

**Galatians 3: 8 and 9; “The Scripture Foreseeing”, Message # 15 in the series –
“Christ has Made Us Free”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall
on September 18th, 2013, at the church.**

This is another very interesting expression which Paul uses in this blessed letter; “the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles”. The Scripture here is personified, and declared to have life; the ability to foresee what God would do. This is what we want to explore tonight. We want to think 1st – Of “how” it is, that the Scriptures can “foresee” something? We want to think 2nd - about “what” it is, that the Scriptures foresaw. And then 3rd – We want to think about who is blessed with believing Abraham?

1st of all – Let us ask the question – How is it that the Scriptures can “foresee” something?”

“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.’ John Gill says, “The scripture here, by a “prosopopeia”, is represented as foreseeing an event that would come to pass, and accordingly spoke of it before hand, and designs God the author of the Scripture; and so the Syriac version renders it, “foreseeing that God foreknew, etc.” and means either the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of the Gentiles; or God the Father who justifies the uncircumcision through faith, according to his own provision and predetermination of it, before the world was; for he was in Christ, reconciling the world, His Elect among the Gentiles, from all eternity; when he resolved not to impute their sins to them, but to His Son, who engaged to be their surety: or rather the Son of God, since He was the preacher of this to Abraham; who lay in the bosom of the Father, and was not only acquainted with all his purposes and determinations, but entered into a covenant with Him, for and on behalf of the people, the chosen ones, among the Gentiles as well as Jews; and undertook to bring in a righteousness for them, by which being received by faith they should evidentially, manifestly, in the court of their own consciences, be justified: wherefore the wisdom of God, the eternal Logos, having such a certain foresight, both as God and as Mediator, concerned in the covenant of grace for His people.” This is a lot for you to take in, I know, and so let us slow down a little and ask first – What is a prosopopeia?

A prosopopeia, says Benjamin Keach in his *Types and Metaphors of the Bible*, is “when anything (which is not a person) is metaphorically introduced or proposed as a person: or when the properties of a man are attributed to other things, for things, for likeness and agreement’s sake.” So what is taking place in this particular verse that we are studying is that the Scripture is being introduced or proposed to us as a living person; “The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand...” If we say that it should read “God foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith”, we somewhat undercut what Paul is trying to convey. Paul is not trying to say that the 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity all saw together that they would justify the Gentiles by faith; although that is true in accordance with their taking counsel together in eternity past in the Covenant of Redemption, they did so. That was where their eternal purposes were mutually agreed upon concerning all Elect persons and all things in relation to them. But rather the focus here is upon Christ and the Scripture being thought of; as together being one. So the verse could very legitimately be read, “Christ foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ Christ and the Scripture are one and meant to be seen that way; as one.

For confirmation of this we need to turn over to Hebrews chapter 4, verse 8. “For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.” “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” “For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased

from his works as God did from His.” “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” You can see here that the writer of Hebrews, which I believe was the Apostle Paul, is saying that you must enter in to the rest which the Lord Jesus has prepared for all of God’s people. And the one who enters this rest by faith in Jesus Christ, has himself ceased from his own works as God did from His. These verse are saying that it is disobedience to trust in your own works to merit salvation and favor in God’s sight. And the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword to be able to discern the thoughts and intents of a person’s heart in this regard. The way it is worded, you would think that the written Scriptures were being spoken of when it says, “For the word of God is living”. Yet it is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ’s discernment which pierces even to the division of soul and spirit; He who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing is hidden from His sight.

