

Title: **Father Abraham (Part 3)**

Passage: **Galatians 3:8-9**

Theme: **Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Abraham**

Number: **1215Ga3.8-9(32)**

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{{Read Passage}}

3d wk. in vv. 6-9 of Gal. ch. 3 – sect. entl. “Father Abraham.”

[i] Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone

1st defense → vv. 1-5 “Don't forget the change”

2d defense in vv. 6-9 = OT / Abraham

Justification by Faith Alone is as old as Father Abraham

I. Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: The Faith of Abraham (3:6-9)

Argument from A. = Argument from Script. Could change o/l [^]

If we incl. t/next section (vv. 10-14) Paul references 5 OT texts (order of appearance): Gen. 15:6; Dt. 27:26; Hab. 2:4; Lev. 18:5; Dt. 21:23.

Theol. exposition of key OT passages addressing A., faith, Law, salvation, promise.

We see t/Law's curse contrasted w/t/blessing that comes by faith.

From time that our 1st parents sinned & brot all of creation down w/them, G's plan for t/redemption of fallen humanity has centered on faith in Him. Coming of JC into t/world, his death on t/cross, was not a new way of salv. from sin but t/consummation & basis for 1 single way that is as old as A. himself: Trust in God's promise.

Justification by Faith Alone is as old as Father Abraham

A. Who Was Abraham? (6a)

1. First of Three Great Patriarchs (Fathers) of the Old Testament

(A., son Is., Is.'s son J. → Israel.

2100-2200 BC. G. called him out of paganism in a land known as Ur of t/Chald. No reason for G. to call him other than His good pleasure.

2. Promise and Faith

God promises him a son (Isaac) thru an aged/barren wife, Sarah.

He was to be t/father of many nations & thru him t/ultimate blessing of Messiah, JC.

We move from t/person of A. to t/faith of A. (2d point) →

B. What Do Faith and Righteousness Have in Common? (6b)

1. We see both of those topics in v. 6:

Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TAP quotes his 1st OT passage, Gen. 15:6 (LXX).

Context {summarize}:

4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Passage Paul also cites in Ro 4.

Consequence of Abraham's faith: righteousness was credited to him.

a. Word "Credited" (λογίζομαι) can be translated "charged" or "imputed"

It's to credit or charge something to someone else.

(1) Doctrine of Imputation

Our sin was imputed to JC - it was credited to him (he didn't deserve it // didn't sin or become a sinner). For believers, the elect, X's righteousness is credited to us (we don't deserve it, we don't become inherently sinless by it).

So, when a sinner comes to saving faith in JC, X's righteousness is imputed to that 1 who is thereby justified (declared righteous).

Goes back to our Union w/X (2:20).

Third ? →

C. Will the Real Children of Abraham Please Stand? (7)

So then, understand that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham.

Note the connection between vv. 6&7

1. Paul is answering the question: “who are those who can rightly claim to be children of Abraham?”

This may have been how the Judaizers were framing the issue (“we are the true sons of Abraham”).

Much like the Jews of Jesus' day.

They prided themselves in t/Law / circumcision. Their deeds.

“Who are those who can rightly claim to be children of Abraham?”
... those of faith ...

Consider carefully what happened. First, God made Abraham a promise. Indeed, the promise of descendants was 'placarded' before Abraham's eyes, much as the promise of forgiveness through Christ crucified was 'placarded' before the eyes of the Galatians. Secondly Abraham believed God. Despite the inherent improbability of the promise, from the human point of view, Abraham cast himself on the faithfulness of God. thirdly, Abraham's faith was reckoned as righteousness. That is, he was himself accepted as righteous by faith. He was not justified because he had done anything to deserve it, or because he had been circumcised, or because he had kept the law (for neither circumcision nor the law had yet be given), but simply because he believed God. [Stott, 72-73]

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4th ? →

D. What Does Justification Have to Do with the Gospel? (8)

or – what does just. have to do w/the gosp. & w/faith – all 3 in v. 8

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

<1.> We have “justify” (justification) + “faith” + “gospel”

<a.> Word group related to the doctrine of Justification (justify, justified, justification) – all relate to what it means to be righteous

We think of being righteousness as a personal, individual virtue:

- * Pos: Righteous judge (one who judges rightly).
- * Neg: Self-righteous (points to pride).

Religious sense: righteousness = puritanical religiosity.

Personal purity wrapped in sacred snobbery.

Never forget that when we talk about being justified we are talking about being declared righteous by God solely on t/basis of the righteousness of JC who took our place in his life, death, and resurr.

We're not made righteous. That's religion. That cannot save you because you can never be made righteous enough. Why? Because of your sin. In order to be justified b4 G. you must be perfectly right.

What we saw in 2:16 . . . Only perf. right. is in X.

<a.> How is that received? By faith – belief – trust

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith . . .

Faith is t/hand that rec. t/gift. Verse 6 . . . (cf. Rom. 4:2-3).

<b.> There's the gospel - “good news” “JC slain for sinners”

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham:

Result?

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

We receive t/blessing of A.

Inheriting the promises of eternal life, fulness of joy in JC.

Which means that in spite of all your sins, [quoting John Piper] God reckons you to be righteous. If you are a child of Abraham, all the things you have done wrong or ever will do wrong are forgiven because of Christ, and God does not hold your sins against you. I don't know of any cultural, intellectual, or technological changes over the past two thousand years that makes this inheritance any less needed or less desirable today than it was for the Galatians. This and this alone can take away the fear of meeting an infinitely holy God loaded with our sin. So the first thing we inherit from God as children of Abraham is justification, acquittal of all our sin. (And this is the basis for all the other blessings!) [John Piper: “Those Who Have Faith Are the Sons of Abraham.” Sermon dated March 20, 1983. <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/those-who-have-faith-are-the-sons-of-abraham>]

Again

D. What Does Justification Have to Do with the Gospel? (8)

Let's zoom in on this verse . . .

