

Exegetical Notes for Galatians 3:6-9

KEY

- ATR** = Robertson, A.T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933.
- BAG** = Bauer Arndt and Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.
- Bruce** = F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle to the Galatians: a Commentary on the Greek Text. New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982.
- Calvin** = John Calvin. *Calvin's Commentaries: Galatians*.
- Carson, Moo, Morris** = D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*.
- Beale and Carson** = Beale and Carson, Eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.
- Cole** = R. Alan Cole. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Galatians*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988.
- Comfort** = Philip W. Comfort. *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*.
- Dunn** = James D. G. Dunn. *The Epistle to the Galatians: Black's New Testament Commentary*. London: Continuum, 1993.
- Erdman** = Charles R. Erdman. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.
- George** = Timothy George. *Galatians. Vol. 30. The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994.
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- Keener** = Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*.
- Lexham** = Douglas Mangum, and Derek R. Brown. *Galatians: Lexham Bible Guide*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012.
- Lightfoot** = J.B. Lightfoot. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations*. 4th ed. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament. London: Macmillan and Co., 1874.
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- MacArthur** = John MacArthur. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1987.
- Metzger** = Bruce M. Metzger. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*.
- Ryken** = Philip Graham Ryken. *Galatians: Reformed Expository Commentary*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005.
- Schaff** = Philip Schaff. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Vol. 13. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series*. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889.
- Schreiner** = Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Simeon** = Charles Simeon. *Horae Homileticae: Galatians-Ephesians. Vol. 17*. London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833.
- Spence-Jones** = H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed. *Galatians. The Pulpit Commentary*. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.
- Stott** = John Stott. *The Message of Galatians*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.
- Strauss** = Lehman Strauss. *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1957.
- Spurgeon** = C.H. Spurgeon. *Galatians: Spurgeon Commentary – Spurgeon Commentary Series*. (Elliot Ritzema, Ed.). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013.
- UBS** = Arichea, Daniel C., and Eugene Albert Nida. *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1976.
- Utey** = Robert James Utey. *Paul's First Letters: Galatians and I & II Thessalonians*. Vol. Volume 11. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997.
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Wright1 = Wright, N.T. *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Ephesians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Wright2 = Wright, Tom. *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004.

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Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs:

ποιμανατε (ποιμαινω = to tend, shepherd || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, Second Person Plural).

ἀποκαλυπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπω = to reveal, disclose || Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).

Nouns (gender before case):

πατηματων (παθημα = suffering || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).

Participles (gender before case):

μελλουσης (μελλω = to be about to || Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular Present Active).

Adjectives (gender before case):

(ἐπιεικης = gentle, kind || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).

Independent Personal Pronouns:

ἡμιν (ἐγω = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

ὑμιν (συ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

αὐτῷ (αὐτος = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).

Near Demonstrative Pronoun (gender before case):

(τουτο = this || Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

Far Demonstrative Pronoun (gender before case):

(οὗτος = those || Far Demonstrative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Singular).

Reflexive Pronouns (only masculine and feminine - the genitive is the lexical form as there is no nominative case):

(ἐμαυτου = myself || First Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

(σεαυτου = yourself || Second Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

(ἐαυτου = himself, herself, oneself || Third Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

Relative Pronouns:

(ὃς = who/that, of whom, to whom, whom [referring to people]; that/which, of which, to which, which [referring to things] – Translation depends on case || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Singular)

Sentence Structure

C. THE THESIS IS PROVEN BY OT SCRIPTURES (3:6-14)

compar $\frac{c}{l}$ 6 Καθώς Ἀβραάμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ,
καθώς Ἀβραάμ πιστεύω ὁ θεός
Just as Abraham believed - God

main verb καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην
καὶ λογίζομαι αὐτός εἰς δικαιοσύνη
and it was credited to him for righteous

main verb 7 γινώσκετε ἄρα
γινώσκω ἄρα
know then

substant ὅτι
ὅτι
that

pendent $\frac{no}{m}$ οἱ ἐκ πίστεως,
ὁ ἐκ πίστις
those out of faith

verb $\frac{\acute{o}\tau\ \acute{c}}{i\ l}$ οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ.
οὗτος υἱός εἰμί Ἀβραάμ
these sons they are Abraham

adv π_ε *causal* 8 προιδούσα δὲ ἡ γραφή
 προοράω δέ ὁ γραφή
 foreseeing and the Scripture

substant ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ
 ὅτι ἐκ πίστις δικαιώω ὁ
 that out / by of faith would justify the

ἔθνη ὁ θεός,
 ἔθνος ὁ θεός
 Gentiles – God

main verb προεηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ
 προεαγγελίζομαι ὁ Ἀβραάμ
 preached the gospel in advance – Abraham

recit ὅτι
 ὅτι
 that

Gen. 12:3 ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ
 ἐνευλογέω ἐν σύ
 will be blessed in you

πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ·
 πᾶς ὁ ἔθνος
 all the nations

concl 9 ὅστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν
ὅστε ὁ ἐκ πίστις εὐλογέω σὺν
so then those out /by faith are blessed with

τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.
ὁ πιστός Ἀβραάμ
the believing / faithful Abraham

compar

comparison; comparative

cl

clause

substant

substantival

nom

nominative

adv

adverbial

ptc

participle

recit

recitative ὅτι

concl

conclusion

6 ← Just as

Abraham BELIEVED GOD

**AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM
AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

7

So then, understand
that it is those of **faith**
who are sons of **Abraham**.

8

And the Scripture,
foreseeing
that **God** would **justify** the Gentiles
by **faith**,
preached the Gospel ahead of time
to **Abraham**:

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

9

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

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT (NA27):

6 Καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην· 7 γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ. 8 προῖδουσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός, προεηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη· 9 ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

6 Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 So then, understand that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” 9 So then, those of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Abraham

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's the passage saying about what it's talking about): was justified by faith alone and is the father of faith for all who believe

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Abraham was justified by faith alone and is the father of faith for all true believers

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: Justification by Faith Alone is as old as Father Abraham

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: "Father Abraham" (Parts 1-3)

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: The Faith of Abraham (3:6-9)

- A. Who Was Abraham? (6a)
- B. What Do Faith and Righteousness Have in Common? (6b)
- C. Will the Real Children of Abraham Please Stand? (7)
- D. What Does Justification Have to Do with the Gospel? (8)
- E. Case Closed (9)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Broad Context:

In the main section of Galatians, Paul used three major arguments from Scripture to demonstrate the doctrine of justification by faith. The first argument, which begins in v. 6 and ends with the twofold conclusion of v. 14, focuses on Abraham's faith and the blessing that comes through it over against the curse of the law that Christ has borne through his death on the cross. The second argument, 3:15–25, picks up on the theme of the law and discusses its foreordained purpose within the economy of redemptive history. The third major argument from Scripture (4:21–31) brings to a conclusion Paul's theological exposition by means of an allegory on two mothers, Hagar and Sarah, and their two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, who are taken as prototypes of those who appeal to the patrimony of Abraham today.

The three arguments Paul developed employ various exegetical devices and marshal diverse texts of Scripture ranging from Genesis to Habakkuk. However, they all share one theme in common: an appeal to the patriarch Abraham. Indeed, Paul's intricate argumentation in Gal 3 and 4 can be reduced to one simple proposition: those who believe in Jesus Christ share fully in the blessings God promised to Abraham. Each of these three sections poses a distinct but interrelated question: How was Abraham made right with God? (3:6–14). What is the true purpose of the law? (3:15–25). Who are the real heirs of the promise? (4:21–31).

Galatians 3:26–4:20 stands as a parenthesis in the elaboration of Paul's scriptural proofs. The parenthesis is further divided into subsections: 3:26–4:7, where Paul drew on early baptismal and confessional formulas to emphasize the unity of the church, and 4:8–20, in which the apostle again expressed in terms of personal intimacy his enduring concern for the Galatians. Throughout Gal 3 and 4 Paul greatly expanded the vocabulary of salvation he had already introduced in the letter. Not only gospel, faith, and justification but also the Spirit, redemption, promise, covenant, inheritance, sonship, and freedom would dominate his discussion of God's gracious initiative to rescue lost individuals from the prison of sin to the praise of his glory. [George, 215–216]

What we have is the Apostle Paul's theological exposition of OT passages dealing with salvation, Abraham, faith, and the Law (law/curse; faith/blessing). Verses 6-9 involve Gen. 15:6 and vv. 10-14 address Deut. 27:26; Hab. 2:4; Lev. 18:5; Deut. 21:23.

