

Interlocked Series

Lesson #10.1

December 12, 2023

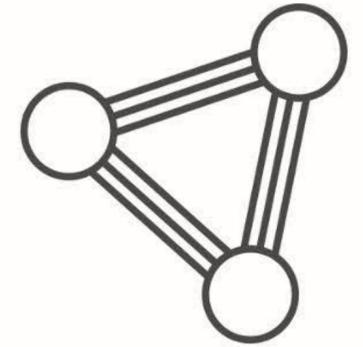
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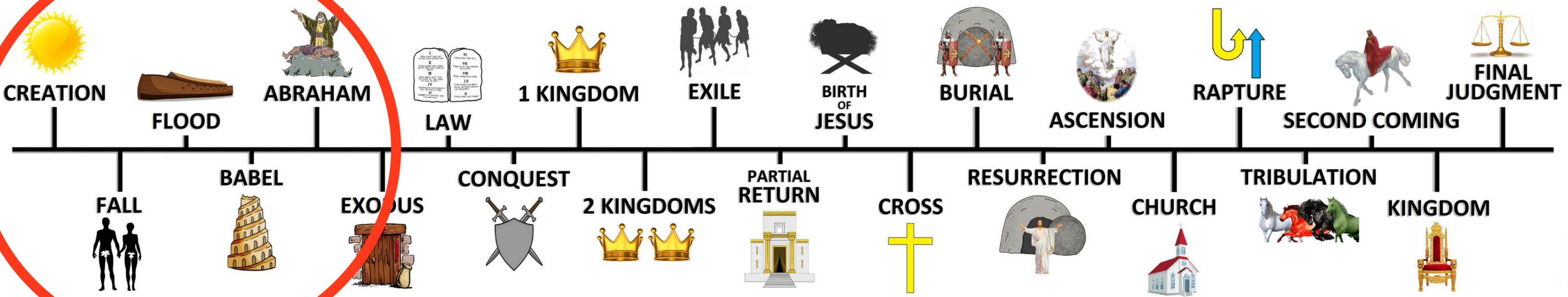
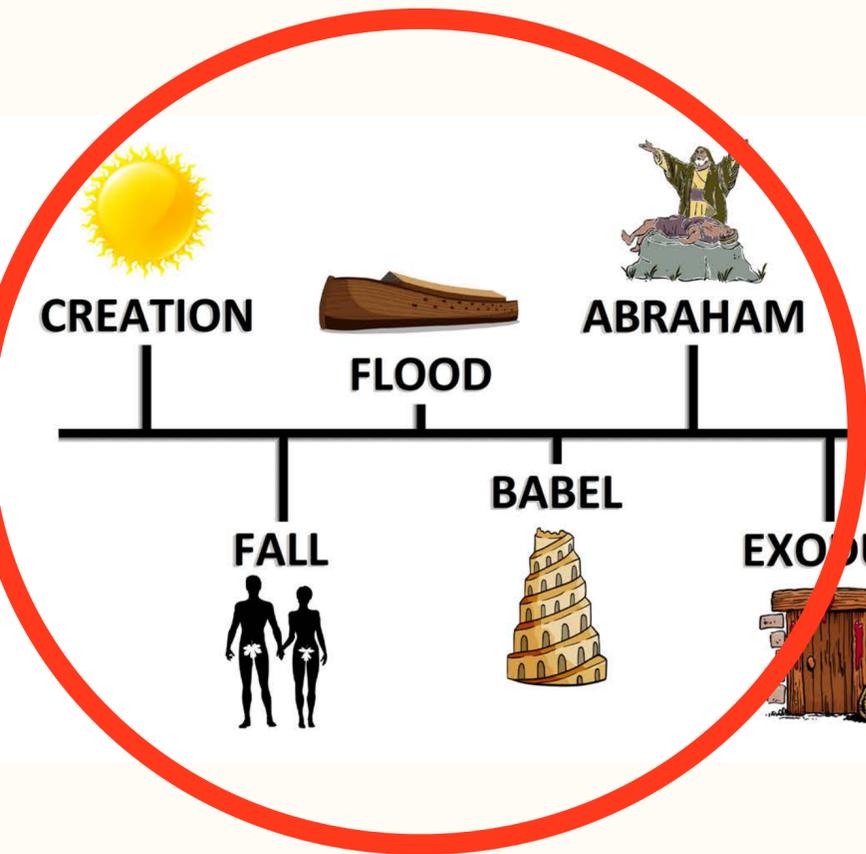
Lesson 10: The Justification of Abram Before God

INTERLOCKED



How Were People Justified in the Hebrew Scriptures?

Lesson 10: The Justification of Abram



The Justification of Abram

Previously: How did Abram 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?

Introduction

- 1. There are challenges for us in teaching this lesson because of the chronology involved. The Scriptures begin with God's call of Abram, but this does not mean that this is when he was first a believer, first justified by faith.**

2. God revealed His plan of salvation in the Scriptures progressively. However, this does not mean that people in that time were not told more. It was just not revealed in the Scripture.

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.”

Where did he learn about the city which has foundations, built and made by God?

3. The use of the word for “believe” is not used in Genesis until we arrive at Gen. 15:6.

Hebrews 11 and other passages clearly indicate faith on the part of the Patriarchs. But this is not mentioned as such except for Abraham. Other words, like “trust” (*batach*), and “faith” (*amen*), are not used either until much later than Abraham.

