

Justification by Faith

Key Verse: “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” —Romans 4:3

Selected Scripture: Romans 4:1-12

exalted Creator.—Rom. 4:1,2

Our Key Verse states that because of Abraham’s faith in God he was counted as being righteous. Abraham followed divine instructions and was called “the Friend of God.” (James 2:23) The initial record of this relationship commenced when he was asked by the Heavenly Father to leave his own people and travel to a distant land. (Gen. 12:1-3) Paul records that when Abraham received this call he obeyed, and went out “not knowing whither he went.” (Heb. 11:8) A wonderful promise was associated with this call in that through his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed.

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now

IN TODAY’S LESSON PAUL

mentions Abraham to illustrate that because of his inherited sinful nature, even he was incapable of measuring up to God’s standard of absolute righteousness. (Rom. 3:10) Nevertheless, because of his obedience through faith to the Heavenly Father’s instructions, Abraham was granted access to and fellowship with his

dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him."—Rom 4:18-23

Abraham had other children by Hagar and subsequently through Keturah, but his obedience was severely tested when God instructed him to place his promised son upon an altar and offer him as a sacrifice. As Abraham was about to carry out this command, his hand was stayed. A ram in a thicket was provided which he offered in the place of his beloved Isaac, who had been brought forth from the womb of his wife Sarah as the seed promised by God.—Gen. 22:1-13

The foregoing narrative is illustrative of the fact that our loving Heavenly Father would offer his only begotten Son, Jesus. God's sacrifice of his beloved Son provided the ransom price to purchase Adam and all his progeny who have been under the curse of sin and death. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."—Mark 10:45

Abraham lived and died centuries before our Lord left the courts of heaven and came to earth, thereby providing the means for human salvation. In preparing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, he deduced that God was able to raise him from the dead, in order to fulfill the promise that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."—Heb. 11:17,18 ■