

GALATIANS - SERMON 10

GALATIANS 3:6-9 — ABRAHAM'S TRUE CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION:

Read Galatians 3:6-9

In this chapter Paul is addressing the subject of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Initially, he laid out his presentation by recalling the Galatians to their personal experience with salvation in relation to faith and works. The personal experience of the Galatians would only support the former, that salvation was by faith alone apart from the works of the law.

Next Paul continues his proofs but turning to the life of Abraham for his proof and example. The Judaizers claimed to have great respect for Abraham. Hence, by supporting the doctrine of salvation by faith alone from the example of Abraham Paul would overthrow the Judaizers and demonstrate that their perversion of the doctrine was false.

OUTLINE:

- I THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND METHOD OF ABRAHAM'S JUSTIFICATION BEFORE GOD, V 6.
- II THE MARKS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ABRAHAM'S TRUE CHILDREN, V 7.
- III THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES AS GENTILES INTO THE BLESSINGS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, VV 8-9.

I THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND METHOD OF ABRAHAM'S JUSTIFICATION BEFORE GOD, V 6.

What were the circumstances and what was the method employed in the justification of Abraham? The answer is in verse 6.

. . . just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

This is a quotation from the Old Testament. Beginning in Genesis 12 we can begin to trace the life of Abraham leading up to his justification.

Genesis 12:1-5 Abram was called out of Haran by God. Abram departs for Egypt.

Genesis 13 records the separation of Abraham from Lot in the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 14 records the rescue of Lot by Abraham.

Genesis 15:1-6

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number

them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

At least at Genesis 15:6 we have the record that Abraham was saved. His salvation was by the imputation of righteousness (*accounted it to him for righteousness*). This salvation/justification was obtained through faith (*he believed in the Lord*). Righteousness was not said to be obtained by works. It was certainly not obtained by circumcision because circumcision was not instituted until Genesis 17, at least fourteen years later. In Genesis 16 Abraham is said to be 86 at the time of Ishmael's birth. Abraham is 90 years old in Genesis 17 when circumcision is instituted.

The example of Abraham and the way he obtained salvation expressly rules out the two elements that the Judaizers said were essential to it; circumcision and law-keeping.

II THE MARKS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ABRAHAM'S TRUE CHILDREN, v 7.

What are the marks of Abraham's true children? Is it circumcision? Is it law-keeping?

Galatians 3:7

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

The true children of Abraham are those who believe or have faith in the same manner as Abraham. It is not circumcision or law-keeping, but faith that distinguishes the true children of Abraham. This contradicts the teaching of the Judaizers. In the clearest of terms Paul demonstrates that it is not the physical lineage and descendants of Abraham who are Abraham's race and seed, but rather it is those united to Abraham by faith in the Lord in the same manner as Abraham. Those participating in the imputed righteousness of salvation by faith alone are the children of Abraham.

The promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12 were made to Abraham and his heirs. Who are Abraham's heirs? According to Paul in this passage the heirs of Abraham are believers not necessarily those who are genetically related to Abraham. Only those who are of faith in Christ are the true sons and heirs of Abraham. Only those heirs participate in the covenant promises and blessings which were made with Abraham.

As an practical out working of this doctrinal verity, we do not recognize the baptizing of babies for they cannot be the heirs of the promise in so far as they have not faith in the Lord. The true covenant heirs are those who believe on Christ as Abraham believed.

Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

All those who are baptized are those who have been united to Christ in faith. It is not physical descent that marks out the heirs of the promises to Abraham, but the lineage of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The promise is not to believers and their seed, but to Abraham and his seed.

III THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES AS GENTILES INTO THE BLESSINGS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, vv 8-9.

Galatians 3:8

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

It is not through circumcision or law-keeping but *by faith* that Gentiles shall be included. This is a recitation of the promise found in Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

In that place and in Galatians 3:8-9 God is saying that Abraham was not to be considered the spiritual father of only the Jews. He was destined and purposed to be the spiritual father of every tribe and nation, Jew or Gentile. His becoming their father was not to be accomplished by physical procreation but by begetting an offspring spiritually. It is not by physical generation but by spiritual regeneration that the lineage is procured and secured.

Galatians 3:9

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

It is not necessary to become a Jew in order to receive the benefits of the promises made to Abraham. The significance of blood relationship with Abraham is forever done away with by this passage. The nature of the union of Gentiles with Abraham was not as the Judaizers supposed, which was by adopting Judaism, but rather by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Since Christ and come and physical Israel has been rejected, the nature of any union with Abraham rests solely upon faith and has nothing to do with physical birth, only spiritual birth. How did the Lord Jesus Christ have children? He had no wife and He had no physical offspring. His children are the children of faith and promise. How did the spiritual offspring of Christ called apostles have children? They had children by the gospel.

1 Corinthians 4:15

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Timothy 1:2

To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conclusion:

This is Paul's second line of argumentation against the Judaizer's doctrine.

Hymn # 454