Remarkable as it may seem, there is no explicit gospel message to be found in the Old Testament. There is no specific command to believe in a future Messiah for salvation, nor is there any mention of an Old Testament saint who put faith in a promised savior for salvation. There are no clear salvation verses like John 3:16 or Acts 16:31 to be found in the Old Testament.

~James Myers, “How Were People Saved in the Old Testament?” Paper presented at 2015 Chafer Pastors’ Conference.

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

- 1. *How* did Abram come to know what he believed?
How did he learn about *YHWH*?
When did he learn about *YHWH*?
What was the nature or content of what he believed?**
- 2. *When* did he learn about *YHWH* and how to be justified?
When God clarified the promise in Gen. 15:4–5?
When God called Abram in Gen. 12:2–3?
Or was it earlier?**
- 3. *What* was the content he believed?
The promise given in Gen. 15:4–5?
The promise of the covenant in Gen. 12:2–3?
Or the promise going back to Gen. 3:15?**

3. The purpose of Genesis is not to answer our questions on how people were saved, when, or what revelation they had. That is developed later. The focus here is on the unfolding of God's plan of grace.

4. As such, the first mention of justification salvation is in Gen. 15:6 as a *reminder*, assuming that they already knew this from some other source.

5. We know from later revelation in the New Testament, that man can only have his problem of spiritual death, unrighteousness, and the sin penalty solved by Jesus Christ and the Cross.

To understand some of the things not revealed in early Genesis we must rely on later revelation in either the Hebrew Scriptures or in the New Testament.

Heb. 10:4, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”

So how were people saved prior to the Cross? In Abraham’s case he did not know of Jesus, the Messiah, or the Cross. How was a person justified before God?

Heb. 9:22, “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

What did he know? What had been revealed?

Key Principles for Review of the Biblical Teaching on Salvation

1. The character of God doesn't change. He is eternally Righteous, Just. He is light (1 John 1:5). We are born under the authority of darkness (Col. 1:13) and He can have nothing to do with sin. Due to His character, God cannot have anything to do with sin. Sin is an offense to God's righteousness and justice.

Isa. 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God;”

1 John 1:5, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

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

1 John 1:6, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

Review: How had God indicated that He would solve the sin problem, the problem of spiritual death, separation from God, before Abraham?

2. Man on his own cannot save himself. From eternity past God knew that He would send His Son into the world to pay the penalty for all sins. God postponed judgment on man's sins in the Old Testament until Jesus came and went to the cross. ~Myers, 3

Rom. 3:25, “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

Rom. 3:26, “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

3. The legal penalty of sin is death. The instant that Eve, then Adam, ate from the forbidden fruit, they died spiritually.

Gen. 2:17, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Death is separation: separation from our physical life; separation from God. These are just two kinds of death in the Bible.

Evidence of Adam and Eve's Spiritual Separation from God

- a. First, the realization they had a problem: they were naked, exposed, and vulnerable. They then developed a strategy to solve the problem by sewing fig leaves together and making coverings (a girdle or a loin cloth of some sort).**

Evidence of Adam and Eve's Spiritual Separation from God

- b. Second, God came to the Garden as He did every day, and instead of being welcomed by the couple, they ran and hid. When God asked why, they said they were afraid because they were naked.**

Evidence of Adam and Eve's Spiritual Separation from God

Rom. 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Rom. 5:13, “(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Rom. 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.)”

4. In Gen. 3:14–19 God announced the consequences that their spiritual death would bring on each of them: the serpent, the woman, and the man.

To the Serpent He said:

**Gen. 3:15, “And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”**

5. God provided a better solution to their sin problem than fig leaves. But it was still a temporary solution, but one that depicted something about how He would eventually solve that sin problem. This is a short verse, but a lot happened for this to take place.

Gen. 3:21, “Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

God had to explain to them what He was doing and why. How do we know this? Because in the next chapter Abel understands sacrifice.

Gen. 4:4, “Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,

Gen. 4:5, “but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

Heb. 11:4, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”

6. Abel brought his sacrifice in faith; faith in God and the promise of God. He brought the sacrifice God has prescribed. We can only approach God on His terms, not on man's terms.

7. After the worldwide flood, Noah also made sacrifices. He had been told by God to take 7 clean animals of each kind onto the ark, and 2 of each unclean kind.

How did he know what clean and unclean were?

God had revealed this obviously, but we do not know when or how.

8. We know from later revelation, and mostly because of the explanations in the New Testament, that these sacrifices pointed to Jesus as our substitute sacrifice.

2 Cor. 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

9. The only way people can be justified-saved is through the death of Christ on the Cross (Rom. 3:25–26).

Rom. 3:25, “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

Rom. 3:26, “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

10. As we continue through our study of the Old Testament (OT) we will see that God progressively provided more and more information about sacrifices as well as prophecies and promises about the coming Savior.

11. Another event in later OT history depicts the idea of justification.

Remember: in justification, God imputes or reckons or counts us as righteous. This is due to God crediting us with the righteousness of Christ.

