

Abraham trusts God
Genesis 12:3 and 15:6

Introduction: In Galatians 3:6 we see that Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6 to make his point about salvation being by faith alone. In 3:8 he quotes from Genesis 12:3 and 18:8. As some are not appropriately familiar with the Old Testament illustration of Abraham, let's go back to the original story and see what God reveals for us that will help us better understand Galatians 3:6-9.

God makes promises to Abraham—Genesis 12:3 (cf. 18:8)

- 1) The God of glory appeared to Abraham—Acts 7:2
- 2) Abraham did not deserve what God promised to do for him—Joshua 24:2-3
- 3) The primary command to “go out” (to separate himself) is given—12:1
 - a) From where? **Specifically:** *from your country, (extended) family, and father's house* (immediate family)
 - i) He was not looking for greener pastures elsewhere. He had everything he needed where he was. He was prosperous, middle-aged, settled, and thoroughly pagan.
 - b) To where? **Non-specific:** *to a land that I will show you*
- 4) Three-fold promise of God's intended consequences to Abraham's obedience detailed—12:2-3 (cf. Hebrews 11:8)
 - These are similar to God's promises to Adam
 - a) Be fruitful—*I will make you into a great nation*
 - i) In addition to the 70 nations listed in Genesis 10.
 - ii) Said to a childless man!
 - b) Multiply/blessings both material and spiritual—*I will bless you*
 - c) Rule/reputation—*I will make your name great*
 - i) Consider the irony of this at the Tower of Babel—Genesis 11:4
(1) Curiously, not one of their names is remembered today!
 - d) This is later expanded into a covenant—Genesis 15, 22
- 5) The final command indicating God's blessing flowing through Abraham—12:2-3
 - a) A 3-fold blessing
 - i) Yahweh will bless [*barak*] those who bless [*barak*] Abraham
 - ii) Yahweh will curse [*arar*] the individual who treats Abraham lightly [*galal*]
 - iii) In Abraham all the nations of the earth will be blessed [*barak*]
 - (1) All those nations scattered because of their rebellion in Genesis 11:1-9!
Unworthy nations can be objects of God's blessing by His grace alone.
 - (2) He will not be the **source** of blessing, but an **example** of God's blessing
 - b) Whoever treats Abram and the covenant with contempt (consider them as worthless) God will banish from the blessing. (NET Bible)
 - c) This is what Paul quotes with some slight changes in Galatians 3:8.
- 6) Abraham's faith is demonstrated by departing—12:4-5
 - a) He didn't have the big picture (Hebrews 11:8), only a specific command to go

Abraham trusts God—Genesis 15:6 (10 years later)

- 1) Yahweh takes the initiative and comes to Abraham in a vision in the night—15:1, 5
 - a) Abraham receives revelation from God as a prophet does (cf. Genesis 20:7)
- 2) Yahweh comforts Abraham—15:1
 - a) Protection—*I am your shield*
 - b) Blessing—*I am your very abundant reward*
 - i) Remember that Abraham has just rejected all the spoils of war (14:22-24). Should he have kept the spoils of war, just in case? This answers that question.
- 3) Abraham legitimately questions Adonai Yahweh about His ways—15:2-3
 - a) Abraham is currently childless
 - b) Abraham currently has a slave as his heir
- 4) Yahweh corrects Abraham's thinking by reaffirming His promise—15:4-5
 - a) A physical son will be born to Abraham—15:4
 - b) Abraham's descendants will be innumerable—15:5
 - i) Cf. the "dust of the earth" (13:16) and the "sand of the sea" (22:17)
- 5) Abraham responds to Yahweh's promise—15:6
 - a) Abraham trusts Yahweh—15:6a
 - i) He considers Yahweh's promise to be certain
 - i) Abram regarded the God who made this promise as reliable and fully capable of making it a reality. (NET Bible)
 - b) Yahweh credited Abraham's faith to him as righteousness—15:6b
 - i) Justification does not mean that the believer is righteous; it means that God credits him with righteousness, so that in the records of heaven (as it were) he is declared righteous. (NET Bible)

Summary: See Arnold Fruchtenbaum's quote on ½ sheet handout.

Take-home truth: Will you trust God's promise that your sins can be forgiven because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross to pay the full and just penalty for your sins and His resurrection from the dead?