1. Scripture is personified

What does that mean? An inanimate object is given personality.

Metaphorical word usage – we do it all t/time.

“After a dark, cloudy week, t/sun came out and smiled upon me.”

“The pizza was calling my name.”

a. This was something not uncommon in Hebrew thought as well

Proverbs 6:16–18 **16 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:**

The 1st 5 of those 6 things t/Lord hates are personified →

17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

Eyes aren't inherently arrogant and proud. Tongues don't lie. Hands don't kill. Hearts don't devise wicked plans. Feet don't run off to evil.

It's t/person behind those things that is t/culprit.

Matt. 12:34 . . . **the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.**

Here →

And the Scripture . . . preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham . . .

b. How can the Scripture “preach the Gospel?”

Another way of saying that “G. preached t/Gosp.”

What t/Script. says G says & vice-versa.

God and the Scriptures are brought into such conjunction as to show that in point of directness of authority no distinction was made between them.” [BB Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 299]

The Scripture referred to here is t/last sentence of Gen. 12:3 →
And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all t/families of the earth shall be blessed.” [MT]

Here in t/Grk text reflected in your NT:

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

2. ἔθνος (cf. “ethnic”) = nation, people, family groups, tribes

Point is, this blessing transcends t/Jewish people.

a. That brings us back to the immediate context of why Paul was writing this letter in the first place!

1:7 “some who are disturbing you and distorting the gospel of Christ.”
Judaizers -

For all practical purposes, Abraham was a Gentile like most of t/Galatian Xns. He was no more a Jew than Adam or Noah. He knew nothing of Moses' Law, t/Temple, dietary regulations. At t/time when his belief was accounted to him as saving, he nothing of circumcision.

b. Follow the argument . . .

vv. 1-5

v. 6 – 7 . . .

Now we have verse 8:

D. What Does Justification Have to Do with the Gospel? (8)

And the Scripture, foreseeing (predicting, prophesying, ordaining)
What?

that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,

That Scripture

preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham:

προεναγγελίζομαι = to proclaim good news in advance. Hapax.

What was that message? What was preached ahead of time to A.?

Statement from Gen. 12:3 →

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

What is t/sum of that blessing? Simply & profoundly: It is X.

c. The Gospel is for all the nations

Thru that blessing found in t/message of t/Cross God calls a diverse people out of their own “Ur of the Chaldeans” – ppl. consisting of atheists, agnostics, prostitutes, drug dealers, educated, ignorant, rich, poor, adulterers, homosexuals, self-righteous religionists & seemingly “good people” – & He transforms them into new creations w/new affections.

It's what we see in t/very last book of t/Bible where we read how X was slain and has purchased for G. w/His blood men **from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

That is →

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

E. Case Closed (9)

So then, those of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

1. That last part is a little tricky – the word for believing is an adj.

“man of faith” as in the NIV and ESV, or “the believer” as in NASB and NET, or “who believed” as in NRSV and CEB.

a. Emphasis needs to be on Abraham's faith, not on his faithfulness

G's. faithfulness that saves us, not our faithfulness which would be another way of saying that our good deeds save us.

So then, those of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

2 ideas: 1) Abraham believed and was blessed – justified by faith in God & His promise; 2) all who believe in God & t/fulfillment of that promise in X are likewise blessed as he was.

[Justification by Faith Alone is as Old as Father Abraham.](#)

Timothy George - dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford Univ.:
[From the creation of Adam and Eve until the second coming of Christ, God has provided one and only one way of salvation for all peoples everywhere: the atoning death of his Son on the cross applied to all of the elect through the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul could claim that the faith of Abraham was the same as ours with this noticeable difference: he believed in the Christ who was to come, just as we trust in the One who has already come. \[George, 226\]](#)

John Calvin puts it more succinctly:

The patriarchs of old “participated in the same inheritance and hoped for a common salvation with us by the grace of the same Mediator.”

[John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.10.1]

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Thoughts . . .

1. The Gospel is Christ

From t/time that our first parents led t/entire creation into sin G has been at work bringing all of human history to t/point of t/Cross.

Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”**

6 vv. later . . . **And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.**

Adam to Abraham to Moses and David – all of OT history points forward to a grand fulfillment in t/Cross of X.

2. The Gospel that is Christ is received by faith alone

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:13–17 13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16 For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

3. God is not looking for perfect people or perfect faith.

A's faith not perfect. He tried to circumvent G's promise of an heir thru a polygamous relationship w/Hagar.

John Calvin:

"While we teach we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety. On the other hand, we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief. The Godly heart feels in itself a division because it is partly imbued with sweetness from its recognition of the diving goodness, partly grieves in bitterness from an awareness of its calamity; party rests upon the promise of the gospel, partly trembles at the evidence of its own iniquity; partly rejoices at the expectation of life, partly shudders at death. we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety. On the other hand, we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their

own unbelief. since in the course of the present life it never goes so well with us that we are wholly cured of the disease of unbelief and entirely filled and possessed by faith. Hence arises those conflicts when unbelief, which reposes in the remains of the flesh, rises up to attack the faith that has been inwardly conceived." [The Institutes, cited in Paul Helm, Calvin and the Calvinists, 24-25]

Saving faith is not perfect faith. Remember, is the genuineness of our faith that's the issue. Have we believed in Christ? Are we believing in Him? The object of our faith saves us because that object is the perfect person and work of Jesus Christ. He's not looking for perfect faith; you can't get perfect faith from imperfect people. [TAB]

4. Rest in God's grace.

Preach grace to yourself. Rom. 8:1.

5. Be sure you are a child of Abraham. Cf. vv. 6-7.