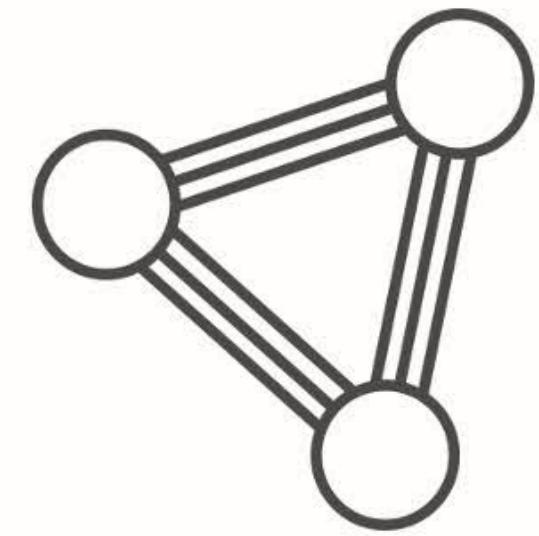
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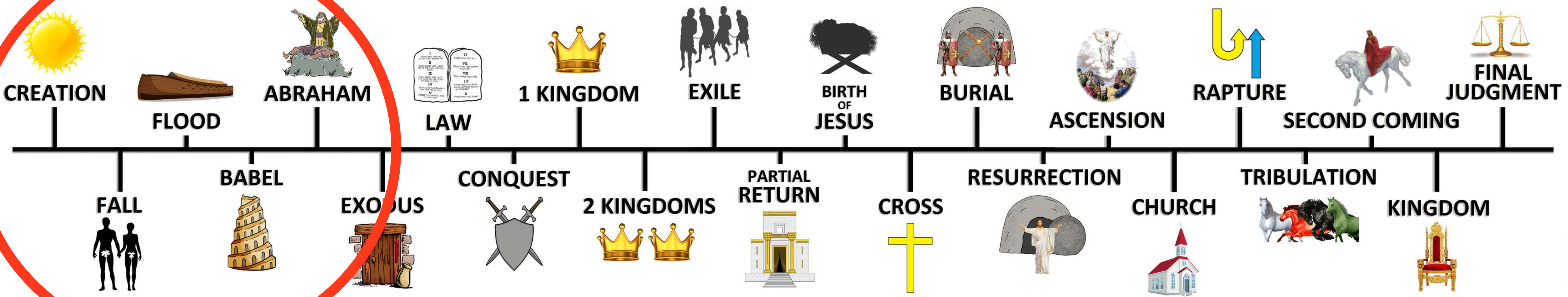
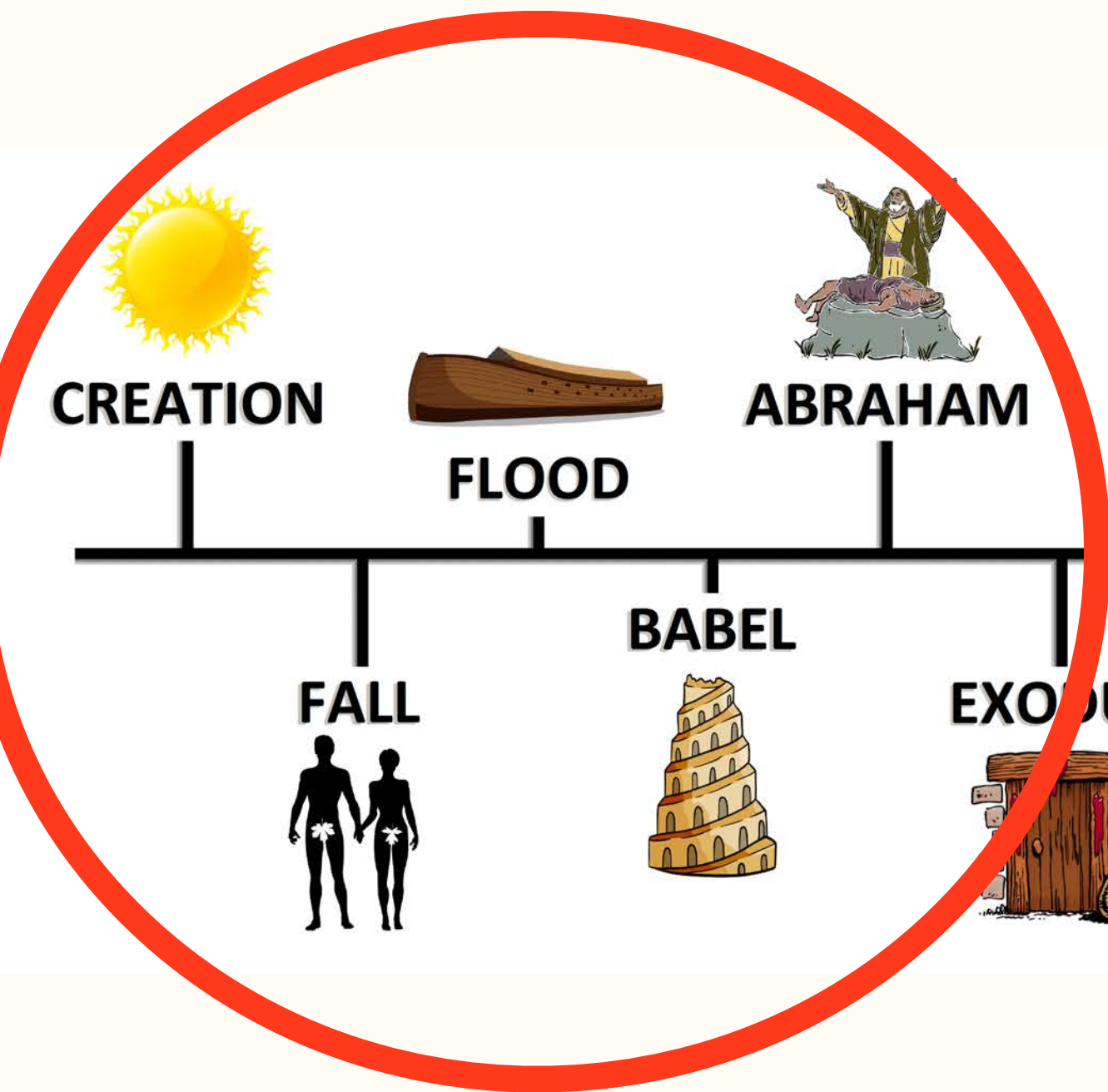
Lesson 10.3: The Justification of Abram Before God