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**Isaiah 64:6, “For all of us
have become like one
who is unclean,
And all our righteous
deeds are like a filthy
garment;”**

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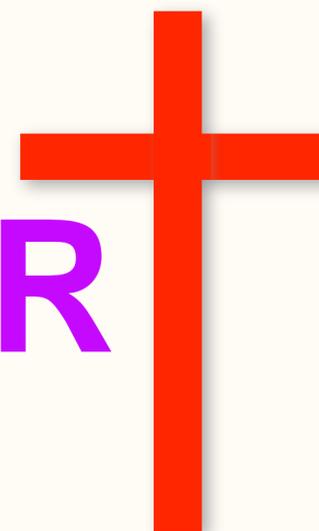


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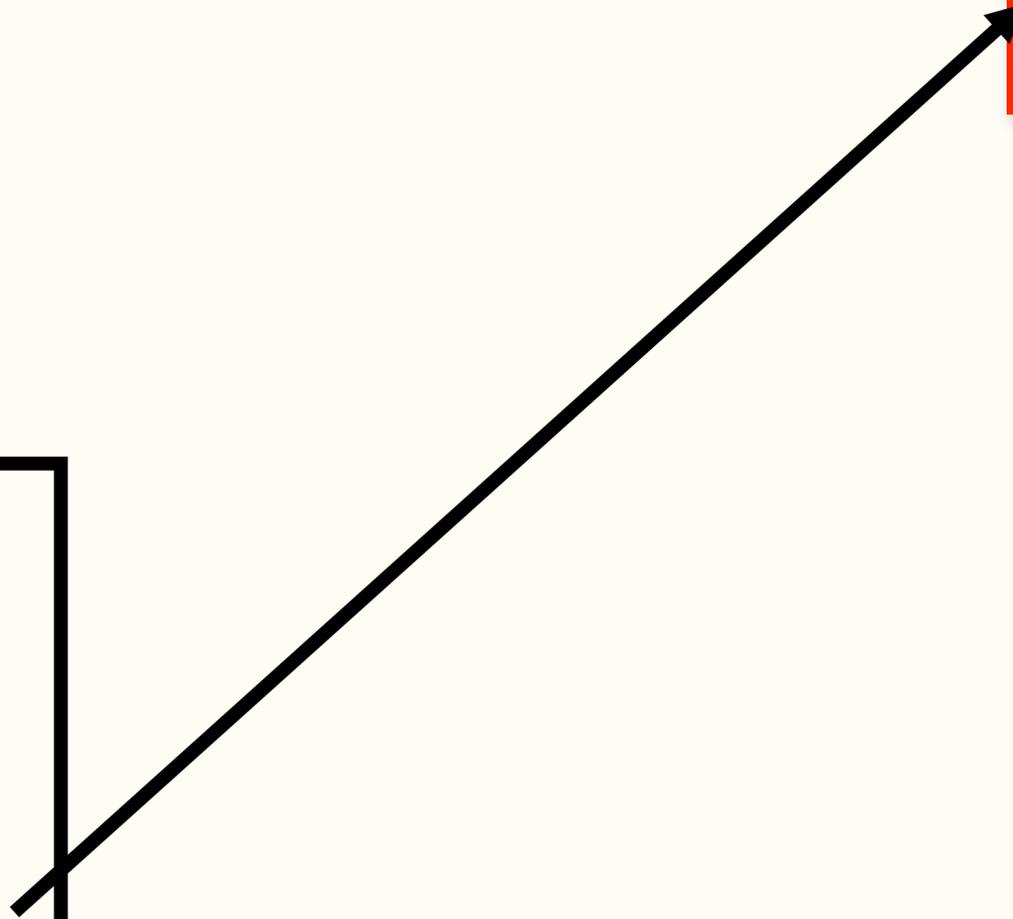


