

Galatians 3:7-12 – The Just Shall (only) Live By Faith

Robertson, TSK, GreekLexicon, Rienecker, Gaebelien, Handfuls, Vincent, Family, Trapp, Poole, PNT, Henry, Lightfoot, JFB, Clarke, Calvin, Barnes
Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: The last time you saw that **those who rejected salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone were foolish**, and in their foolishness, they **mocked God's Son** (minimizing his death), they **mocked God's Spirit** (acting as if regeneration were not his exclusive work), and **they mocked God's servant Abraham**, who made it clear he was saved by faith in Jesus!

Today you will see absolute proof Abraham, and consequently all his Gentile and Jewish children, were saved by grace through faith in Jesus.

Our headings are:

All believers are children of Abraham

All believers must hear the Gospel

All believers must have faith

Our goals are: **That you will see the old and new covenants were both grounded in grace through faith in Christ alone, and that you will warn others not to add any work to try to complete their salvation or cause their salvation.**

All believers are children of Abraham

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

1. Abraham had an unqualified faith in the Lord Jesus, the means by which he received God's grace.

His was not saved by keeping the Old Testament ceremonies – like being circumcised or having his sons circumcised.

He was not saved by some faith AND keeping some Old Testament ceremonies.

2. All other Old Testament believers, whether related to Abraham by blood or belief, were saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Rahab, Ruth, and Jethro, and all Old Testament Gentiles, were saved by grace through faith in Jesus. Hebrews 11.

If one believed in salvation by ceremonies...or salvation by partial ceremonies, his faith was useless.

Romans 4:4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

3. All believers today, whether from Abraham's blood or belief, are saved by grace through faith in Christ!

All believers must be considered children of Abraham – whether Jew or Gentile.

All believers must be esteemed as children of Abraham – whether Jew or Gentile.

Romans 4:16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, 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...

All believers have all been imputed with (counted as righteous) the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The Gentiles are all grafted into that Olive Tree, who is Jesus. Romans 11.

4. Lessons:

a. The old and new covenant are the same in essence: Both required faith in Jesus Christ. So when you hear “old” and “new” covenants, understand they are only old and new in terms of small details. (The signs are different.)

Both focus on Christ. One looks forward to Christ and one looks back to Christ. Believers were always saved by the same Savior, they had the same faith, and they were incorporated into the same church.

b. Share this with those who say one is saved in a different way today! There is only one name given under heaven by which a man can be saved...and it is Christ!

c. You are Abraham's children! You have the same faith as he - faith in the same person.

All believers must hear the Gospel

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."

1. Abraham heard the preaching of God's Word; it proclaimed faith in Christ as the only means to be saved from his sins.

Then Apostle Paul showed the link between the Gospel and salvation in Abraham's life. He quoted Genesis 12.

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.**"

They received what God did for them after they **heard the Gospel from God!** This Gospel worked faith, which was essential for them to receive salvation.

No Old Testament saint was saved without hearing and believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Did they understand all the details of the Gospel? No! They did not know about the Romans and Pharisees. But they knew **Isaiah 53...by His stripes they were healed!**

Abraham heard this Gospel 430 before the law was given...long before anyone was circumcised.

Romans 4:11 And he **received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised,** that he might be the **father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised,** that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

And that **promise of Christ was given to the Gentiles also.**

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,** That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

2. So back to our passage: How then could the Galatians argue they needed to be circumcised in order to be saved?

Abraham wasn't circumcised and he was saved. And the Jews were taught salvation **could not** be achieved by human effort.

So why were some trying to do this? Did they expect salvation by works? No. They were just causing trouble.

Acts 15:24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us **have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"** — to whom we gave no such commandment —

3. As a result of hearing the same Gospel as Abraham heard, which he passed down to his children, the whole world was blessed.

“Blessed” means they received the full promise of the Gospel; they were saved! No works were involved in their salvation.