INTERLOCKED



**Lesson 10: Abraham a Picture of How to be Right
with God!**

Lesson 10: Justification Before Men



The Call of Abraham

Last time: Directed toward teachers

Previously: How did Abraham respond to God's call?

**Faith: How were people justified before the Cross?
How would Abraham know about God's promise
of salvation?
On what basis was Abraham justified?**

Justification: God declared Abraham righteous as the pattern for how everyone is justified.

Gen. 15:6, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” [NKJV]

Gen. 15:6, “Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD credited it as righteousness to him.” [NET]

- 1. Faith: Abraham chose to believe God and that was the means for his justification.**
 - a. How did Abraham come to know about *YHWH*?**
 - b. When did Abraham first believe God's promise of salvation as it was revealed in early Genesis?**
 - c. What does it mean that Abraham believed in *YHWH*?**
 - d. What does it mean that the Lord "counted" him as righteous? (also address the issue of the NLT translation, "because" of his faith)**
- 2. Abraham, friend of God.**
- 3. Lessons from Abraham's life and God's covenant with Him.**

Introduction

2. Abraham, friend of God

James 2:23, “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [imputed] to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God.”

Why does James make this statement about Abraham being called the “friend of God?”

How did Abraham become the “friend of God?”

What is the context of this verse?

What questions does this raise?

Some Christians teach that James and Paul contradict each other (the most extreme of these reject the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture).

Others say that James is saying that genuine saving faith is exhibited and validated by works. This introduces works through the back door as part of what is necessary to be saved.

Important things to remember.

- a. The Bible nowhere qualifies “faith” with any adjective or “believing” with an adverb. It is by faith alone. Some of these people will also say that a person can have a faith in Jesus for salvation that is not a true or genuine faith because it doesn’t have the right kind of works.**

Important things to remember.

b. There are three kinds of justifications in the Bible:

1. Justification by God through our faith alone and does not involve works of any kind. Rom. 4:1–4

Important things to remember.

Rom. 4:1, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”

Rom. 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’”

Rom. 4:4, “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.”

Important things to remember.

b. There are three kinds of justifications in the Bible:

2. Justification by the works of the law, which is a false justification.

Gal. 2:16, “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

Important things to remember.

b. There are three kinds of justifications in the Bible:

3. Justification before humans, which is not related to our salvation but to a testimony of our spiritual growth.

James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?”

James 2:22, “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”

James 2:23, “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God.”

James 2:24, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not only justified by faith.”

Important things to remember.

c. The word “saved” in the Bible is used three ways. James is talking about the second way in this epistle.

Three Stages of Salvation

**Stage
One**

Justification

**Stage
Two**

**Spiritual
Life**

Text

**Stage
Three**

Glorification

**Delivered from
the Penalty of Sin**

“you were saved”

**Being Delivered from
the Power of Sin**

“you are being saved”

**Delivered from
the Presence of Sin**

“you will be saved”



Important things to remember.

d. The word “works” is often misunderstood. In James 2, the contrast between faith and works mirrors what he said at the end of chapter 1 concerning hearing and doing. “Works” is a term that describes the range of application of what is heard and believed. A “dead” faith is not a non-existent faith, but a faith that is useless or not active, not applying, not doing what one says he believes.

Important things to remember.

- e. Both Paul and James cite Gen. 15:6, a verse that describes the point in Abraham's early life when he believed God's promise of one who would save us from sin and Satan, and God declared him righteous through his faith.**

2. Abraham, friend of God

James 2:23, “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [imputed] to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God.”

- **Why does James make this statement about Abraham being called the “friend of God?”**
- **How did Abraham become the “friend of God?”**
- **What is the context of this verse?**
- **What questions does this raise?**

When did God justify Abraham? *Before Abraham did anything!*

1. First, we must remember that before we are justified we are sinners and our lack of righteousness keeps us from God. But God initiated salvation for us. Our relative or negative righteousness is rejected and incompatible with God's perfect righteousness.

Rom. 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

Rom. 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

God had to provide us with righteousness, not our own.

Rom. 4:1, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”

Rom. 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ ”

Rom. 5:10, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Rom. 5:11, “And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

2. One of the consequences of Abraham's new possession of righteousness is that at the same time that he received the imputation of God's righteousness, he also received peace with God. This also is described in the Bible with the word reconciliation.