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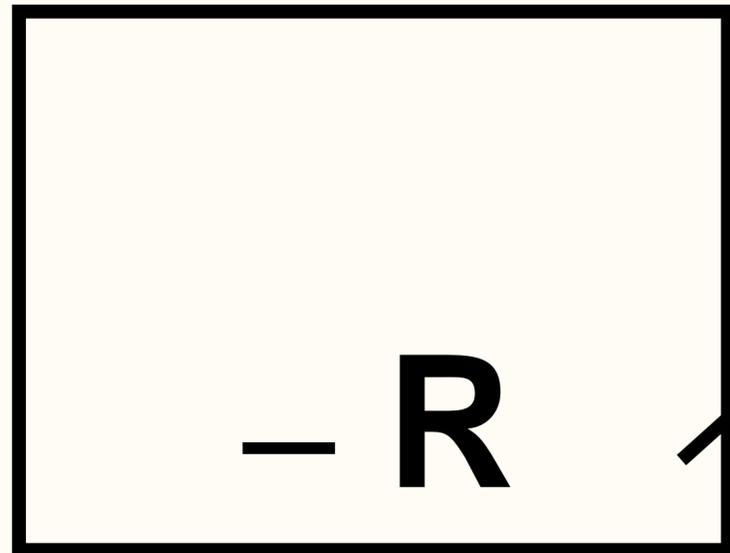
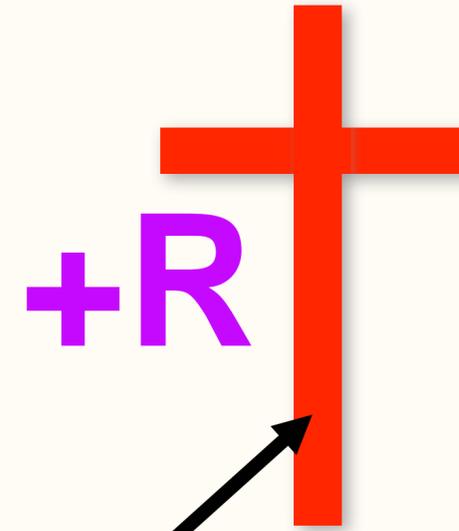
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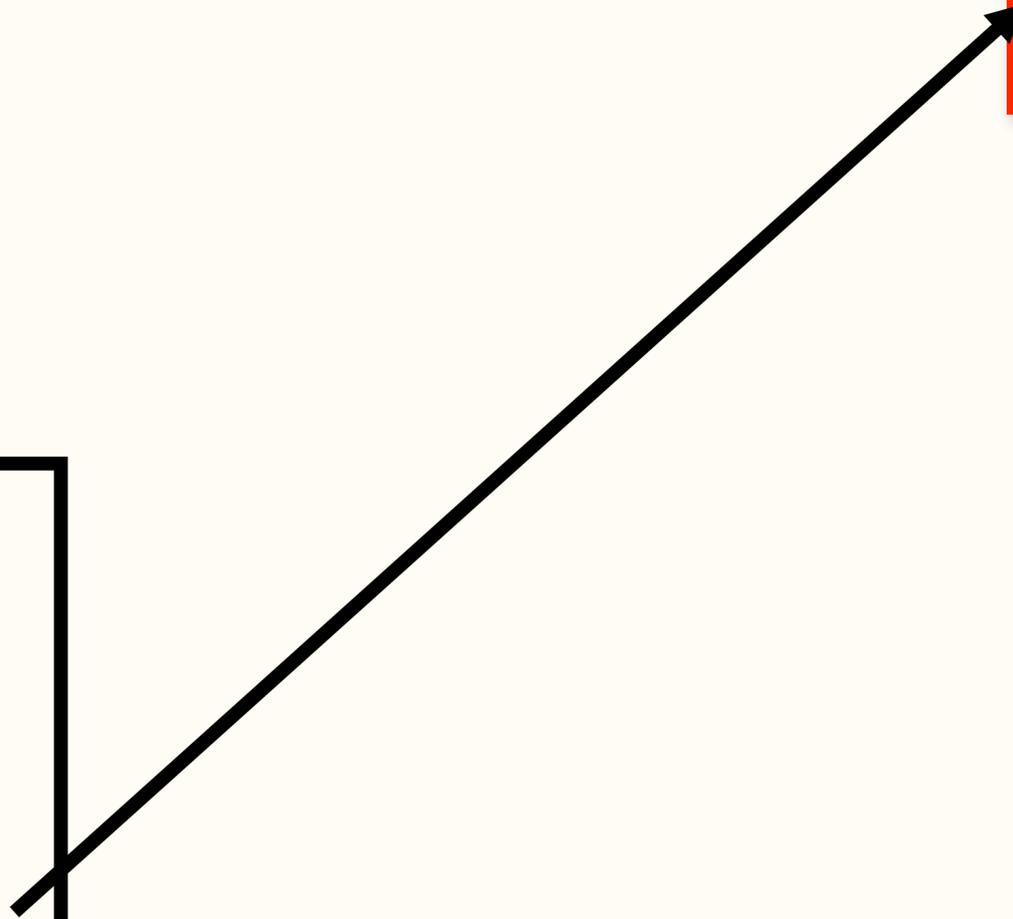


