

Title: Father Abraham: Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith (Part 2)

Text: Galatians 3:6b-9

Main Idea: Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe

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### [i] Scripture Reading and Prayer

**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.**

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### [ii] Last time . . .

*Father Abraham had many sons*

*Many sons had Father Abraham*

*I am one of them*

*And so are you*

*So let's just praise the Lord*

Archeological discovery: t/Judaizer version from t/1st c.:

*Father Abraham had many sons,*

*Many sons had Father Abraham;*

*And I am one of them, but you are not,*

*Because you don't keep YHWH's Law.*

### [iii] Who were the Judaizers?

Not a PRB from t/80s. No, they were a 1st c. heretical group consisting of Jews who claimed belief in J. but also demanded adherence to t/Law of M.

They wrongly believed that to truly be a son of A. (to be right B4 G.) you had to keep t/Law. – Circumcision –  
Their false teaching had infiltrated (corrupted) 1st c. Galatia.

Galatians 1:6–8 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

#### **[iv] The book of Galatians is a defense of the gospel**

Central to t/gospel is t/doctrine of justif. thru faith alone.

#### **[v] We saw Paul's first defense of justification by faith in verses 1-5 . . . .**

3:1–5 1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit

and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

We called that section ==>

***I. Paul's First Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Don't Forget the Change (3:1-5)***

That brings us to ==>

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

This is our 2d wk. in this section, vv. 6-9 →

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

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From time our 1st parents sinned & brot all of creation down w/them, G's plan for t/redemp. of fallen humanity has centered on faith in Him.

T/Incarnation / Death / Resurr. of X - was not t/basis for a new way of salv. from sin but t/consummation of a single way that is as old as A. himself: Faith in G.

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

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Last time we camped on t/1st ½ of v. 6 answering t/? →

***A. Who Was Abraham? (6a)***

We spent some time in Gen. 11-15 looking at t/life of A.

G. called Him out of paganism in a land known as Ur of t/Chald. 2100-2200 BC.

G. made an unconditional covt. w/A. He would be t/father of many peoples & thru him & his child of promise, Issac, would come t/ultimate blessing of Messiah, JC.

We move from t/person of A. to t/faith of A. (2d point) →

## **B. The Relationship Between Faith and Forgiveness (6b)**

What does belief have to do w/being made right B4 G.?

**1. We see both of those topics (faith and forgiveness) in v. 6:  
6 Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS  
CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**a. The Apostle Paul quotes his first O.T. passage in  
Galatians: Gen. 15:6 (LXX)**

### **(1) Context {summarize}**

4 . . . the word of the LORD came to [Abraham], saying, “This man [Eliezer] will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”<sup>5</sup> And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

### **(2) This is a verse that Paul also cites in Romans 4**

**(a) There in Romans he asks the question in v. 1 of chapter 4**

1 WHAT then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

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

IOW . . .

Paul then appeals to Gen. 15:6==>

3 For what does the Scripture say? “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

That’s the same thing we see here in Gal. 3 . . .

Focus w/me on verse 6. What’s t/1st thing we see? ==>

**2. Abraham believed God (three words)**

6a . . . **Abraham BELIEVED GOD . . .**

**a. Note what it doesn’t say**

Doesn’t say ‘A. believed IN G.’ - but ‘he believed G.’

**(1) That’s significant (he believed God)**

Lot’s of ppl. believe IN “God” as some sort of abstract deity of their own imagination.

“I believe in G. but I don’t believe in t/Bible”

“I believe in G. but I don’t believe in t/G. of t/Bible.”

While believing IN God is essential (assuming what you believe is true), BELIEVING HIM takes it to another level.

To believe G. is to bel. what He says; it’s to trust Him & to trust what He has said (Bible).

It's to believe in His promises. To take Him at His word.

Do you believe Him? // trust Him? // take Him at his Wrd?  
Do you trust Him in t/midst of seemingly impossible  
circumstances?

Abraham was promised a land in Gen. 12:1 (he had none).  
A. promised an heir, a son (he had none) – he was nearly 100  
yrs old! Yet ==>

**6a ... Abraham BELIEVED GOD ...**

**(2) Important: Faith is only as good as it's object**  
Your faith is worthless if it's based on some false G.  
or some false understanding of what He demands from us.