From the Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament:

In fact, it is quite possible to lay out the structure of this section's argument by using the OT citations as the logical markers. As the following chart indicates, these quotations appear to provide the grounds for five different theses. It is also important to note, however, that in all four cases the logical connection is not at all obvious:

Thesis 1 (Implied)

[God gives you the Spirit by the hearing of faith]

Grounds (v. 6)

Abraham believed God and [his faith] was reckoned to him for righteousness

Thesis 2 (vv. 7,9)

the ones who are of faith—these are the sons of Abraham . . .

the ones who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham

Grounds (v. 8)

all the Gentiles will be blessed in you.

Thesis 3 (v. 10a)

as many as are of works of the law are under a curse

Grounds (v. 10b)

cursed is everyone who does not remain in all the things written in the book of the law
in order to do them

[Assumed premise: all are disobedient (this point is disputed)]

Thesis 4 (v. 11a)

through the law no one is justified before God

Grounds (v. 11b)

the righteous one will live by faith

Stated premise (v. 12a)

the law is not of faith

Grounds for premise (v. 12b)

the one who does them will live by them

Thesis 5 (v. 13a)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us

Grounds (v. 13b)

cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree

Conclusion (v. 14)

in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles

so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith [p. 792]

While this section features Abraham (and OT Scripture) those topics are not exclusive to these verses. Note: 3:14 (a summation of vv. 6-9); 3:15-18 (contrasting Abraham with the Mosaic Covenant); 3:19-25 (purpose of the Law); 3:26-29 (Abraham's seed); 4:21-31 (Abraham's two children).

Literary Context

In 1:10–2:21 Paul argues that his gospel is authoritative and independent of the Jerusalem apostles. He received his gospel directly from God through a revelation of Jesus Christ. When

the Jerusalem apostles heard his gospel, they ratified it and declared it to be true. The Pauline gospel is so authoritative that Paul rebuked Peter on the basis of it, and 2:15–21 explains the substance of the gospel, which is that righteousness is based on the cross of Christ, not via keeping the OT law. Therefore, those who believe in Jesus Christ are justified, not those who attempt to observe the OT law.

In 3:1–5 Paul turns directly to the Galatians. He begins by emphasizing that their own experience validates his gospel. They received the Spirit through faith alone, not by their observance of the law. Further, the way they began the Christian life is the way they should continue in it—by the power of the Spirit and in faith. Now in 3:6–9 Paul begins to establish his case from the OT, defending his theology in this paragraph from Gen 15:6 and 12:3. In both instances Paul endeavors to prove that believers are children of Abraham. [Schreiner, 188]

According to Turtullian, Marcion omitted these verses as he didn't want to make a spiritual connection between the faith of NT believers and OT Abraham (Marc. 5:3).

The arguments that follow in 3:6 – 4:31 are all arguments from OT Scripture (see number of quotes). Scripture is the foundation. The argument from experience in vv. 1-5 is “pushed into the background” as the focus shifts to the redemptive/historical/theological/scriptural arguments that follow through chapter 4.

Notes on Abraham (see my sermon notes for 3:6a):

Introduction of Abraham - mentioned by name in 3:6-9,14,16,18, 4:22 (8x total).

Personal Names in Galatians (not counting name of Jesus):

James 3x

Paul 2x

Barnabas 3x

Peter 6x (Cephas 4x / Peter 2x)

John 1x

Titus 1x

Hagar 2x

Isaac 1x

David (0x); Moses (0x) – Abraham 8x

A. 64 vv. in NT

Why Abraham?

Who Was Abraham?

"Apart from Jesus Christ, Abraham is probably the most important person in the Bible. Abraham is a giant in Scripture—his stature is far greater than that of Moses, David, or Paul. These latter three were great men, and God used them in great ways, even giving portions of the Scripture to us through them. But each of them would have agreed without qualification that Abraham was his father in faith." [James M. Boice, Ordinary Men Called by God, 12]

The Supreme Immigrant

Genesis 17 - father of many nations (cf. Galatians)

Physically - He is the father of both the Jews and the Arabs

Jews through Isaac; Arabs through Ishmael

Spiritually - He is the father of all believers.

Abraham was 1st person called by God for a specific role in t/plan of redemption (JC). Cf. Matthew genealogy which begins w/Abraham (1:1). Luke 1:68,72-73 - promise to A.

A. was a pagan when called (Josh 24:2,3,14). Cf. Israel in Deut. 7:7-8.

A. first in Gen. 11:26 – ch. 12.

Called out of Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2-4). Years later while in Haran.

Genesis 12:1–4 1 NOW the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”4 So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

True saving faith demonstrates itself in action: Abraham acted out the reality of his faith.

A. faith was not perfect. God called him out of UR to go to Canaan. Ur was east of t/great Arabian desert. He had to travel far west to the border of the Med. Sea. 1000 mi. journey. He apparently was sidetracked for at t/end of Gen. 11 he's in Haran, a small town in Syria. He stayed there until his father died. Was 75 years old before he once again set out to Canaan. Second call in Gen. 12:1-2.

Ur was the principal center of worship of the Sumerian moon god Nanna and of his Babylonian equivalent Sin. The massive ziggurat of this deity, one of the best preserved in Iraq, stands about 21 m (about 70 ft) above the desert. The biblical name, Ur of the Chaldees, refers to the Chaldeans, who settled in the area about 900 BC. The Book of Genesis (see 11:27-32) describes Ur as the starting point of the migration westward to Palestine of the family of Abraham about 1900 BC.

Romans 4 and Abraham

Conclusion

Nothing in Abraham to commend him to God - God's sov. grace (cf. Jacob and Esau).

Why did God call Abraham? Why did He call you? Me?

External and internal call.

"There is nothing in us to commend us to God. And yet God loves us. Just as He sought Abraham, He seeks to draw us into fellowship with Himself." [Boice, 17]

Cf. Jesus calling his sheep . . .

Abraham's faith not perfect. God persisted in keeping him.

David was called and yet his life was marked by several failures (Psalm 51).

Jonah was called to Nineveh. He was to go east; instead he went west. Fled to Tarshish sailing from t/Jewish port of Joppa (1:3). God pursued him.

For the argument that Paul uses the OT texts in ways not supported by contemporary or later Judaism, an argument with a degree of truth, see Beale-Carson, 795, Betz, Galatians, 139–40, and Longenecker, Galatians, 110–12. Cf. also G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) who outlines Paul's use of Abraham as a key figure in the development of his theology.

Paul's argumentation using Abraham is likely polemical in nature; he's using the Judaizer's own arguments against them. Common among Jews of Paul's day to turn Abraham into a superman of faithfulness focusing on his "faithfulness" (works) rather than his faith in YHWH. Some even claimed that Abraham obeyed the Law before it was even given! (so Moo, 192).

Paul demonstrates that not only was Abraham justified by faith alone, he was also the spiritual father of the Gentiles.

Cf. inclusio of vv. 6-9 w/the end of the chapter. For a brief overview of 3:7-14, see Moo 195-96.

3:6 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην·

Καθὼς (καθὼς = as, just as || Coordinating Adverbial Conjunction).

Ἀβραὰμ –

ἐπίστευσεν (πίστευω || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 3S).

τῷ θεῷ, (- || Noun: Masculine Dative Singular).

καὶ ἐλογίσθη (λογίζομαι = to count, credit, impute || Verb: Aorist Passive Indicative, 3S).

αὐτῷ (αὐτός || (αὐτός = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).

εἰς δικαιοσύνην· (δικαιοσύνη || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Just as (Καθὼς)

What is the connection between vv. 6-9 and vv. 1-5? Conjunction καθὼς can make a strong or loose connection.

Schreiner:

Scholars dispute the significance of the connection between 3:1–5 and 3:6. Can we infer from the use of the conjunction that Paul argues that Abraham received the Spirit just as the Galatians have? Can we go further and infer from this that the term “righteousness” is not merely forensic but also includes the idea of transformation since those who are righteous have also received the Spirit?