Rom. 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith [a complete, finished, past act], we have [present reality] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

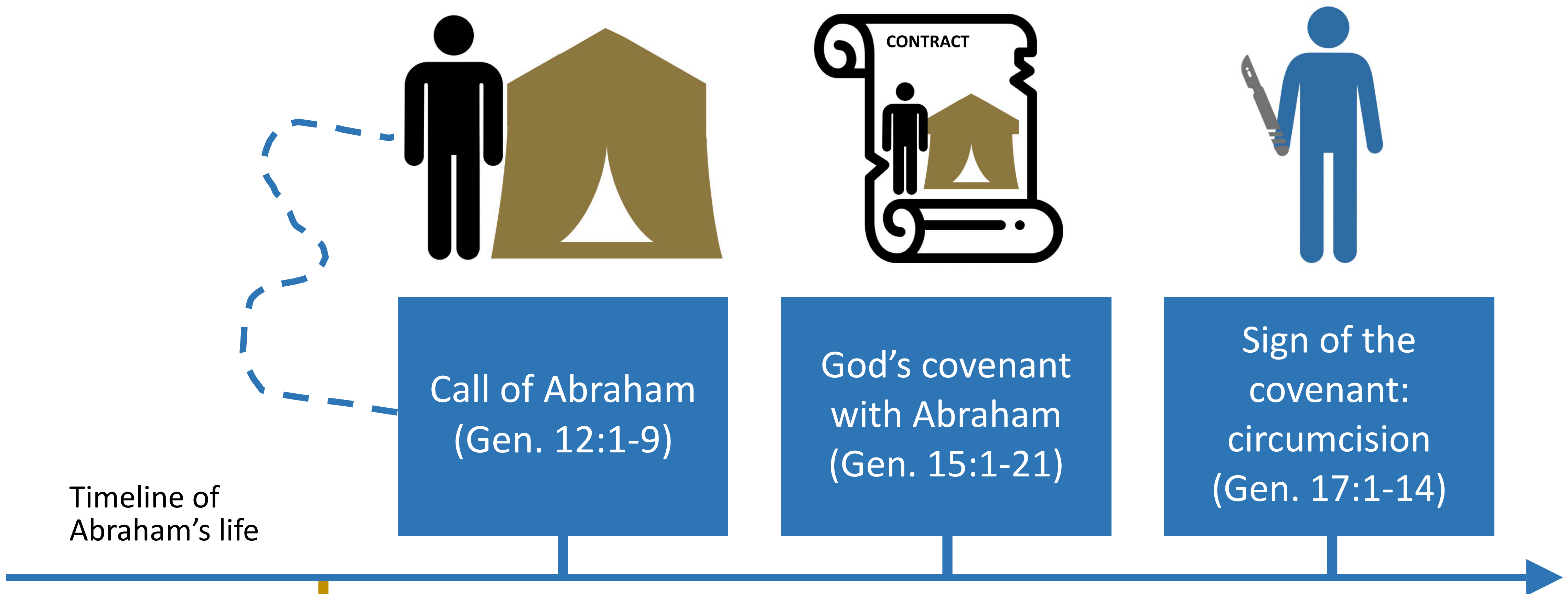
Abraham's justification was before he did anything, before he was circumcised, before the covenant was made.

Rom. 4:9, "Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom. 4:10, "How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised."

Rom. 4:11, “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

Rom. 4:12, “and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”



Timeline of
Abraham's life

And Abram believed the LORD,
and the LORD counted him as
righteous because of his faith.
(Gen. 15:6)

Rom. 4:1, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”

Rom. 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*’ ”

Example 1

Inner belief

Abraham trusted in God's promise of land.



Outward action

Abraham left Ur.





Heb. 11:8, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb. 11:9, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;

Heb. 11:10, “for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Example 2

<p>Inner belief Abraham trusted in God's promise of descendants.</p>	<p>Outward action Abraham continued to have sexual relations with Sarah for 25 years, even though she was infertile.</p>
	


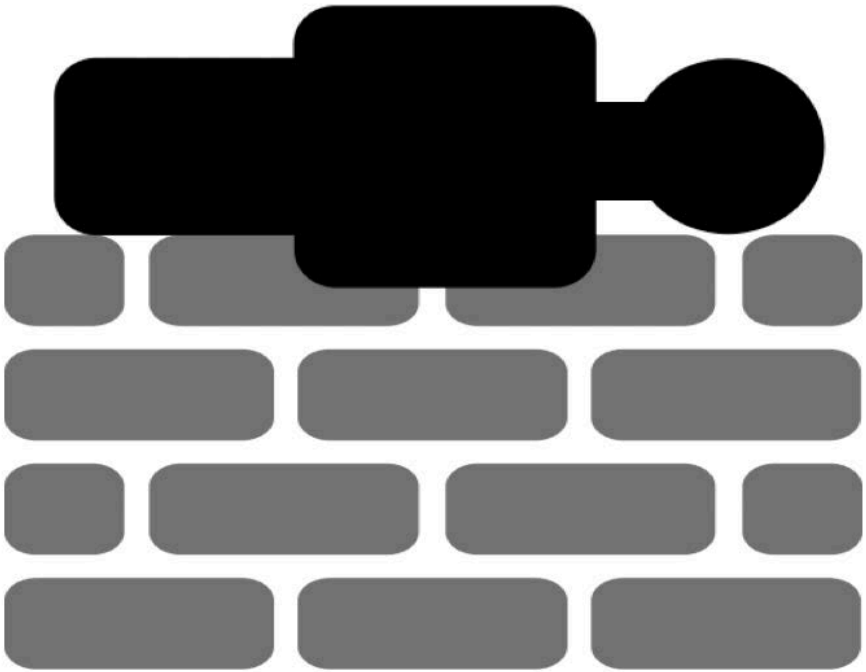
Rom. 4:18, “who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”

Rom. 4:19, “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.”