Let us understand that the Scripture is that which has been given by Christ Himself, and they represent Him perfectly as God, and as the Son of God; as the One through whom all things were made, and the Word who became flesh and became the only Mediator between God and men. We need to look into this a little more, so turn over to John 5, verse 38. “But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.” “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” “But you are not willing to come to Me, that you may have life.” You can see here that Christ and the Scriptures are integrally linked because “they are that which testify of Him.” Open up God’s Word at almost any place, and in some way, what is being related pertains ultimately to Him. Whether it is the accounts of the Patriarchs receiving promises from Him personally in Theophanic form or whether it is the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament law which typified His ultimate once-for-all sacrifice, or whether it is the prophecies concerning Him which are strewn throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, they speak of Him. These people whom Jesus was speaking to had read the Scriptures many times because they thought that if they had them, they had eternal life. But the eyes of their hearts were not opened to see the truth, that the Scriptures are fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ. They were not willing to think of Jesus as being the fulfillment of the Scriptures and so they remained blind and willfully obstinate to the idea that they needed to be saved from their sins by faith in Jesus Christ.

Turn to John 12, verse 42 – “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” “Then Jesus cried out and said, ‘He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.’ “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.” “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” Notice here that if anyone heard Jesus’ words in that day, and did not believe, Christ did not judge him at that time, for His purpose was not to judge at that time, but to save. But the person who rejected Him and did not receive His words had one who judges them; the Scriptures, or the word which He spoke. That would judge him in the last day. That is; that Jesus and His word are so integrally linked that He could have the word judge those who were disobedient on that Day of Judgment, even though it is obvious from other Scriptures that He will be the Judge on that Day.

This is how the Scriptures could foresee that God would justify the Gentiles by faith. It is because Christ is the author of the Scriptures. Look also with me at 1 Peter 1, verse 10. "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, without doing any violence to His being fully God as much as the Son and the Father. But it was the Spirit of Christ in these prophets that had them write down the Scriptures which revealed so many things about our Lord which they longed to look into. Therefore, it is also Christ, who in giving the Scriptures, enabled them to have a real life in the very words which were written down, so that people would see that word of His as the living written representation of Christ Himself. "The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6: 63) In other words, Christ's words, whether they are spoken or written in the Scriptures perfectly represent Him.

2nd – We want to ask – "What" is it that the Scriptures foresaw?

The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith because they preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." Turn with me over to Genesis Chapter 12, verse 1 – "Now the Lord had said to Abram; 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.'" "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing." "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." Now let us remember that Abraham was a Gentile at the time of this experience when the Lord came and spoke to Abraham and said to him, "Get out of your country to a land that I will show you." And, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." The gospel was preached to Him here was that he would trust in what God would do for him. He was to believe that God would give him descendants even though his wife Sarai was barren. God was giving to him these precious promises of what He would do for Him in bringing to him and his descendants the spiritual blessings which would come through the future Seed, our Lord Jesus Christ. This was confirmed to him, as a Gentile, a bit later in his experience in Genesis 15, verses 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 for righteousness." This is where Abram was first declared righteous by the Scriptures. Now Abraham was called of God earlier when He left Ur of the Chaldeans. But there is no mention of being justified by faith there, even though in Hebrews 11: 8 it says that "he obeyed when he was called to go out". This was related to his repentance from false worship, and it was indeed done by grace through faith. But this passage in Genesis 15 is where it is first mentioned by the Scriptures that He being justified in God's sight; when he believed God, that God would give him a child when he knew that he and Sarai could not produce one, and through a descendant of that child, he would be become a blessing to all nations. There was nothing related to works-righteousness in either his call or in his justification; it was by faith alone. The Scriptures foresaw this; that the Spirit of Christ through the Scripture writer Moses wanted this experience of what transpired between the Lord God and Abram written down through Moses at a later time, so that all of God's Elect Gentiles would see that it was by faith alone that they could

be justified. This foresight on the part of the Scriptures relates to all the Elect Gentiles who would come to Christ by faith in the promises of God found in both Old Testament and New.

And then 3rd - We want to ask - Who is blessed with believing Abraham?

And the answer is very simple – It is those who are of faith; these are blessed with faithful Abraham. Turn over to Romans 4, verse 13-16 – “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” “For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.” “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.” You see that the Scriptures foresaw everything that was necessary for the salvation of all of God’s Elect; both Jew and Gentile. What was needed was Christ the promised Seed, and for Him to fulfill the law perfectly on our behalf. Then the promise is sure to all who believe.