Such conclusions overread the connection between 3:1–5 and 3:6. Elsewhere in Paul and the rest of the NT, the gift of the Spirit is considered to be a gift of the eschaton.² This is not to say, of course, that the Spirit was not active in the OT, but nowhere else in the OT or the NT do we find the claim that Abraham had the Spirit. It seems the connection between 3:1–5 and 3:6 is loose. The point of comparison is that both Abraham and the Galatians exercised faith.³ It also follows, then, that it is too ambitious to derive a definition of the term “righteousness” by the use of this conjunction. Finding a transformative meaning for righteousness must be established on other grounds. Indeed, I will argue shortly that the context supports a forensic meaning instead. [Schreiner, 190–191]

Perhaps the Judaizers appealed to Abraham, the father of circumcision, in the account that connects him to that sign of the Old Covenant: Genesis 17. Paul counters by going back 2 chapters (15) and some 14 years.

Abraham BELIEVED GOD (Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ)

Object of A's faith: God (not any God).

Notice that the text quoted does not say 'Abraham believed in God' but rather 'he believed God'. Faith in Abraham's case means something like trusting or taking God at his Word. [Witherington, 225–226]

A' promised land in 12:1 (he had none); promised an heir, a son (he had none & he was nearly 100 yrs old!). Note that he had faith, but that faith wasn't perfect (cf. Hagar).

Quotation from Gens 15:6 and follows the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew. See Beale-Carson page 793 for an extensive analysis of both quotations from the OT in this passage (here and in v. 8).

[Paul's] quotation is from Genesis 15:6. Let me remind you of the circumstances. Abraham was an old man and childless, but God had promised him a son, and indeed a seed or posterity. One day He took Abraham out of his tent, told him to look up at the sky and count the stars, and then said to him: "So shall your descendants be." Abraham believed God's promise, "and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

Consider carefully what happened. First, God made Abraham a promise. Indeed, the promise of descendants was 'placarded' before Abraham's eyes, much as the promise of forgiveness through Christ crucified was 'placarded' before the eyes of the Galatians. Secondly Abraham believed God. Despite the inherent improbability of the promise, from the human point of view, Abraham cast himself on the faithfulness of God. Thirdly, Abraham's faith was reckoned as righteousness. That is, he was himself accepted as righteous by faith. He was not justified because he had done anything to deserve it, or because he had been circumcised, or because he had kept the law (for neither circumcision nor the law had yet been given), but simply because he believed God. [Stott, 72-73]

Paul not only argues from OT Scripture – he argues from the chief OT Patriarch. This would be arguing from the Judaizer's own playbook. They likely appealed to Abraham and circumcision (Gen 17:9–14) as support for their arguments that circumcision was necessary for salvation.

Abraham is considered the father of the Jewish nation. An appeal to his experience would be an effective argument against the Judaizers, that is, those who insisted that conformance to the Law was necessary for salvation. [UBS Handbook, 58]

Paul appeals to the faith of Abraham, apart from works. The Jews of antiquity overlooked such a connection:

Indeed, Jewish tradition emphasized Abraham's obedience rather than his faith. For example, 1 Macc 2:52 says, "Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?" (NRSV).⁴ The sacrifice of Isaac recorded in Genesis 22 is merged in 1 Maccabees with Gen 15:6, with the result that Abraham's obedience rather than his faith is featured. The same emphasis on Abraham's faithfulness and obedience emerges in Sir 44:19–21:

Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations,
and no one has been found like him in glory.
He kept the law of the Most High,
and entered into a covenant with him;
he certified the covenant in his flesh,
and when he was tested he proved faithful.
Therefore the Lord assured him with an oath
that the nations would be blessed through his
offspring;
that he would make him as numerous as the dust
of the earth,
and exalt his offspring like the stars,
and give them an inheritance from sea to sea
and from the Euphrates to the ends of the
earth. (NRSV)

Sirach stresses that the blessing of Abraham was given to him because of his obedience. In doing so he reflects, in part, the message of the OT itself (Gen 22:17–18; 26:5). What is missing, however, is the crucial role that faith played in Abraham’s life.

Such a one-sided focus on Abraham’s obedience easily leads to a synergistic understanding that does not accord with the Pauline reading.⁵ We read in Jub. 23:10, “For Abraham was perfect in all of his actions with the Lord and was pleasing through righteousness all of the days of his life.”⁶ Abraham’s obedience, particularly in the sacrifice of Isaac, was a common theme in Jewish writings (Jub. 16:28; 17:15–18:19; 19:8; 24:11; 2 Bar. 57.1–2; m. ’Abot 5:3; Philo, Abraham 35 §§191–199; Josephus, Ant. 1.13.1–2 §§223–25; 1.13.4 §§233–36; Psuedo-Philo, Bib. Ant. 40.2; 4 Macc 14:20).

Paul does not discount Abraham’s obedience (cf. Rom 4). Nevertheless, in contrast to Jewish Second Temple literature, Paul puts the accent on Abraham’s faith.⁷ That faith was the fundamental reality of his life. Genesis 15:6 takes center stage in Paul’s understanding of Abraham. In Gen 15 Abraham wondered if his only heir would be his servant, Eliezer. The Lord promised him that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars of heaven. Abraham responded to that stunning promise by believing in what the Lord said. He did not perform any astonishing works for God but trusted in him. Genesis 15 concludes with the Lord himself, symbolized by fire, passing through the pieces of the animals alone, demonstrating that the covenant would be fulfilled by the Lord alone. Hence, the entirety of Gen 15 focuses on the work of the Lord and Abraham’s trust in what the Lord would do on his behalf. [Schreiner, 191–192]

Cf. Heb 11:8–10:

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

The word “faith” is common in the N.T. but all but absent in the Old (though the concept isn't):

The faith of Abraham

From the investigation just concluded it appears that the term 'Faith' can scarcely be said to occur at all in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is indeed a characteristic token of the difference between the two covenants, that under the Law the 'fear of the Lord' holds very much the same place as 'faith in God,' 'faith in Christ,' under the Gospel. Awe is the prominent idea in the earlier dispensation, trust in the later. At the same time, though the word itself is not found in the Old Testament, the idea is not absent; for indeed a trust in the Infinite and Unseen, subordinating thereto all interests that are finite and transitory, is the very essence of the higher spiritual life. [Lightfoot, 158–159] **See this section in Lightfoot for an extended treatment**

AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. (καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην·)

Consequence of Abraham's faith: righteousness was credited to him.

The word "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) here does not denote ethical transformation or the infusion of righteousness. Instead, it has a forensic meaning, as the context makes clear. Since Abraham was counted as righteous by believing, there is no idea here of an ethical transformation within him. [Schreiner, 192]

Paul goes back in time to salvation history – before Moses and before circumcision. Issue of continuity vs. discontinuity in OT / NT. Salvation history actually begins with Adam (cf. JC as the 2d Adam).

λογίζομαι = to count, credit, impute || Verb: Aorist Passive Indicative, 3S). Word is used numerous times in Rom. 4 (vv. 3-6, 8-11, 22-24).