Rom. 4:20, “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,”

Rom. 4:21, “and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

Example 3


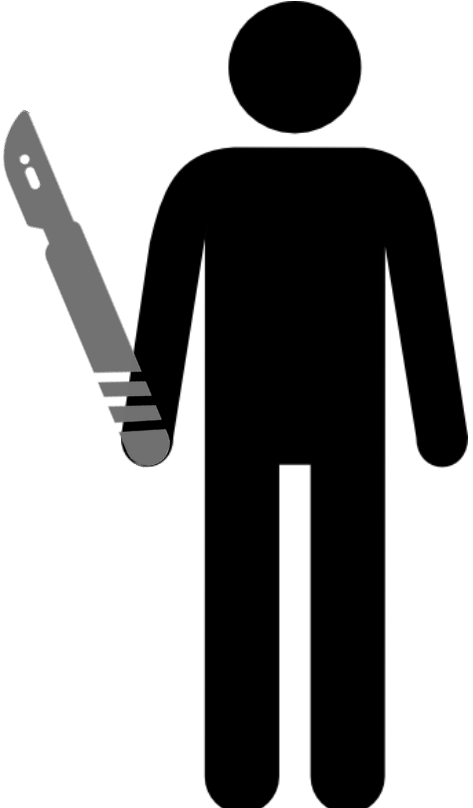
Inner belief Abraham trusted in God's promise of descendants.	Outward action Abraham obeyed God's instruction to sacrifice Isaac, his promised son through Sarah.
	

Heb. 11:17, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Heb. 11:18, “of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’

Heb. 11:19, “concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

Example 4

Inner belief Abraham trusted in God's covenant or contract.	Outward action Abraham circumcised all the males in his family.
 An icon of a scroll with the word "CONTRACT" written on it. Inside the scroll, there is a silhouette of a person standing next to a tent.	 An icon of a person holding a large knife, representing the act of circumcision.

James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?”

James 2:22, “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”

James 2:23, “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*’ And he was called the friend of God.”

James 2:24, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not only justified by faith.”

James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?”

James 2:22, “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”

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James 2:24, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not only justified by faith.”

Abraham was Justified BY God and BEFORE Man

1. First, we must remember that before we are justified, we are sinners and our lack of righteousness keeps us from God.

Rom. 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

Rom. 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Rom. 5:10, “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

How was the sin problem solved?

Rom. 4:1, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?”

Rom. 4:2, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom. 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’”

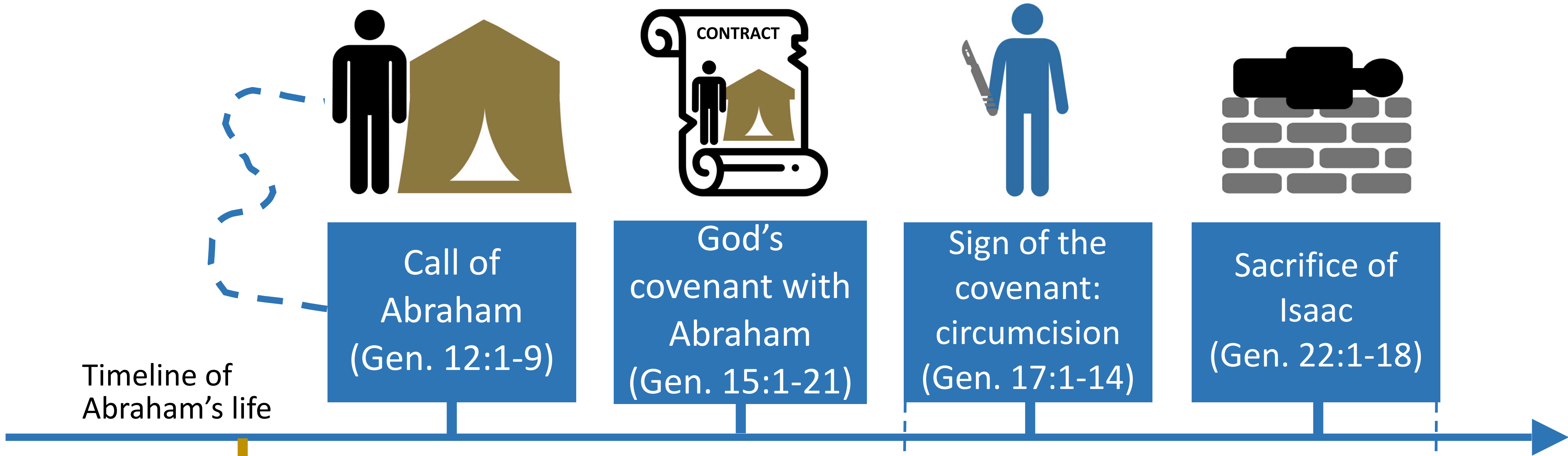
Rom. 4:4, “Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.”

2. One of the consequences of Abraham's new possession of righteousness is that at the same time that he received the imputation of God's righteousness, he also received peace with God.

Rom. 5:10, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Rom. 5:11, "And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

3. Abraham was declared righteous by God before God gave him the promises in the covenant. But still Abraham had to learn to trust God.