2 Corinthians 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

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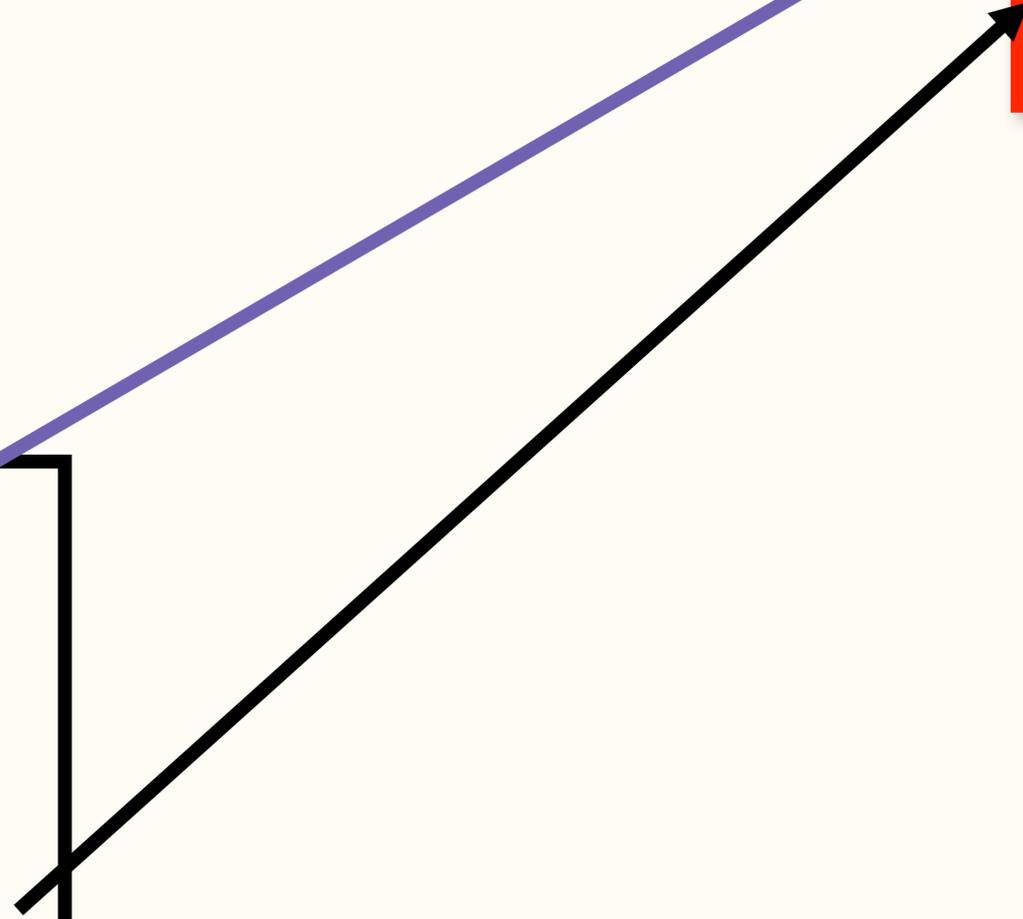