λογίζομαι impf. ἐλογιζόμεν; 1 aor. ἐλογισάμην, pass. ἐλογίσθην; 1 fut. pass. λογισθήσομαι. Mid. dep. (Bl-D. §311; Rob. 816; 819) (Soph., Hdt.+; inscr., pap., LXX; En. 99, 2; Ep. Arist., Philo, Joseph., Test. 12 Patr.). A word esp. used by Paul; cf. GThomas, ET 17, '06, 211ff. 1. reckon, calculate—a. count, take into account τὶ someth. ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν love does not take evil into account 1 Cor 13:5 (cf. Zech 8:17). λ. τί τινι count someth. against someone, to punish him for it (Simplicius in Epict. p. 79, 15 τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐ τῷ πράττοντι λογίζονται; Test. Zeb. 9:7) μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα 2 Cor 5:19.—οὐ οὐ μὴ λογίσθεται κύριος ἁμαρτίαν Ro 4:8 (Ps 31:2). Pass. (Lev 17:4) μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθῆναι (on the form s. Mlt.-H. 217) 2 Ti 4:16.—But 'place to one's account' can also mean credit τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν a workman's wages are not credited to him as a favor (but as a claim) Ro 4:4. ᾧ ὁ θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην vs. 6. Pass. εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι αὐτοῖς τ. δικαιοσύνην vs. 11.—λ. τινί τι εἰς τι credit someth. to someone as someth. pass. ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην (after Gen 15:6; cf. Ps 105:31; 1 Macc 2:52) Ro 4:3, 5, 9, 22 (WDiezing, NovT 5, '62, 288-98 [rabbinic use of λογ.]); Gal 3:6; Js 2:23.—Cf. also Ro 4:10, 23f.—H-WHeidland, D. Anrechnung des Glaubens zur Gerechtigkeit '36; FWDanker, FWGingrich-Festschr., '72, 104.—λ. εἰς τινα put on someone's account, charge to someone (commercial t.t.: Dit., Or. 595, 15 τὰ ἕτερα ἀναλώματα ἑαυτοῖς ἐλογισάμεθα, ἵνα μὴ τὴν πόλιν βαρῶμεν; PFay. 21, 9) μὴ τις εἰς ἐμὲ λογίσθεται in order that no one may credit me 2 Cor 12:6. [BAG]

B. The Word Group in the NT. Paul uses *logízesthai* in all its nuances, though bending it to his own purposes. *logismós* occurs only twice in Paul. In the rest of the NT *logízesthai* is rare and weak, and *logismós* is never used at all.

1. Thought Taken Captive to Christ. Paul expresses the popular philosophical idea of thought in his use of *logismós*. In Rom. 2:15, where he stands on common ground with the diatribe, he has *logismós* in a positive sense for the thoughts which, on the basis of moral law, either accuse or excuse. Its function, however, is only judicial. In 2 Cor. 10:4, where the *logízesthai* of v. 2 is hostile to Paul and reflects an overestimation of reason, the situation is different. The *logismoí* are the thoughts of arrogant reason which can be subdued, not by reason's own weapons, but only by God's power as this is set forth at the cross (cf. Lk. 22:37 quoting Is. 53:12). The *logismoí* are not destroyed but reoriented to divine reality. Hence *logízesthai* can become a term for the judgment of faith in Rom. 3:28; Phil. 3:13. This is an obedient *logízesthai* in which we judge on the basis of the justifying efficacy of Christ's work (Rom. 3:28) or consider that present suffering is not to be compared with future glory (8:18). It is also unconditionally valid; there can be no objection when Paul thinks he is not inferior as an apostle (2 Cor. 11:5), or when he considers that he has not yet achieved perfection (Phil. 3:13), or when he calls us to consider that we are dead to sin and should act accordingly (Rom. 6:11), or even when the weak think things to be unclean (14:14).

2. *logízesthai* in the Apostle's Ministry. In the estimation of his work in 2 Cor. 3:5 Paul uses *logízesthai* in a broader sense than that of thought. As in 1 Cor. 13:11 and 2 Cor. 10:2, judgment involves commitment to action.

3. *logízesthai* in the Community's Life. In Phil. 4:8 Paul is not asking for mere reflection but for the practical consideration that leads to action. The same applies in 1 Cor. 13:5, where what is at issue in this very un-Greek combination is not reflecting on a principle but living according to the fact of salvation (Phil. 2:5ff.). When Christ is normative, *logízesthai* involves the power to live. It is not arbitrarily or aimlessly impelled to action, but unfolds in the community and comes to fulfilment in the edification of the community (1 Cor. 12 and 14).

4. *logízesthai* as God's Saving Act.

a. God imputes faith (cf. Jms. 2:23; Rom. 4:3ff.; Gal. 3:6). This imputing sets up a relation between salvation and faith and raises the question of merit. In Gen. 15:6 God reckons faith as righteousness because he is pleased to do so and not because it has intrinsic worth. Yet a tendency develops, especially among the rabbis, to remove the judgment from God's personal will and turn it into general recognition. The Greek term *logízesthai* fits in with this trend, for while it embraces the idea of imputation, it also carries with it the idea of recognition, which implies that faith is also a merit. Jms. 2:23 breaks with this trend by stressing, not the meritoriousness of faith, but its commitment to action. Paul makes an even more decisive break in Rom. 4:3ff., where he is plainly playing off the Hebraic *logízesthai* of the LXX against the Greek use, as may be seen by his contrasting of gift and debt (v. 4). The presupposition here is that the very question why faith should be reckoned for righteousness is a false one unless an answer is sought in the grace of the cross. The point of faith is that in it believers subject themselves to divine judgment and mercy and are ready to live by divine grace. On the basis of the cross righteousness is now the true reality, so that this imputation is no fiction. The reality of God's assessment thus serves as a norm of action. Believers become new creatures by God's *logízesthai*, which carries with it the imparting of the Spirit (Gal. 3:2ff.). Paul, then, restores

Gen. 15:6 to its true sense, corrects the trend supported by the Greek sense of *logízesthai*, and presents *dikaioún* and *logízesthai* as complementary terms whereby God the Judge is also God the Father.

b. The reverse side of the imputing of faith is the nonimputing of sin (Rom. 4:7–8; 2 Cor. 5:19; cf. Ps. 32:2). The intrusion of grace into divine justice offends the Greeks linguistically and the Jews materially. The cross is the point of union, for if God does not impute sin to us, it is because Christ has been made sin for us. *logízesthai* is here again a judgment of grace, but it is the only connecting point between Gen. 15:6 and Ps. 32:2, for the imputing of faith obviously embraces much more than the nonimputing of sin. Justin Dialogue 141.2–3 rather misses the point when he suggests that repentance is the ground of nonimputation (cf. faith in 1 Clem. 10.6). – H. W. HEIDLAND, IV, 284–92 [Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 536–537]

Cf. Paul’s explanation of the same text in Rom 4:2–5.

Faith is not righteousness (not a “work”). Faith unites us to righteousness because faith unites the believer to Christ who is their righteousness. Cf. Union with Christ.

Such a reading fits with Paul’s explanation of the same text in Rom 4:2–5. Abraham was counted as righteous before God even though he was ungodly.⁹ Nor does Paul suggest that Abraham’s faith was his righteousness, as if faith could be considered to be a kind of work that makes one righteous before God. Rather, faith is counted as righteousness because it unites believers to Christ, who is their righteousness.¹⁰ Such a conclusion fits with one of Paul’s major themes in Galatians, i.e., that the Galatians’ righteousness derives from the cross of Christ. [Schreiner, 192]

Justification by faith alone and imputation.

N.B. George's commentary on this verse is excellent and reproduced in full:

3:6 The patriarch Abraham, who is mentioned nineteen times in Paul’s letters, is the pivotal figure in all of Paul’s arguments from Scripture in Galatians. But why Abraham? It has been suggested that Paul was exercising theological one-upmanship in his appeal to the father of the Jewish people. In other words, if his opponents claimed the authority of Moses, the giver of the law, he would do them one better by going even further back to Abraham.¹⁹ It is much more likely, however, that Paul developed his unique understanding of Abraham’s role in the history of salvation over against the appeal to Abraham in the theology of his opponents. Thus Paul’s main purpose was not so much to oppose Abraham to Moses as it was to set the Abraham of “faith alone” over against the Abraham of rabbinic exegesis who was blessed by God because of his meritorious deeds.²⁰

In the postexilic period the Pentateuchal patriarchs became the focus of extensive study and speculation. In a time of national conflict and identity crisis, the Jewish people sought an answer to the question, What does it mean to be in covenant with the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”? Abraham, of course, was not only the father of the Jewish nation, but he also was the original source of blessing for the Jewish people. In the Jewish literature of this period Abraham is invariably depicted as the “hero of faith” whose fidelity and obedience merited the favor of God and brought divine blessing on him and his posterity. Abraham is extolled as the “friend of God,” a man of hospitality, virtue, and conviction.