And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith. (Gen. 15:6)

JUSTIFIED BY GOD

Paul was talking about this

JUSTIFIED BEFORE MAN

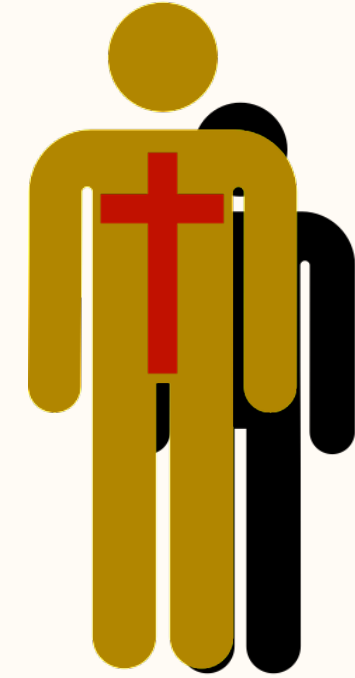
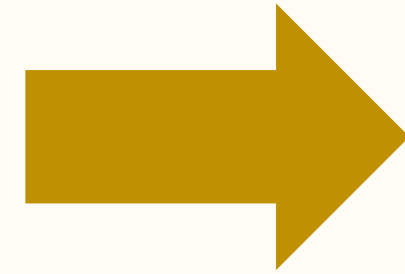
James was talking about this

Rom. 4:11, “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

Rom. 4:12, “and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”



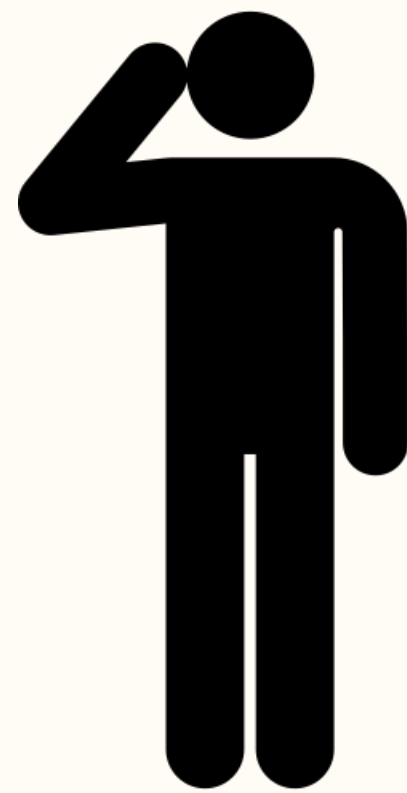
INWARD FAITH
in God



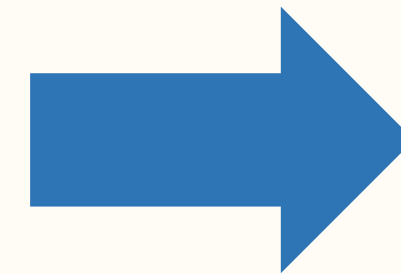
Declared righteous
because of Jesus' work

1. Justification by God

**2. Justification Before
Others**



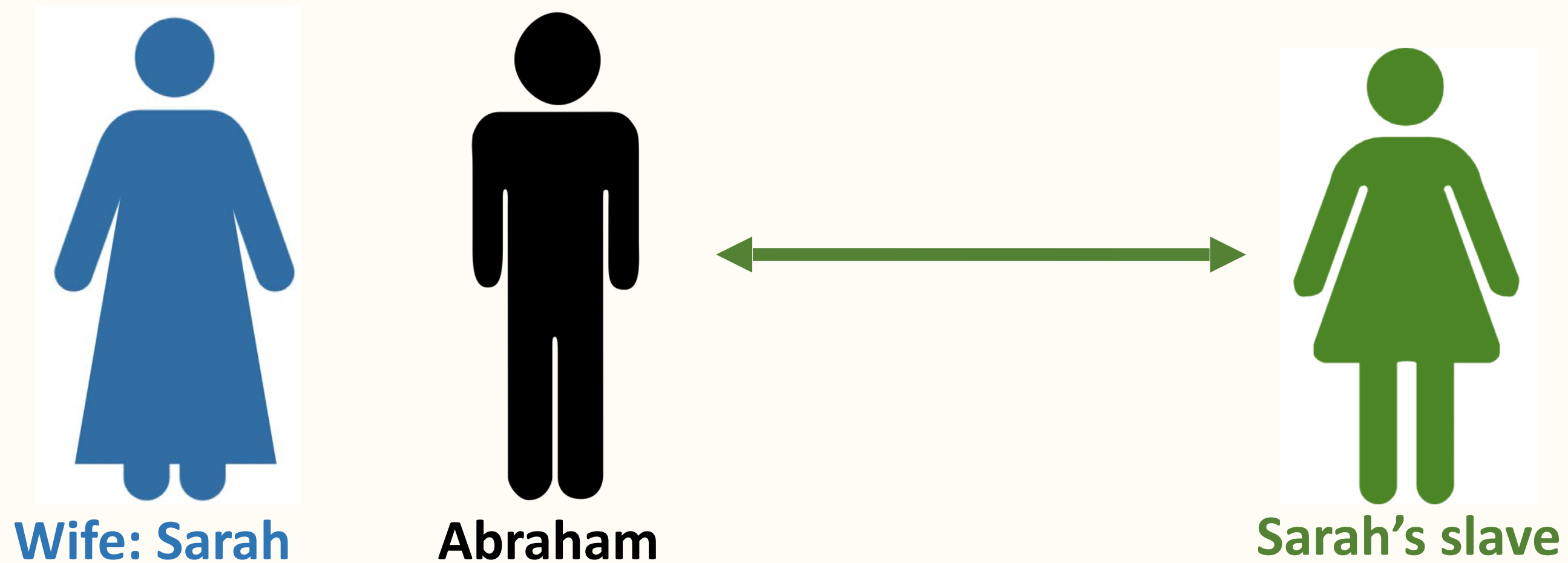
OUTWARD ACTS
of obedience



Show others
your faith

Abraham's faith was not perfect [mature]

1. Abraham and Sarah thought they could help God out.



Gen. 16:2, “So Sarai said to Abram, ‘See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.”