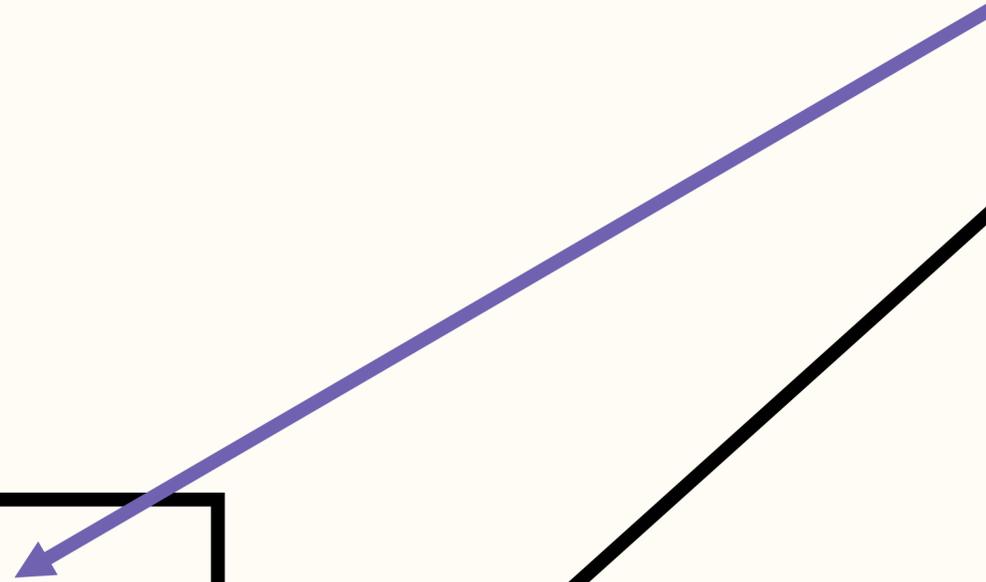
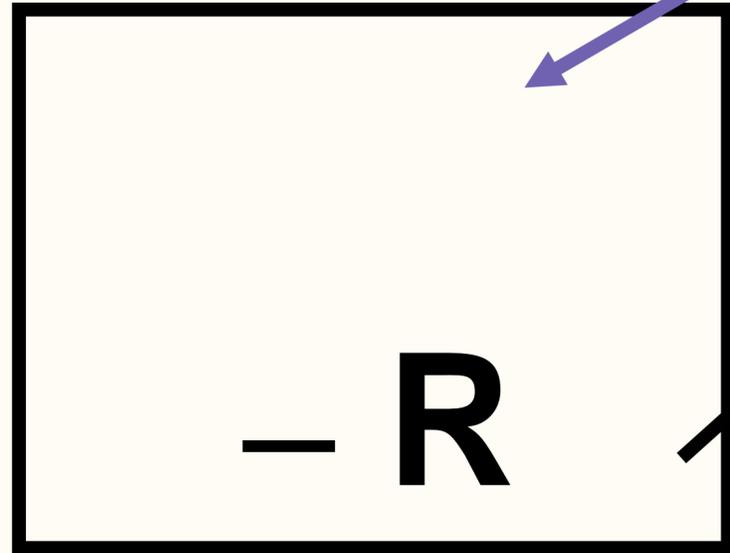
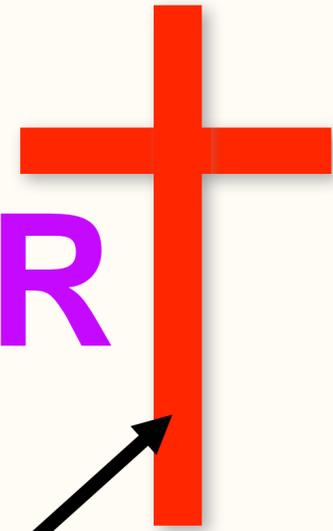
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