Two incidents in Abraham’s life were singled out as illustrations of his faithful obedience and worthiness before God. The first event is referred to in a lyrical passage from the apocryphal book called Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), where Abraham is praised as one of the great heroes of Israel’s past:

Great Abraham was the father of many nations;
no one has ever been found to equal him in fame.
He kept the law of the Most High;
he entered into covenant with him,
setting upon his body the mark of the covenant;
and, when he was tested, he proved faithful.
Therefore, the Lord swore an oath to him,
that nations should find blessing through his descendants,
that his family should be countless as the dust of the earth
and be raised as high as the stars,
and that their possession should reach from sea to sea,
from the Great River to the ends of the earth. (Sir 44:19–21, NEB)

The “mark of the covenant” that was set upon Abraham’s body is an explicit reference to Abraham’s acceptance of circumcision as recorded in Gen 17:4–14. This was doubtless a critical text for Paul’s opponents, for it suggested that circumcision was an indispensable sign of the covenant. If Gentile converts wanted to receive the full blessing of the people of God, they had to submit themselves to the God-ordained sign of his covenant as Father Abraham had done long ago. The text from Sirach also declares that Abraham had “kept the law of the Most High.” Of course, Abraham lived before the actual giving of the Mosaic law, but it was believed that he had fulfilled it proleptically through his exemplary obedience and faithfulness before the Lord.²¹

Abraham’s anticipatory obedience of the law was further illustrated by the ten trials or tests that proved Abraham’s trustworthiness, the ten trials corresponding to the Ten Commandments, which would be broken by the children of Israel.²² In rabbinic writings the last of the ten trials was always the “*Aqēdā* Isaac,” the “binding” and sacrifice of Abraham’s beloved son as recorded in Gen 22:1–19. These two things, Abraham’s obedience to the law and his sacrifice of Isaac, were brought together in the story of Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus, who organized an army of liberation to wage guerilla war against the Gentile invaders of Israel. First Maccabees 2 describes how these “freedom fighters” swept through the land, pulling down pagan altars and forcibly circumcising all the uncircumcised boys found within the frontiers of Israel. Thus they “saved the law from the Gentiles and their kings and broke the power of the tyrant.” On his deathbed Mattathias gathered his sons about him, exhorting them to be zealous for the law and give their lives for the covenant of their fathers. He reviewed the catalog of Israel’s heroes whom God blessed because of their obedience to the law: Joshua kept the law and became a judge in Israel; Elijah was zealous for the law and was taken up to heaven; Daniel was an observant Jew in a pagan culture and was rescued from the lions’ jaws. At the head of the list, of course, stands Abraham: “Did not Abraham prove steadfast under trial, and so gain credit as a righteous man?” (1 Macc 2:45–64). Here again is the standard portrayal of Abraham—the valiant warrior of faith who received the reward of righteousness because of his obedience and steadfastness under testing, even to the limits of sacrificing his own son.

No doubt Paul was well aware of this traditional portrait of Abraham. Very likely it had been cast in his teeth by his Judaizing opponents. Paul did not ignore their appeal to Abraham, but he shifted the point of departure to an earlier event in Abraham’s life. Nowhere did Paul refer explicitly to Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac, nor in Galatians did he cite the covenant of circumcision mentioned in Gen 17.²³ For Paul the critical verse was Gen 15:6: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” This quotation is introduced by the correlative conjunction *kathōs*, “just as,” which connects the faith of Abraham to the experience of the Galatians that Paul had just reviewed. He was saying, in effect, that just as the Galatians had trusted God’s Word, which they heard through Paul’s preaching, so also Abraham believed what God said and was counted righteous, just like the Galatians, through the “hearing of faith,” not by the doing of deeds.

How did Paul understand Abraham’s faith? In Rom 4:3 he again quoted this same text from Genesis and described more fully how faith became the instrument of Abraham’s justification. Thus the best commentary on Gal 3 is Rom 4. Looking at both passages in the total context of Paul’s theology, we can learn three important principles about faith from the example of Abraham.²⁴

1. *Faith excludes boasting.* The theme of boasting is a major motif in Paul’s writings, not only in Galatians and Romans but also in the Corinthian correspondence and Philippians as well.²⁵ To boast is to glory, to take credit for, to claim the right of self-determination, to brag about one’s autonomy and self-sufficiency. While few people are so brazen as to claim outright, “I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my ship” (Thomas Henley), this thought lies just beneath the surface in every unregenerate heart. But the faith by which Abraham was justified

stands in absolute contradiction to every kind of self-glorification. Just prior to quoting Gen 15:6 in Rom 4, Paul made this very point. If indeed Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had reason to boast. Yet this is precisely what Abraham could not do because God called him, as Paul would show later in Gal 3, four hundred thirty years before the law was given, even twenty-nine years, according to the reckoning of the rabbis, before the sacrifice of Isaac. Thus, contrary to the traditional interpretation, Paul did not present Abraham as a paragon of virtue or a model of religious activism. Rather, it happened this way: God spoke, Abraham heard and believed, and on the basis of mere faith (*sola fide*) he received God's justifying verdict.

2. *Faith transcends reason.* In his exegesis of this verse, Martin Luther introduced a second antithesis: not only faith versus works but also faith versus reason. "To attribute glory to God is to believe in him, to regard him as truthful, wise, righteous, merciful, and almighty, in short, to acknowledge him as the Author and Donor of every good. Reason does not do this, but faith does.... Faith slaughters reason and kills the beast that the whole world and all the creatures cannot kill."²⁶ Such language can easily be misunderstood if we take it as a blanket condemnation of logical thinking or rational discourse. Both Paul and Luther made good use of their God-given ability to think clearly and argue cogently by means of human reasoning. But Luther was right to oppose faith to reason where the latter is understood as an autonomous principle of doing theology apart from the special revelation of God in his Word.

Abraham's faith was not based on his independent inquiry into the structure of reality nor his construal of various arguments for or against the existence of God. Abraham's listening to God and finding God in the right was thus "contrary to all self-assessment and the verdict of human probability."²⁷ In Rom 4 Paul gave the example of Abraham's trust that God would fulfill his promise to give him descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens or the sands along the seashore even when he and Sarah were well past the normal age of childbearing. When reason would have counseled doubt and despair, Abraham "was fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised" (Rom 4:21). The sacrifice of Isaac must be interpreted along these same lines. Abraham was willing to slay his son of promise at God's command, believing that, if necessary, God could raise him back to life in order to fulfill his word. This is the kind of faith Jesus spoke of when he announced that, contrary to every canon of reason, God was able to raise up sons to Abraham by the power of his word from inanimate objects such as lifeless stones. Thus Luther invites us to enter with Abraham into "the darkness of faith," saying to reason, "You keep quiet. Do not judge; but listen to the Word of God, and believe it."²⁸

3. *Faith issues in obedience.* By emphasizing so strongly the unilateral action of God in justifying sinners by faith alone apart from works, did not Paul undercut the basis of Christian morality and leave himself open to the charge of antinomianism? Clearly he faced just such an objection in his own day as he himself indicated: "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!" (Rom 6:1–2). In Gal 5 and 6 he would spell out the dimensions of the Spirit-led life and encourage his readers to "test their own actions, serve one another in love, and fulfill the law of Christ" (6:4; 5:13).

It is in this context that we must place the presumed contradiction between Paul's doctrine of justification by faith and James's statements about justification by works (Jas 2:14–26). As is well known, Luther criticized James as "a right strawy epistle" that was hardly worthy to be included in the canon since it contradicted Paul in ascribing justification to works.²⁹ Calvin, on the other hand, held that James was not opposing works to true faith but rather to a false conception of faith. Calvin contended that James's intention was not to show the source or manner of one's attainment of righteousness but simply to stress a single point, that true faith is confirmed by good works.