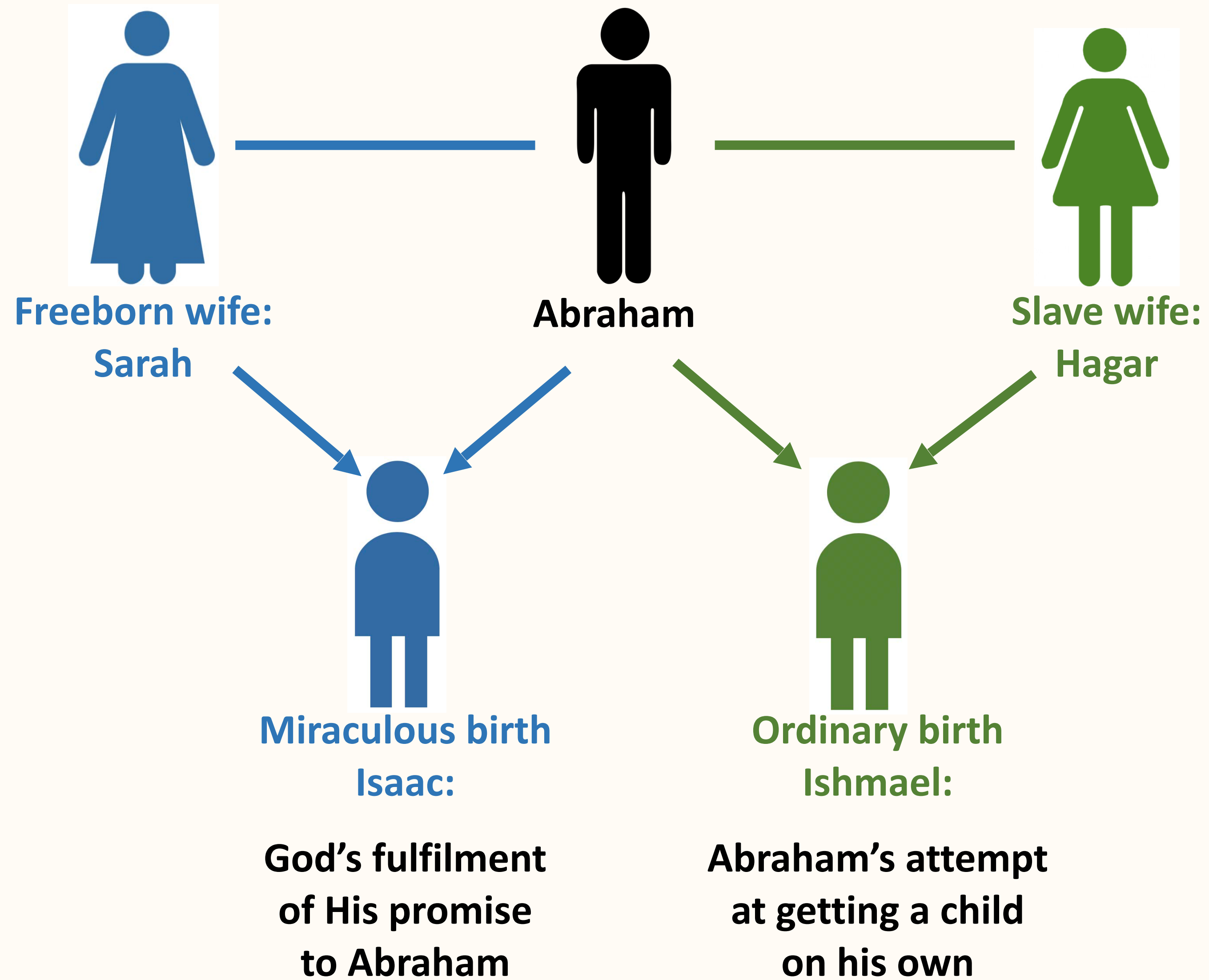
2. Abraham laughed when God told him it was time to have a son.

Gen. 17:15, “Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

Gen. 17:16, “ ‘And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.’

Gen. 17:17, “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’

Gen. 17:18, “And Abraham said to God, ‘Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!’ ”



3. Abraham showed a lack of trust in God's protection.

Gen. 20:2, “Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She is my sister.’ And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.”



Rom. 4:20, “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

Rom. 4:21, “and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Rom. 4:22, “And therefore ‘*it was accounted to him for righteousness.*’ ”

