

Romans 4:17-22

1. In this chapter, Paul sets forth the kind of faith which is counted for/imputed to/reckoned for righteousness.
 - A. This kind of faith excludes the concept of acquiring righteousness by obligating God by a debt for work performed. **ROM 4:4.**
 - B. This kind of faith excludes circumcision since it preceded circumcision and circumcision is a work. **ROM 4:9-11.**
 - C. This kind of faith excludes the Law of Moses since it preceded the Law of Moses and the Law of Moses is works-oriented. **ROM 4:13-14 c/w GAL 3:12, 17-18.**
 - D. This kind of faith relies upon God's promise to do what is impossible with man.
2. (**ROM 4:17**) (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
 - A. Abraham would certainly be the natural father of many nations, Jewish and non-Jewish.
 - B. Abraham would even be the spiritual father of spiritual nations of faith. **ROM 4:11 c/w 1PE 2:9.**
 - C. All true believers have Abraham for their father and participate in the promises God made to him. **GAL 3:9; HEB 11:12; REV 7:9.**
 - D. Abraham believed, *before* this God and *in* this God, Who had the power to make that which is dead alive. **JOH 5:21, 25-29; EPH 2:1.**
 - E. He believed in a God Who could speak of and promise things that had not happened as though they had already happened because He has the sovereign power to do what He promises in any area, whether it be things of this world or in the salvation of sinners who have no way to save themselves from their sin. **TIT 1:2; 2TI 1:9-10; EPH 1:3-5; ROM 8:28-30.**
3. **vs. 18-22.**
 - A. Abraham was 99 years old and no longer physically able to produce children and had none with his wife Sarah who was 90 years old when God said in **GEN 17:1-6**, "...a father of many nations have I made thee."
 - (1) Against any physical reason to hope, he believed in hope that what God said God could accomplish even if his own body was dead to producing children and Sarah's womb was dead to bearing children.
 - (2) If you believe in a God that can quicken the dead, that God can quicken a dead old man and a dead old woman and enable them to have life enough to produce and bear children.
 - B. (**ROM 4:20**) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
 - (1) How then does one explain **GEN 17:15-22** ?
 - (2) In **GEN 17:17**, Abraham had a moment when he laughed at God's words and questioned the reality of them as he looked at *their age and inability* rather than the *ability and the promise of the God that was speaking to him*.
 - a. Abraham had by this time figured out that he no longer had ability to produce seed. **ROM 4:19.**
 - b. A big clue for him might have been that fertile Hagar was not conceiving.
 - (3) This is where the trouble always starts with man and his faith in God. He looks at something besides the promise and ability of God.
 - (4) He even raised the possibility to God in **v. 18** that Ishmael might be the fulfillment of the promise.

- a. Ishmael was the result of Sarah's suggestion that Abraham raise her children by her maid Hagar when Abraham still had the ability to produce seed. **GEN 16:1-6, 15-16.**
- b. It seemed that time was of the essence! Years later, Saul made a fateful decision because he thought time was of the essence. **1SAM 13:8-14.**
- c. It is understandable that Abraham thought Ishmael could be the promised seed because God had not specified that the heir would come from Sarah but only that he would come from Abraham's bowels. **GEN 15:1-6.**
 - [1] Thus he attempted to fulfill the promise through another woman while he still had ability.
 - [2] Mind that God's order for marriage is one man and one woman. **MAT 19:4-6.**
 - [3] Paul connects this fateful reasoning of Abraham with the bondage of works-justification which assumes that God's promise of life needs our help! **GAL 4:21-31.**
 - [4] That decision of Abraham did NOT help God bring God's promise to pass and had consequences that have affected the world ever since. **GEN 16:12.**
 - [5] This is what comes of man not trusting unconditional promises of God and adding his own works to God's. NOTE: If Jesus truly "paid it all" (as is commonly sung) then why do so many who sing that assume that there remains a debt which they must discharge or that man's lack of knowledge, faith or works negates Jesus' payment?
- d. How many ill-fated relationships with dire consequences have been formed because of these same elements of not trusting God, impatience, compromising God's order and helping God with one's own works (especially in an area where God has promised something unconditionally)!
- e. God has promised to raise the dead and destroy the earth (**JOH 5:28-29; 2PE 3:9-10**). Should we "help" Him bring these promises to pass?
- f. Something to ponder: If it is true that the existence of the modern state of Israel is because of something God unconditionally promised, how is it that God needed the direct help of antichrist financiers and globalists like the United Nations to bring it to pass?
- g. The highest example of faith in God's promise is when Jesus trusted God's promise in the scriptures that He would limit His sufferings and raise Him from the dead without any active "doing" on Jesus' part. **ACT 2:25-28.**
- (5) God waited until BOTH Abraham and Sarah were physically incapable of generating a child and then He told Abraham that he would have a son with her. **GEN 17:1-6.**
- (6) At this point, Abraham could not work for the promised son but only believe in the God Who quickens the dead. Faith like this is counted for righteousness. **ROM 4:5.**
 - a. Faith that denies God's power to fulfil His own promises is not counted for righteousness.
 - b. Faith that trusts God to fulfil His own promises in spite of the impossible and without our works is rather counted for righteousness.
- (7) (**HEB 6:11-12**) And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.