When the Sophists set James against Paul, they were deceived by the double meaning of the term 'justification.' When Paul says that we are justified by faith, he means precisely that we have won a verdict of righteousness in the sight of God. James has quite another intention, but the man who professes himself to be faithful should demonstrate the truth of his fidelity by works. James did not mean to teach us where the confidence of our salvation should rest—which is the very point on which Paul does insist. So let us avoid the false reasoning which has trapped the Sophists, by taking word of the double meaning: to Paul, the word denotes our free imputation of righteousness before the judgment seat of God, to James, the demonstration of righteousness from its effects, in the sight of men.³⁰

If Luther understood better than anyone since Paul himself the radical character of justification by faith alone, Calvin had a better grasp of how this vital doctrine related to the overall structure of Pauline thought and New Testament theology. We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is not alone. E. Käsemann has captured well the meaning of this dictum for Paul's overall understanding of faith: "Faith is constituted by the fact that with the preaching of the gospel the Lord who is the basis of the gospel comes upon the scene and seizes

dominion over us.... Faith is living out of the word which bears witness to his lordship, nothing more and nothing less.”³¹ [George, 216–223]

¹⁹This, for example, is the suggestion of J. Stott (*Only One Way: The Message of Galatians* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1968], 72). Paul does not mention Moses by name in Galatians, although he is referred to by inference in 3:19–20. For other Pauline references to Moses see especially Rom 5:13–14 and 2 Cor 3:6–18. On the place of Moses in Paul’s covenant theology, see P. Démann, “Moïse et la loi dans la pensée de saint Paul,” in *Moïse, l’homme de l’alliance*, ed. H. Cazelles (Paris: Desclé, 1955), 189–242.

²⁰On this theme see the excursus and literature cited in Betz, *Galatians*, 139–40, and Longenecker, *Galatians*, 110–12. On Paul’s use of Abraham as a key figure in the development of his theology see G. W. Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), and the excellent summary article by N. L. Calvert on “Abraham” in *DPL*, 1–9.

²¹Cf. Jubilees 23:10: “For Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life.”

²²The following dialogue between Moses and God is reported by Rabbi Abin as an example of the merit of Abraham’s faithfulness: “But Moses pleaded: ‘Lord of the Universe! Why art thou angry with Israel?’ ‘Because they have broken the Decalogue,’ He replied. ‘Well, they possess a source from which they can make repayment,’ he urged. ‘What is the source?’ He asked. Moses replied: ‘Remember that Thou didst prove Abraham with ten trials, and so let those ten [trials of Abraham] serve as compensation for these ten [broken commandments]’” (*Exod Rab* 44.4).

²³In a suggestive article, however, M. Wilcox has pointed to several possible allusions of the sacrifice of Isaac in Paul’s writings including the word for “cross” or “tree” (ξύλον) in Gal 3:13 (“‘Upon the Tree’—Deut 21:22–23 in the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 [1977]: 85–99). This word can also mean “wood,” which was used in Midrashic interpretations to refer to the wood of the burnt offering that Abraham loaded onto Isaac for their excursion to Mount Moriah. Tertullian spells out the significance of this act for Christian typology: “Isaac, when led by his father as a victim, and himself bearing his own ‘wood’ (*lignum*) was even at that period pointing to Christ’s death; conceded, as he was, as a victim by the Father; carrying, as he did, the ‘wood’ of his passion” (*Adversus Iudaeos* 10.6). Wilcox also finds a Pauline reference to Isaac in Rom 8:32, where God is described as the one “who did not spare his own son, but handed him over for the sake of us all.”

²⁴In interpreting Gal 3 by means of Rom 4, I presuppose the essential coherence of Paul’s thought while allowing for the occasional and contextual character of both Galatians and Romans. Important differences exist in the way Paul treated the Abraham story in these two epistles, but his interpretations are complementary rather than contradictory. J. C. Beker has argued that Paul’s polemical attack against the law in Galatians reflects the contingency and particularity of his defense of the gospel against the Judaizers (*Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980], 99). Romans, on the other hand, is more irenic and positive in its treatment of circumcision and the law because it was written as a dialogue with converted Jews rather than as an apologia for Gentile Christians. While Beker’s analysis is helpful in accounting for the different tone and nuances of the two letters, he goes too far in claiming that “Romans 4 allows for the continuity of salvation-history, whereas Galatians 3 focuses on its discontinuity.” In neither Romans nor Galatians did Paul ever lose sight of the Jews’ and Gentiles’ special place in God’s salvific economy. H. Hübner proposed a developmental scheme of Paul’s thought that bifurcates Galatians and Romans in an even more extreme manner (*Law in Paul’s Thought* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984], 51–57). He sees great inconsistency in Paul’s treatment of the law in these two letters and attributes this disjunction to the apostle’s fundamental rethinking of the relationship of Gentile Christianity to its Jewish counterpart. Galatians was written rather late in Paul’s apostolic career even if, as we have argued, it may have been the first of his extant letters. By the time he wrote Galatians, he had behind him many years of missionary preaching, the synod on the Gentile mission at Jerusalem, and the confrontation with Peter at Antioch. It is inconceivable that he would not yet have given thought to the “inconsistencies” in his attack on the law on the one hand and his appeal for the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christianity on the other. Galatians reflects a mature, if passionate, theology that is anything but half-baked.

²⁵See R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribners, 1955); E. Käsemann, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 64. Cf. Gal 6:13–14; Rom 2:23; 3:21–31; 4:1–6; 1 Cor 1:29–31; 2 Cor 10:7–18; 11:16–30; Phil 3:3–9.

²⁶*LW* 26.227–28. On the various ways Luther used the word “reason” (*ratio, Vernunft*). See the excellent study of B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). See also H. Oberman, ed., *Luther: Sol, Ratio, Erudito, Aristoteles* (Bonn: Bovier, 1971).

²⁷G. Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 176.

²⁸*LW* 26.228. In his excoriation of unbridled reason, Luther sometimes praises faith in a way that seems inappropriate as when he calls it “the creator of the deity, not in the substance of God but in us.” Early in his reforming career Luther had broken with the mystical doctrine that within every human soul there remained a spark of divinity. His language about “faith creating deity” represents an awkward attempt to read an evangelical meaning into a pre-Reformation conceptual framework. See T. George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 62–73.

²⁹*LW* 35.362. For Zwingly, Calvin and the Anabaptists on James, see T. George, “‘A Right Strawy Epistle’: Reformation Perspectives on James,” *RevExp* 83 (1986): 369–82.

³⁰*CNTC* 3.285. Echoes of Luther and Calvin can be heard in recent scholarly discussion of the James-Paul issue. After surveying this literature P. H. Davids has concluded that there is “no real conflict between James and Paul on the issue of works.... The two authors used their terms in different ways because they addressed different issues.” Concerning the use both James and Paul made of Gen 15:6, he notes how the example of Abraham functioned differently for the two biblical writers. For Paul the critical issue was the fact that Abraham was declared righteous before the rite of circumcision was instituted; for James the critical issue

was to show that the faith of Abraham was not mere orthodoxy but rather a trust leading to actual righteous deeds. “In other words, the two men come at the Abraham narrative from different directions, using definitions of faith with different emphases, and as a result argue for complementary rather than contradictory conclusions.” See P. H. Davids, “James and Paul,” *DPL*, 457–61.

³¹Käsemann, *Romans*, 108.

Paul's exegesis compared to that of his contemporaries:

The test-case scripture was also obvious—Gen 15:6, which Paul quotes more or less verbatim from the LXX, itself a close enough rendering of the Hebrew: Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. From Paul's side it was obvious since in the scriptures dealing with Abraham this was the only passage which spoke of Abraham's faith and of the righteousness attributed to him by God. But it was also obvious from the side of the more traditionalist Jewish view maintained by his opponents. For, as 1 Macc. 2:52 and James 2:23 show, it was customary in Jewish understanding of Abraham to link Gen. 15:6 with the other promise-to-Abraham passages in Genesis, particularly Gen. 22, climaxing as it does in 22:17–18. That is to say, it was customary to interpret ‘Abraham believed God’ in the light of Abraham's subsequent faithfulness under trial, so that it was by virtue of Abraham's faith, that is faithfulness, that ‘he was reckoned righteous’ and given the promise (Sir. 44:19–21; 1 Macc. 2:52; Jub. xvii.15–18; m. Abot v.3); to rephrase such language in terms of ‘meritorious achievement’ (Fung 135), however, is to transform it into a later issue (cf. Philo, Heres 94; Abr. 262; and Lightfoot's 159–63 still valuable comparison of Philo and Paul at this point). Not least of interest is the fact that the same formula, ‘it was reckoned to him for righteousness’, was used within the tradition of the faithful zealot, like Phinehas, and Simeon and Levi (Ps. 106:31; Jub. xxx.17–19), since Paul had previously counted himself as belonging to that tradition (see on 1:14). [Dunn, 161]