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Abraham

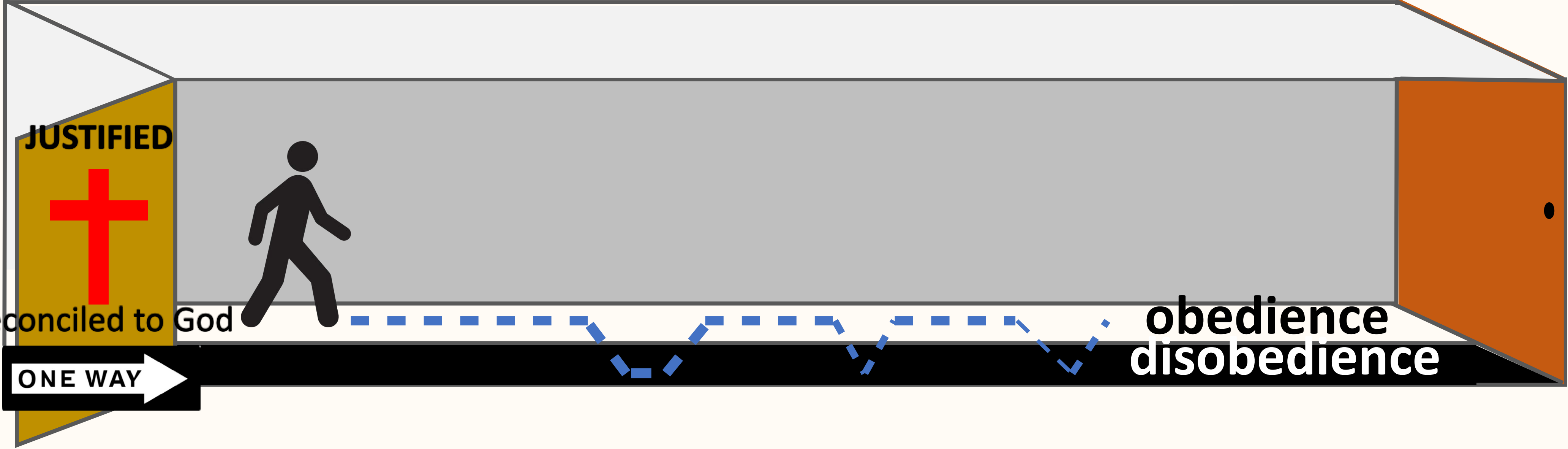
JUSTIFIED



Reconciled to God



obedience
disobedience



Abraham, friend of God

- 1. *Yahweh* had fellowship with Abraham by having a meal with him. Abraham was reverent and humble towards God.**

Gen. 18:1, “Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

Gen. 18:2, “So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

Gen. 18:3, “and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.

Gen. 18:4, “ ‘Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

Gen. 18:5, “ ‘And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.’ They said, ‘Do as you have said.’

Gen. 18:6, “So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, ‘Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.’ ”

2. *Yahweh* chose to have an authentic relationship with Abraham by revealing His heart to him.

Gen. 18:16, “Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.

Gen. 18:17, “And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,

Gen. 18:18, “ ‘since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Gen. 18:19, “ ‘For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.’

Gen. 18:20, “And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,

Gen. 18:21, “ ‘I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’ ”

3. *Yahweh* offered Abraham the opportunity to intercede and pray for Sodom and Gomorrah.

Gen. 18:22, “Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

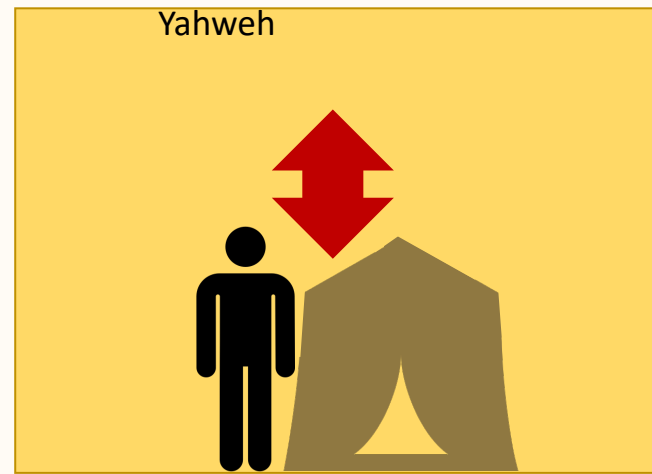
Gen. 18:23, “And Abraham came near and said, ‘Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?’

Gen. 18:24, “ ‘Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?’

Gen. 18:25, “ ‘Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’

Gen. 18:26, “So the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.’ ”

Abraham's Friendship with God



1. Fellowship between God and Abraham



2. God reveals His heart



3. God invites Abraham to participate in His work

Lessons from Abraham's life and God's covenant with him.

1. Just as *Yahweh* made Abraham promises and invited Abraham to trust in Him, God promises us reconciliation with Him if we place our trust in Him. It is our responsibility to respond to God's call and invitation.

2 Pet. 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

Gal. 3:8, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’”

Gal. 3:9, “So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

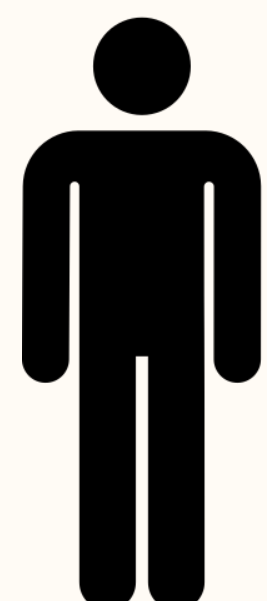
God credits righteousness to believers because of what Jesus did