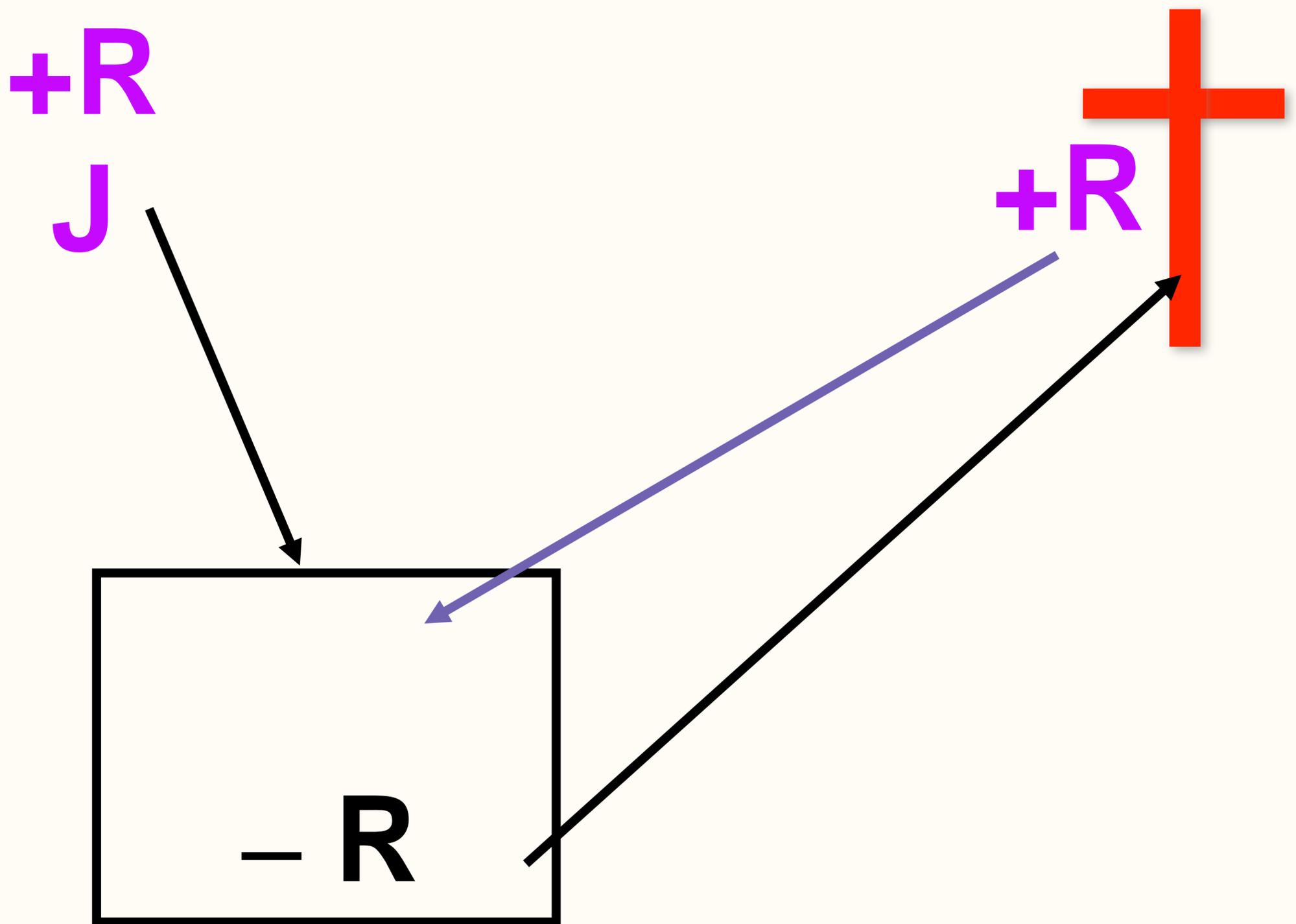
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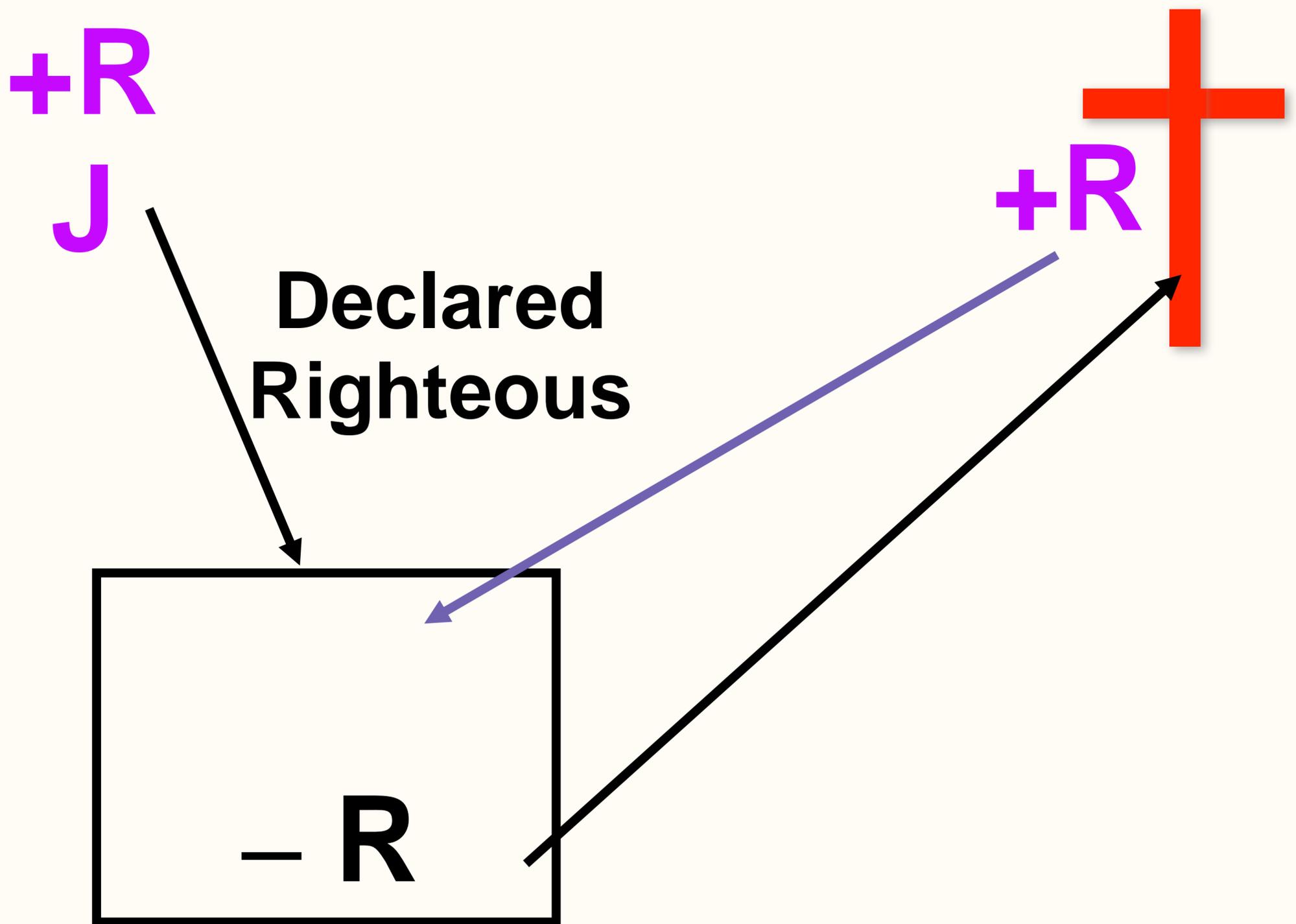