Philo interprets Abraham's faith as meritorious (Rer. Div. Her. 90–95; cf. Leg. All. 3.228). It is not certain that Jas. 2:23 does so (cf. B. Lindars, *NT Apologetic*, 225; J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity*, 96, 251). But Paul interprets the text so as to exclude merit, thus showing ‘a more careful regard for the context’ (B. Lindars, *NT Apologetic*, 225). Cf. Rom. 4:4f., where he says that the reckoning is not *κατὰ ὀφείλημα* but *κατὰ χάριν*. See H. W. Heidland, *TDNT IV*, 289–292, s.v. *λογίζομαι*. [Bruce, 153]

Paul will make much of the principle of historical precedent in direct contrast to the way the Abraham tradition was used elsewhere in early Judaism where Abraham is specifically said to be reckoned as righteous because he was found faithful (in offering Isaac; cf. 1 Macc. 2:52), or it is said that the promise to multiply his descendants and be a blessing to the nations was given because Abraham “kept the commandment of the most High and entered into covenant with Him; in his flesh He engraved him an ordinance, and in trial he was found faithful” (Sir. 44:19–21 cf. Jub. 23.10), or it is said ‘he was accounted a friend of God because he kept the commandments of God’ (CD 3:2). In short, two “emphases with regard to Abraham are constantly made in the literature of Judaism: (1) that Abraham was counted righteous because of his faithfulness under testing; and (2) that Abraham's faith spoken of in Gen. 15:6 must be coupled with his acceptance of circumcision as referred to in the covenant of Gen. 17:4–14 ... Furthermore, Abraham's faithfulness under testing is always presented as being meritorious both for Abraham himself and for his posterity.”⁸⁶ In short, there is no evidence that Paul got his particular interpretation of the Abraham material from this Jewish heritage, even if he shows

some indebtedness at the level of the general way he approaches Scripture. If anything, Paul's approach seems more faithful to the progression of the narrative than the anachronistic approaches found in Sirach and other early Jewish sources. Gen. 12 and 15 do both suggest that Abraham believed and trusted God and received promises and right-standing before and apart from any act of circumcision or offering of Isaac in sacrifice. For Paul, Abraham is an example of trust or faith in God and God's Word and its consequences, while in the other Jewish literature he is an example of faithfulness, even meritorious faithfulness to God (cf. even Philo Abr. 262–74 and Praem. 27). [Witherington, 224–225]

See my work on justification according to (κατα) works.

Paul places the emphasis upon the two words: Abraham believed. Faith in God constitutes the highest worship, the prime duty, the first obedience, and the foremost sacrifice. Without faith God forfeits His glory, wisdom, truth, and mercy in us. The first duty of man is to believe in God and to honor Him with his faith. Faith is truly the height of wisdom, the right kind of righteousness, the only real religion. This will give us an idea of the excellence of faith. To believe in God as Abraham did is to be right with God because faith honors God. Faith says to God: "I believe what you say." [Luther comment on 3.6]

3:7 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ.

γινώσκετε (γινώσκω || Verb: Present Active Indicative or Imperative, 2P).

ἄρα (ἄρα = therefore, so then, then, consequently || Conjunction: Logical Inferential).

ὅτι (ὅτι || Conjunction: Substantival).

οἱ (ὁ || Definite Article: Masculine Nominative Plural).

ἐκ πίστεως, (πίστις || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular).

οὗτοι (οὗτος = those || Far Demonstrative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Plural).

υἱοὶ (υἱός || Noun: Masculine Nominative Plural).

εἰσιν (εἶμι || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3P).

Ἀβραάμ. –

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

So then, understand that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So then, understand that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham. (γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ.)

γινώσκετε can be translated as an Indicative or Imperative. Cf. Longenecker's arguments in favor of the indicative on p. 114 (contra Moo, 196 and Calvin, 87).

Paul gives the answer to the question: “who are the children of Abraham?” This may have been how the Judaizers were framing the issue (“we are the true sons of Abraham”).

ἐκ πίστεως – use of the preposition = marked by, characterized by belief (“believers”). Not a reference to X's “faithfulness” as some (some NPP) contend.

Consequence.

It should also be noted that we have a powerful argument supporting the objective genitive reading “faith in Christ Jesus” here. The phrase “those of faith” (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) is found here and is repeated in 3:9 (“those of faith are blessed”). Furthermore, 3:8 says that “God [justifies] the Gentiles by faith” (ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός), which should either be translated that “God justifies the Gentiles by faith,” or “God justifies the Gentiles by faithfulness,” referring in this latter instance to the faithfulness of Christ. We have a major clue, however, that in every instance Paul refers to “faith” rather than “faithfulness.” That clue is the verb “believed” (ἐπίστευσεν) in 3:6. The verb leaves no doubt that the focus is on Abraham’s believing, not his faithfulness.

Moreover, as we noted above, Paul draws a conclusion from 3:6 in 3:7. Since Abraham was righteous by believing, it follows that “those of faith” (οἱ ἐκ πίστεως) are also Abraham’s children. But then the phrase “those of faith” must refer to those who believe in the same way Abraham believed. Paul’s argument would veer off course if he suddenly discussed “faithfulness.” No, the Galatians are Abraham’s sons if they believe as he did. Indeed, every use of “faith” (πίστις) in this context should be interpreted similarly. And it also suggests that the “faith in Christ” phrases in 2:16 and 2:20 should be interpreted the same way. Paul labors to emphasize that it is faith and faith alone that makes one a child of Abraham. [Schreiner, 193]

“sons” vs. “children” - biblical concept of inheritance is preserved through the “sonship” language. Cf. 4:5-7 and the concept of inheritance. As Abraham was an “heir” so are we – through faith.

It has always been true that “he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter” (Rom. 2:28–29). Physical circumcision was a matter of earthly, ceremonial identity with God’s people, whereas salvation is a matter of spiritual identity with Him; and if the earthly symbol had no genuine spiritual counterpart it was worthless. Even under the Old Covenant, circumcision itself carried no spiritual power.

Since the Fall, proud mankind has been naturally inclined to trust in himself, including his ability to please God by his own character and efforts. The Jews of Jesus’ day put great stock in circumcision and physical descent from Abraham. When Jesus told a group of them, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” they replied, “We are Abraham’s offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone” (John 8:31–33). Their answer was obviously absurd from a historical standpoint. The Jewish people had been in severe bondage many times throughout their history and were at that time under the iron rule of Rome. Even more foolish, however, was their thinking that mere physical descent from Abraham made them acceptable to God. In one of His most powerful denunciations of bankrupt Judaism, Jesus said: “I know that you are Abraham’s offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ... If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father” (John 8:37, 39–40, 44). [MacArthur, 74]

3:8 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφή ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός, προευηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη·

προϊδοῦσα δὲ (προοραω = to foresee || Participle: Feminine Nominative Singular Aorist Active).
ἡ γραφή (γραφή || Noun: Feminine Nominative Singular).
ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως (πίστις / πιστεως || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular).
δικαιοῖ (δικαιαω = to justify || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3S).
τὰ ἔθνη (ἔθνος || Neuter Accusative Plural).
ὁ θεός, –
προευηγγελίσατο (προευαγγελίζομαι = to proclaim good news in advance || Verb: Aorist Middle Indicative, 3S). Ηαραχ.
τῷ Ἀβραάμ (Ἀβραάμ || Noun: Masculine Dative Singular).
ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται (ἐνευλογεω = to bless || Verb: Future Passive Indicative, 3P).
ἐν σοὶ (συ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Singular).
πάντα (πάς, πασα, παν || Adjective: Neuter Nominative Plural).
τὰ ἔθνη· (ἔθνος || Neuter Nominative Plural).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, (προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφή ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῖ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός,)

The Scripture is personified. As the words of the Genesis passage are God's, it's clear that what Scripture says, God says (the two are equated). Paul's use of ἡ γραφή here may signal a reference to a particular text (as here, Gen. 15:6 – cf. Rom 4:3, 9:17, 10:11, 11:2; Gal 4:30).