4. Lessons:

a. All men of all other religions, regardless how peaceful they may seem to be, will spend eternity in hell if they reject the Gospel and try to reach God by their good works.

b. All men, from Adam on, were taught the necessity of the Gospel to be saved. (Adam had the proto evangelium.) So even Gentiles were saved in the Old Testament and Gentiles continue to be saved today by believing the Gospel of Jesus.

c. This is reason to proclaim the Gospel to all those who are lost...even if they think they are good and God is pleased with them because of their good works.

Love them enough to speak the truth to them. Even if they accuse you of being arrogant, they still need to hear the truth.

It is not arrogant to try to save someone's life by telling them the truth.

All believers must have faith

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

1. Abraham, the father of all believers heard and believed the Gospel preached to him 2000 years before Jesus, and 430 years before the law was given, and was therefore seen as blessed.

If he were blessed because of his faith in Jesus, even before he was circumcised, why would the Galatians feel like they had to be circumcised in order to be blessed? In fact, all believers today are blessed (saved) on account of their faith!

10 For as many as are of the works of the law **are under the curse**; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

2. Abraham's biological children (some Jews) who rejected the Gospel about the coming Savior and tried to please God by their own works, remained under the curse of the law!

The curse was like a big billboard under which they were standing with their condemnation written on it. They all failed!

Romans 3:20 Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified** in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And they could do nothing about it. The case was closed. The verdict was in! Guilty on all counts! So there was no clearance! Why? Because even the holiest man sinned at least once! And that was enough for hell for eternity. Salvation was impossible for him!

But Jesus came under the law and took the condemnation for those under the law's judgment. This is the only way man could escape God's judgment...

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, **born under the law**, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

11 But that no one is justified by the law **in the sight of God is evident**, for "**the just shall live by faith.**"

3. In short: No one is justified by keeping the law, and all those who are justified are only justified by faith.

And this, the Apostle argued, **was evident to all.**

Men were only able to live because they had faith in Christ; they could not obey the ceremonies perfectly.

Romans 4:2 For **if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about**, but not before God.

The law offers no promise. The **law asserts one is only saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.**

Habakkuk 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; **But the just shall live by his faith.**"

Though the Jews highly esteemed obedience, it was nothing to God but an

abomination. Luke 16:15. See Romans 3:20 above.

12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

4. No one is to confuse the fact the keeping the law was not the same as having faith.

The law is perfect. It is well organized. It brings blessings to society. But no one can keep it! So no one can get life from it.

Faith is not the starting point of the law; works are! No wonder works could not save!

5. Lessons:

a. Living by the law only brings curses. There is no saving ability in the law. But true life comes through faith in Jesus.

b. Our society is geared toward teaching man has the ability to help restore his spiritual condition. Even in church, some people think baptism can save...or church attendance can save...or being nice can save...or being faithful to a spouse can save. We are self-deceived.

c. While the ceremonial laws have passed away, you are still required to keep God's law—for God's laws are good. You can't *be justified* by the law because you always fail to live up to God's standards.

d. Jesus fulfilled the law for you...and he gave you faith to receive what he did.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by **sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,**

New life is only connected to faith – never to law keeping.

Conclusion:

John Calvin: "It was easier to mix fire and water than to mix law and faith!" What the Galatians needed to see was that both law and faith have always co-existed. The law pointed to Christ and guides life in Christ, but **faith, and only faith, was the means by which one was justified.**

By that true faith all were saved before and after Christ. That saving faith came through the preaching of the Gospel before and after Christ.

So beloved in the Lord:

1. Praise God Jesus took Abraham's curse, your curse, and the world's curse when he died on the cross. You are now free!

2. Protect your heart from trying to take credit for what Jesus did for you. It is natural to want to take credit!

3. Promote the fact justification before the Father comes for free, through Christ, without any human effort. Save the world from futility.

Finally: To have saving faith requires humility and acceptance that you can't save yourself. I know this goes against every aspect of society, including in some churches, but it is the biggest deception of the Devil today. You can only be saved through the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf, and you do so by faith...faith that God gives.