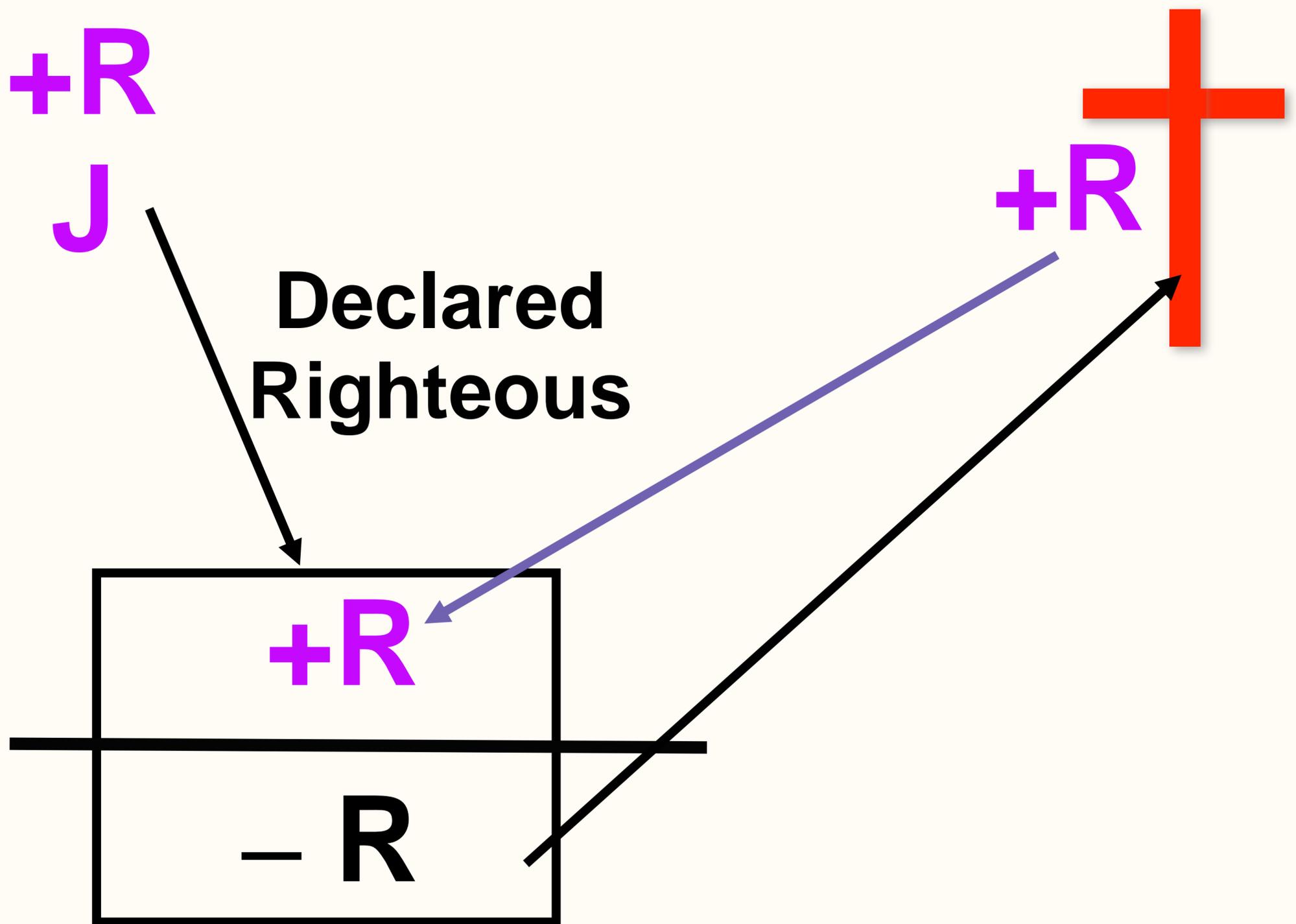
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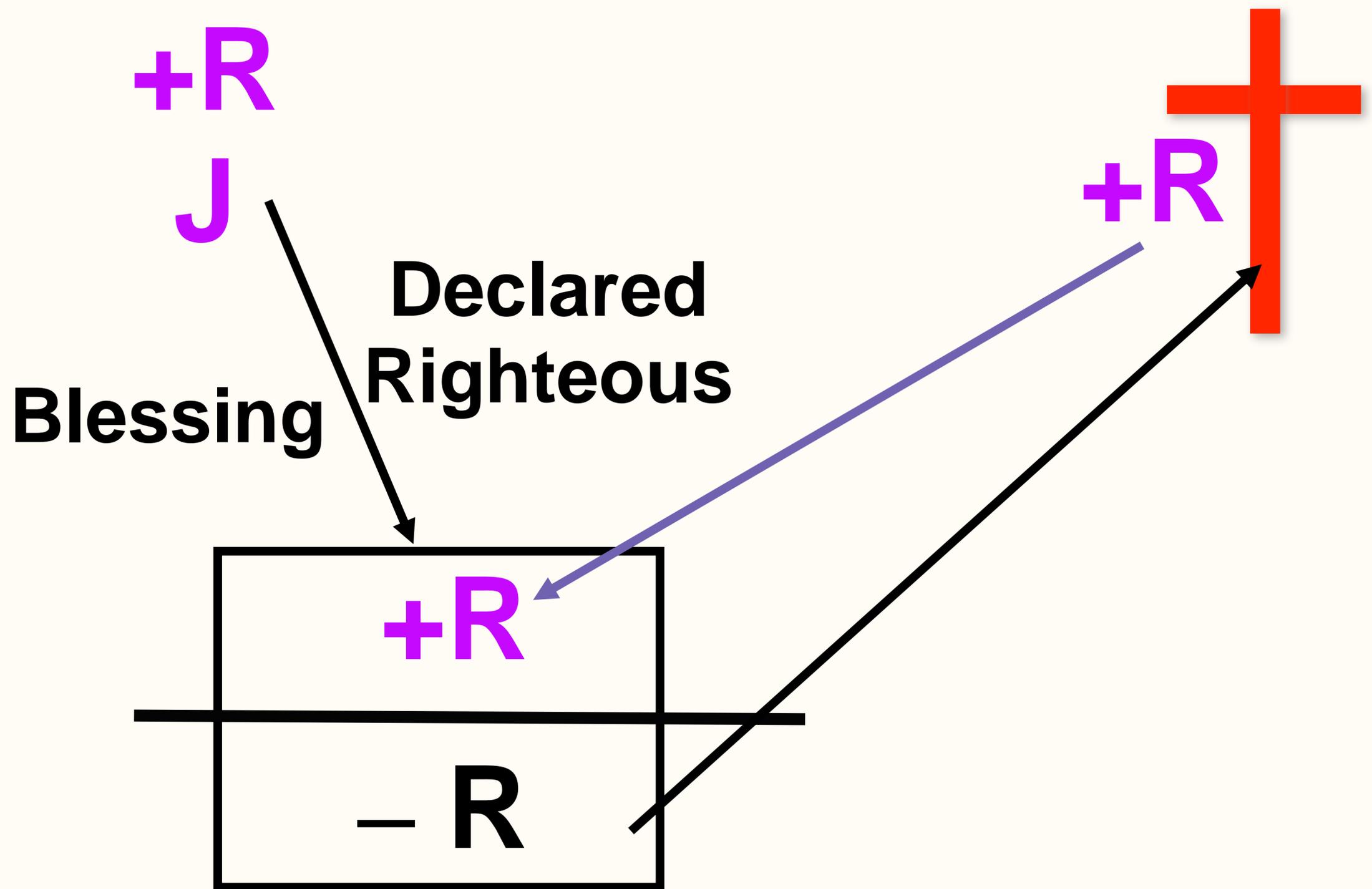
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11. Another event in later OT history depicts the idea of justification.

Remember: in justification, God imputes or reckons or counts us as righteous. This is due to God crediting us with the righteousness of Christ.

Zech. 3:1, “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Zech. 3:2, “And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’ ”

**Zech. 3:3, “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,
and was standing before the Angel.”**

Zech. 3:4, “Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.’”

Zech. 3:5, “And I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.”

1. Justification: God declared Abraham righteous.

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]