man: unrighteous

man: righteous

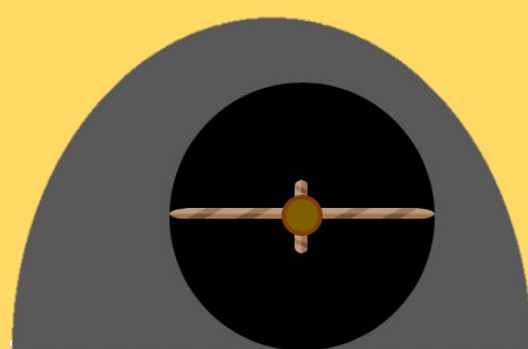
-R

+R



Abraham

Needs a death to pay for sin



Jesus paid the penalty of death for man's sin

Needs to live a perfect life by God's standards



Jesus lived a perfect life and His righteousness is imputed to man

applies to believers

applies to believers



All Man

FAITH

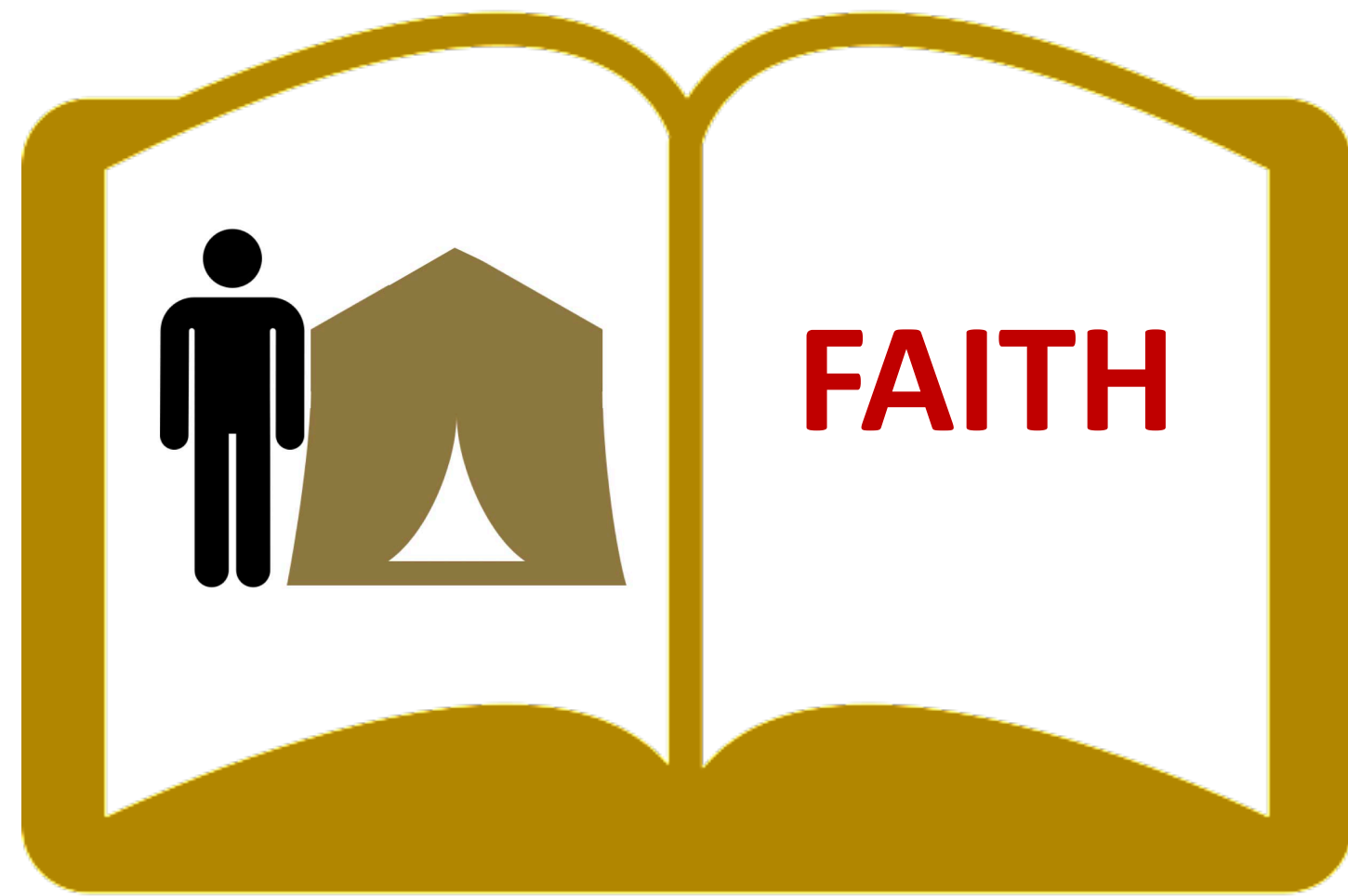
God's Promises

2. Just as Abraham was made righteous based entirely on his faith, likewise, we too are justified by *Yahweh* entirely based on our faith. Works are excluded.

Rom. 4:22, “And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’

Rom. 4:23, “Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,

Rom. 4:24, “but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,”



**How God counted
Abraham righteous
because of his faith**

**... was recorded
so we know
it is also ...**



**... how God counts
us righteous
because of our faith**

3. *Yahweh* wants to have a genuine relationship with us, where He fellowships with us, speaks with us, and we come to Him in prayer.

John 15:14, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

John 15:15, “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

Can we tell if a person is justified or not by looking at how he lives his life?

John 13:21, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’

John 13:22, “Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

John 13:23, “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.”

John 13:24, “Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

John 13:25, “Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ ”

The disciples did not immediately turn to Judas and think that it was him. This was probably because Judas looked, spoke, and behaved just like the rest of them. However, while Judas may have been a disciple of Jesus, he was certainly not a believer. This is what Jesus said of Judas:

John 6:64, “ ‘But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.”



YAHWEH

- **All-knowing**
- **Infinite**
- **Just judgments**



Mankind

- **limited**
- **finite**
- **warped judgments**

Four examples why we cannot determine who is saved.

Good works are relative. An unbeliever may lie 50 times a day, but after trusting God and becoming a believer, by the power of the Holy Spirit he is able to limit his lying to just once a day. This is a miracle and a good work. But we may see him and think, “Goodness, he’s a believer, how can he lie?”

2. Good works can be invisible. God tells us to pray in secret (Matthew 6:6) and do good works in secret (Matthew 6:3). So it shouldn't be surprising that we often cannot see each other's good works.

3. Good works can be passive in nature. One type of good work is self-control (Galatians 5:23). And that means to stop doing bad things. So, if someone used to do lots of bad things and now he stops, it's a good work. But in our eyes, he's doing nothing!

4. Good works can be inconsistent. The Bible allows for the possibility of believers failing to live good lives. If there are lapses in good works, how long can the lapse continue before one is judged as never justified? If I do good works for ten years and then I stop for the rest of my life ... do I become unjustified? That's simply not true. Abraham himself is a good example of this.

John 21:20, “Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’ ”