

Children of Abraham.

Galatians 3:6-10

OT reading Genesis 12: 1-7

NT reading Hebrews 11:8-19

Read first Galatians 1-10

Last week we covered verses 1-5 where Paul has begun to shift his focus away from the False teachers and focusing on the believers in Galatia themselves. Having turned from the gospel of salvation by faith alone, they were being convinced by the Judaizers that circumcision and law keeping was required. Paul was quite disappointed in them calling them foolish. How could they who have begun in the spirit now be made perfect in the flesh. If you remember last week in these verse he lays down his argument for justification through Christ alone, by faith alone and not of any actions, or works that a person could do.

Today, we will pick back up at verse 6 where Paul uses Abraham as his argument of being justified by faith alone. Paul knew exactly what he was doing, he was turning the false teachers argument back against them. They were making a claim to being children of Abraham, and only through being a child of Abraham does the spiritual blessings come. So therefore, you must become a Jew, to become a son of Abraham. Paul says....nope! You have completely missed the point!

He jumps right in, he doesn't set up an elaborate long complicated debate All he does, is quote scripture. In verse 6 he says: just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Paul is quoting Genesis lets turn to chapter 15. (read to verse 7)

Here we see God's promise to Abraham that he will have a son, and an heir from his own body. Despite Abraham and his wife being past child bearing age, he did not doubt God. Abraham believed God, Abraham had faith in God that he would fulfill his promise and that he was the Sovereign and all powerful God who is able to complete his promise. Abraham had faith, he believed and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

God not only promised Abraham a child, an heir, he also promised him land, and that he would be a father of many nations. It is interesting that Abraham is a key figure in 3 different religions. Each one sees Abraham, and what makes them right with God differently. First, we have the Israelite's who are the physical nation of God's promise. The offspring of Isaac the promised heir. Then we have Muslims who regard Abraham as the ancestor of the Arabs through Ishmael and claim him as their father. Then we have Christianity, who regard Abraham as their spiritual Father through Christ. God said your name shall no longer be Abram, but Abraham for I will make you a father of many nations. We can see that this is true, he is the physical father of the Jews and the Muslims. But that isn't the only nations he is the father of, he is the father of a spiritual nation of faith.

God gave Abraham 3 promises. A land promise, a nation promise, and a seed promise. We need to understand these promises to get a full understanding of how the Jews saw their father Abraham.

We saw in the promises of God to Abraham in this mornings reading of Genesis 12. Also in chapter 13

starting in vs 14 says

And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are, northward, southward, eastward, and westward. For all the land which you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.

Later we see the fulfillment of God's promise that Abraham will be the father of a mighty nation. In Exodus it says that the descendants of Abraham's have grown into a mighty nation. Under Egyptian captivity they multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty and the land was filled with them, so much so that they were mightier and outnumbered the Egyptians.

We also know that God fulfilled the land promise in Joshua 21:43 it says the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which he had sworn to give to their fathers and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.

Then we have the seed promise. Genesis 22:18 says, In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice. God tells Abraham again in 26:4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven, I will give to your descendants all these lands, and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. And again in chapter 28:14 we see God's promises to Abraham, and his seed. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth, you shall spread abroad to the west and east, to the north and south and in you, and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

This seed that God promised, was Christ. Out of Abraham's seed will come the messiah, the savior of the world. That is what Paul is getting at here in Galatians, before there was a physical nation of Israel, before they were given the promised land, while Abraham was still Abram, the Chaldean Paul says he believed God and it was counted toward him for righteousness. That is the genius of Paul's argument here against these Judaizers false teachers. The very person they look to as their father and believes that makes them an heir to God's promise is the same that Paul points to and says in verse 7 of Galatians,

Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Abraham was declared righteous before circumcision, he was declared righteous while he was an uncircumcised Chaldean gentile! . That right there gives the Judaizers nothing to stand on, for the very person they are pointing to, the very nation they are claiming you must be a part of to gain favor before God, Paul shows that Abraham was justified by faith, before, and apart from being a Jew, while still a gentile. and it is those who are of faith, that are true son's of Abraham.

The Jews thought they were something special, chosen of God, a Holy Nation. And on one level you could say that they were. God always provided for them despite their rebellion, God never forgot his promises to Abraham and fulfilled each and every one physically. But the Jews missed the biggest point, God's whole purpose was to create for himself a holy nation, out of every nation, tribe and tongue, and that nation is a nation of Faith.

The Gospel of Christ is the good news of God forgiving sins and granting eternal life. These are the very things that Abraham believed. Even though he did not know Jesus Christ by name, he trusted him nonetheless. He believed that God would forgive his sins, and grant him eternal life, he had Faith in

both atonement and the resurrection. We see that when God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Not only did he have faith that God would provide a lamb for the sacrifice, he also believed that God could resurrect his son from the dead. Before he even took Isaac up the mountain he told those with them, to Stay with the donkey, and that he and Isaac will go and worship and return back. Abraham had full intention to to sacrifice his son as God told him to, but he had faith that God would keep his promises to him and would either provide an alternative, or resurrect his son from death. So we see Abraham's faith, is in a God who keeps his promises, in a God who is sovereign even over death, and in a God who could forgive sin's and grant eternal life.

All those who are children of Abraham are those who are of the same faith as Abraham. It is through the promise seed, which is Christ. And Faith in him that we inherit the promised land. It is that faith which sets us apart to be a holy nation.

Paul does not stop there though. Even though his argument leaves nothing for his detractors to stand on. He proved them wrong showing that he is a true apostle, and has authority to teach given to him by God himself. He proved his acceptance by the other Apostles in Jerusalem proving that these men claiming to be from the Jerusalem Church were not there by authority of the Apostles in Jerusalem as they were claiming. And now, he completely destroys their argument claiming the promises to Abraham were actually spiritual in nature and prophetic of the messiah, and that the true meaning is that those of faith, not physical lineage are the heirs of God's promise. As if that was not enough, Paul goes on to prove that this was God's design and plan all a long.

Verse 8 says: “ 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. Abraham was promised that the messiah, the savior of the world would come from his lineage. In Abraham's seed, in Christ all the nations shall be blessed. Paul shows that there is more here then the physical aspect of the promise and he shows that salvation of the gentiles was God's plan from the beginning. God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the whole world.

So, we could bring this that Paul is saying here right back to last week in chapter 3. Here Paul shows, that salvation, and justification is of the spirit, by faith. He shows that even Abraham before any covenant, before any works, while a gentile himself believed in God, had faith in God and that belief and faith was accounted to him for righteousness. If you remember last week, he asks the Gentiles, “did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Did God who supplied the Spirit to you do it by law, or by faith? Paul has now shown that even Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith in God, and the promised messiah and not of any work that he had done.

So were does that leave us now today? Do you have faith, do you believe in Christ the promised seed of Abraham, and his atoning work on the cross? If so, then you are heirs to the promises given to Abraham. This is quite astounding if we stop a moment to think about it. Before creation, in eternity past God set forth this plan. His plan, included this man Abram, a nomad. Who he made a covenant with, that the messiah would come through his lineage, that the Son of God, would become flesh, be born of a virgin, to die and take the penalty of sin for his people, so that they may be in right standing with God the Father. And it is those who are of this faith, like Abraham's, that are heirs to all of God's promises. What an awesome God that we serve.