

## Galatians 3:6-9

Introduction: While Paul argued from their personal experience in Galatians 3:1-5, he will now argue from Abraham's personal experience as recorded in Scripture. Paul builds his argument on Genesis 12:3; 15:6; and 18:18. I am planning to look at the Genesis passages next Sunday.

**We are commanded to understand an important historical example—<sup>7</sup> so then [ἄρα], understand [pres. act. impv. γινώσκω]—3:6-7**

- 1) What is the standard?—3:6 <sup>6</sup> *Just as* [καθώς] *Abraham* “trusted [aor. act. ind. πιστεύω] *God and it was credited* [aor. pass. ind. λογίζομαι] *to him* (by God) *for* [εἰς] *righteousness/uprightness/approval* [δικαιοσύνη],” [Genesis 15:6]
  - a) The Jewish writings of 1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees 2:52 and Sirach 44:19-21 emphasize Abraham's obedience as the basis of his acceptance before God.
- 2) What are we to understand?—3:7 *that those who are of* [ἐκ] *faith* [πίστις], *these* [οὗτος] *are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *the sons* [υἱός] *of Abraham*.
  - a) Not literal/genetic sons, but the **spiritual** ones (ones originating in and living by faith, and not works, just like Abraham) (cf. Romans 3:26)
  - b) They share the same characteristic as Abraham; i.e. trust in God
  - c) The phrase “sons of Abraham” is not an OT expression. Being a “son of Abraham” does not make you a Jew!
- 3) But historical example is not enough; God's Word is more authoritative.

**We need to submit to the authority of Scripture—<sup>8</sup> And the Scripture** [γραφή], ... *announced the good news ahead of time* [aor. dep. ind. προεπαγγελίζομαι] *to Abraham that*,—3:8-9

- We must equate “Scripture says” with “God says”. NB how Paul uses the singular “Scripture” to refer to the entire Word of God. cf. Romans 9:17
  - Do not read the NT concept of gospel into the OT. Remember, it simply means the good news that God is revealing at that time.
  - This situation occurs 10 years **before** that of 15:6. Paul seems to be saying, “Let's go even further back.”
- 1) What do the Scriptures say? “*In* [ἐν] *you* (singular) *all the Gentiles/nations* [ἔθνος] (those 70 nations listed in Genesis 10) *will be blessed* [fut. pass. ind. ἐνευλογέω].” [Genesis 12:3; 18:18]
    - a) Abraham came from a thoroughly pagan background (Joshua 24:1-2)
    - b) In order to be blessed, all nations must be associated with Abraham by genuine faith in the one true God. (cf. John 8:39; Acts 13:26; Romans 4:11-12)
  - 2) Based on the foreknowledge of God—*having foreseen* [aor. act. ptc. προοράω] *that God declares* [pres. act. ind. δικαίωω] *the Gentiles/nations* [ἔθνος] *righteous/upright/approved* **by** [ἐκ] **faith** [πίστις] (emphatic),
    - a) God knew what He was going to do in the future, so He revealed His promise to Abraham ahead of time. God's purpose all along has been to reach the Gentiles. cf. Acts 13:26

### **We need to embrace the inferred conclusion—3:9**

- 1) <sup>9</sup> *So then* [ὥστε], *those who are of* [ἐκ] *faith* [πίστις] *are blessed* [pres. pass. ind. εὐλογέω] *with* [σύν] *trusting* [adjective, πιστός] *Abraham*. (cf. 3:2, 5)
  - a) There is no difference in the way that Abraham was justified and the means by which all subsequent generations and people groups have been declared righteous. (Gromacki)
  - b) Gentiles may obtain righteousness as a consequence of trusting God, just like Abraham, and not by observing Jewish practices.
- 2) Schreiner is correct when he says that we honor the one we trust. If your doctor diagnoses you with a condition and prescribes medicine, you call into question the doctor's competence if you fail to follow his advice. Faith honors God because it considers him to be trustworthy.

### **Summary/take-home truths:**

The OBJECT of Abraham's faith—God Himself, not Abraham

The CONTENT of Abraham's faith—God's revelation in the form of a promise

The TIME of Abraham's faith—2 chapters (@ 15 years) **before** Abraham was circumcised, almost 500 years **before** the Law was given through Moses

The RESULT of Abraham's faith—Abraham was declared righteous/approved by God

Listen to the wise words of John Frame:

*Justification comes by means of faith, by trusting God's promise, just as Abraham did, when he believed what God said, even when God's promise seemed impossible. If you believe God's promise you are justified, and you also have a right to assurance. Believing God's promise is the instrument of justification, and continuing in faith brings the assurance.... If you can honestly say, "I am trusting Jesus for my salvation, not my own works, not my family, not my church, but Jesus," then you can say without doubt that you are saved. (Systematic Theology, 1005)*