God and the Scriptures are brought into such conjunction as to show that in point of directness of authority no distinction was made between them.” [BB Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 299]

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως (πίστις / πιστεως || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular).
δικαιοῖ (δικαιαω = to justify || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3S).
Justification by faith predicted.

preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: (προευηγγελίσσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ ὅτι)

“Pre-preached” (so Hays as cited by Witherington).

Note the connection of JBF to t/gospel. JBF doesn't exhaust all that is in t/gosp., but it is a necessary part of t/gosp.

One of the implications of this is that the doctrine of justification by faith is not some kind of theological novelty. In their fascination with Rome, some evangelical Christians now question the importance of Reformation theology. In particular, they wonder if it was really necessary to divide the church over the doctrine of justification. What does it matter, they wonder, whether I am saved by faith alone or by faith plus works? . . . To those who doubt the necessity of the Reformation doctrine of justification, we testify—with Paul as well as Abraham—that justification has always come only by faith. Justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone has always been the very heart of God's plan for the salvation of sinners. [Ryken, 102-03]

“[J]ustification remains the center, the beginning and the end of salvation history.” [Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 76]

Cf. Romans 1:1-3. What follows is the inclusion of the Gentiles into the promise. Cf. Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-6; Col. 1:25-27.

Now all the promises of God lead back to the first promise concerning Christ: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The faith of the fathers in the Old Testament era, and our faith in the New Testament are one and the same faith in Christ Jesus, although times and conditions may differ. Peter acknowledged this in the words: "Which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." (Acts 15: 10, 11.) And Paul writes: "And did all drink the spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (I Cor. 10 : 4.) And Christ Himself declared: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56.) The faith of the fathers was directed at the Christ who was to come, while ours rests in the Christ who has come. Time does not change the object of true faith, or the Holy Spirit. There has always been and always will be one mind, one impression, one faith concerning Christ among true believers whether they live in times past, now, or in times to come. We too believe in the Christ to come as the fathers did in the Old Testament, for we look for Christ to come again on the last day to judge the quick and the dead. [Luther comment on 3.7]

“ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.” (ένευλογηθήσονται έν σοι πάντα τὰ έθνη)

Quote from Genesis 12:3 follows the Septuagint with some slight differences – a merging of Gen 12:3 and 18:18 (so Schreiner):

Gen 12:3: “all peoples [tribes] on earth will be blessed through you” (ένευλογηθήσονται έν σοι πᾶσαι αί φυλαι τής γῆς)

Gen 18:18: “all nations will be blessed in him” (ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)

Waltke: Gen. 12:1-3 = “the thematic center of the Pentateuch” (cited in Moo, 199).

Looks past Abraham to his “seed” (cf. v. 17) – looking forward to JC (cf. 3:16).

Nothing in the words of Gen 12:3 forecasted that Gentiles would be blessed in Abraham by believing. Indeed, 12:1–5 emphasizes Abraham’s obedience in going to the Land of Promise. Nevertheless, Paul sees in 12:3 a promise of righteousness by faith, for he interprets it in light of the blessing given to Abraham in 15:6, and hence the Gentiles are not justified through doing but by believing. As we saw earlier, the key verb “he believed” (ἐπίστευσεν) in Gal 3:6 helps unpack the meaning of the phrase “by faith” (ἐκ πίστεως), suggesting that it means “faith” rather than “faithfulness.” Before Paul even cites Gen 12:3, he provides the interpretation of its meaning, so that we read the promise of Abraham in terms of justification by faith.

Nor should we think that the Pauline meaning contradicts Gen 12:1–5, even though it calls attention to Abraham’s obedience, for Abraham’s obedience, according to Paul, Hebrews (Heb 11:8), and James (Jas 2:14–26), flows from faith. The prophetic quality of Scripture is also featured in this verse, for it “foresaw” (προῖδοῦσα) and “proclaimed the good news beforehand” (προεσηγγερίσατο). Scripture is personified here, so that what Scripture says is what God himself says. [Schreiner, 194–195]

The gospel is the good news about God forgiving sins and granting eternal life. These are the very things Abraham believed. He did not know Jesus Christ by name, but he trusted him nonetheless. He believed that God would forgive his sins and grant him eternal life. He had faith, in other words, in both the atonement and resurrection. [Ryken, 101-02]

Cf. Ryken's summary of Genesis 22 on p. 102 and also cf. Gen. 22 / Heb. 11:8,17 ff.

Abraham himself is, in one sense, a Gentile like the Galatians. He is no Jew, though he became the ancestor of the Jews. He knew nothing of the law of Moses, nothing of the Temple, nothing of later food laws, nothing of circumcision itself, in early days at least. He was not ancestor of the Jews alone: all the desert peoples of the Negev, the “Southland,” traced their ancestry to him. Moreover, in God's gracious promise to him, Gentiles found special mention. [Cole, 85]

3:9 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.

ὥστε (ὥστε = then, so then || Conjunction: Logical Inferential).

οἱ (– || Definite Article: Masculine Nominative Plural).

ἐκ πίστεως (πίστις / πίστεως || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). Example of “Expansion of the Subject” / “Nouns and Pronouns” / “Ablative Case” in Brooks and Winbery, p. 165, where they render this clause “faithful Abraham.”

εὐλογοῦνται (εὐλογεω || Verb: Present Passive Indicative).

σὺν (with, together with)

τῷ πιστῷ (πιστος = faithful, believing || Adjective: Masculine Dative Singular).

Ἀβραάμ. (Ἀβραάμ || Noun: Masculine Dative Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So then, those of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. (ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ.)

τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ = adjective is to be translated “believing” not “faithful” in keeping with Paul's understanding of Gen. 15:6. The adjective may be translated with the substantive expressions “man of faith” as in the NIV and ESV, or “the believer” as in NASB and NET, or “who believed” as in NRSV and CEB.

The construction “the believing Abraham” (τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ) could refer to Abraham's faithfulness rather than his faith. But as we have already argued, such a reading is unlikely contextually, for the paragraph was introduced with Abraham's believing (ἐπίστευσεν), not his faithfulness (3:6). Therefore, what Paul emphasizes here is that the Galatians are blessed with (σύν) the believing Abraham. He does not say that they are blessed in or through Abraham. Indeed, the entire paragraph is repetitive intentionally, stressing that faith makes one a child of Abraham and allows one to receive the blessing of Abraham. [Schreiner, 195]

Verse 9 literally rendered is “so that (or therefore) those of faith are blessed with the faithful (or believing) Abraham.” Two ideas are expressed: (1) Abraham believed and was blessed; (2) all who believe are blessed as he was. The source of the blessing in each case is God himself. Here again, belief is not simply mental assent, but trust and confidence in God.

Abraham believed and was blessed must be expanded in some languages to read “Abraham trusted God, and God blessed him.” What Abraham did, however, may be best considered as cause in some languages and therefore “Because Abraham trusted God, God blessed him.” Similarly, the resulting clause so all who believe are blessed as he was may be rendered as “therefore God blesses all those who believe in him, just as he blessed Abraham.” [UBS Handbook, 60]

From the creation of Adam and Eve until the second coming of Christ, God has provided one and only one way of salvation for all peoples everywhere: the atoning death of his Son on the cross applied to all of the elect through the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul could claim that the faith of Abraham was the same as ours with this noticeable difference: he believed in the Christ who was to come, just as we trust in the One who has already come. [George, 226]

The patriarchs of old “participated in the same inheritance and hoped for a common salvation with us by the grace of the same Mediator.” [John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.10.1]

“Paul found Gentiles at the very heart of the Abrahamic covenant. In fact, as Rom 15:9-12 shows (citing Ps 18:49; 2 Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43; Ps 117:1; Isa 11:10), Paul found God's saving purpose toward Gentiles everywhere in the Old Testament.” [Longenecker, 115]

The adjective πιστῶ is to be taken in its active sense, as required by ἐπίστευσεν of v 6. The translation “believing” more exactly expresses its meaning (certainly not “trustworthy” as in Sir 44:20 or “faithful” as in KJV and NEB). But such a translation tends to subjugate the adjective to its noun and not highlight its alignment with οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. So some such translation as “Abraham who had faith” (RSV) or “Abraham, the man of faith” (JB, NIV) is better.”