Some time ago I heard a celebrity being interviewed. That  
woman was asked, "Faith is very important to you, isn't it?"  
My ears perked up. She responded, "Oh yes, I definitely  
believe in a higher power."

What does that even mean? It can mean anything, so in t/end  
it means nothing.

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**(3) Matthew 16 ...**  
Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son  
of Man is?"  
What's t/word on t/street?

"Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still  
others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Today, might be “a good man” / “prophet” / “sage” / “H.P.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

There’s no more essential ? that this one . . .

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

**(4) It matters what you believe as well as the fact that you do believe**

Jesus who declared to t/Jews in John 8:24 ==>

“. . . unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

Lit. in t/Gk. text “unless you believe I AM (ἐγώ εἰμι) you will died in your sins.” YHWH, t/same G. who revealed Himself to Moses in Exo. 3 as a burning bush.

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A. believed G. He also rejoiced to see Jesus’ day (Jn. 8:56).

***a. Abraham believed God***

What was t/result of that belief?

**b. Second part of the verse: Imputation**

6b . . . AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**(1) What was the consequence of Abraham's faith?**

Righteousness was credited to him.

**(2) Word “Credited” (λογίζομαι) can be translated “charged” or “imputed”**

It's to credit or charge something to someone else.

### **(3) Doctrine of Imputation**

Sadly, many if not most Xns have no idea what that is.

“Without the righteousness of Christ you and I are finished. Without imputation there is no justification, and without justification by faith alone there is no gospel.” [R.C. Sproul, Romans, 509]

Our sin was imputed to JC - it was credited to him (he didn't deserve it // didn't sin // become a sinner).

For believers, t/elect, X's righteousness is credited to us (we don't deserve it, we don't become inherently right. by it).  
T/Perfect right. of X is charged to our prev. bankrupt acct.

#### **(a) Paul's letter to Philemon**

T/doctrine of imputation is portrayed so wonderfully in Paul's letter to Philemon.

Philemon was a slave owner converted under Paul's min.

While Paul is imprisoned in Rome, he providentially comes into contact w/a runaway slave named “Onesimus.” What a coincidence: Onesimus ran away from Philemon!

Paul leads Onesimus to saving faith in X & contrary to t/Law, he sends him back to Philemon w/this short letter in hand.

In that letter, Paul appeals to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, requesting that he receive him back as a brother



in X (hint there that he may also be appealing for t/outright release of Onesimus).

Then Paul adds these words ==>

Verse 18: But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

That's imputation! "If Onesimus has wronged you, or owes you anything, charge it to me."

Paul wasn't guilty; Onesimus was. This is an example of t/innocent paying t/price owed by t/guilty.

**(b) That's a picture of what Christ has done for the believer**

We have wronged G. We have betrayed His glory. Infinite debt of sin what we cannot pay.

Jesus, dies for us & as resurr. Lord, when we believe in Him, it's as if He says, "That debt of sin has been charged to Me."

G. sees we who have t/faith of Abraham clothed in t/right. of JC. We have t/infinite right. of X credited to us!

So, when a sinner comes to saving faith in X, His righteousness is imputed to that person who is thereby justified (declared righteous). Double Imputation {explain}

**[c] Are we righteous like Christ?**

Is that what salvation is all about? Being made righteous? No! We're still sinful. *Simul Iustus et Peccator*.

It's about being "declared" righteous. Imputation.

As a result we are united w/X in His death, burial, & resurr.  
2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

Dr. Tom Schreiner ==>

"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. 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. 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]

**(4) That word (λογίζομαι) is used numerous times in Romans chapter 4**

4:8 (Psa. 32:2) "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." (impute)

4:9 Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 10

How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

That's Paul's argument here in Galatians.

**(5) Faith itself is not righteousness (not a “work”)**

Faith unites us to righteousness because faith unites us to JC who is righteousness.

**(6) This was radical among the Jews of Paul's day**

Back in our introduction we talked about t/NPP. T/NP contends that t/1st c. Jews were not works-oriented, they were grace-oriented. Too much evidence to t/contrary.

As it related to A., t/Jewish consensus of t/day was that G. rewarded him, not because of his faith, but because of his faithfulness.

Big difference. Huge difference.

Jewish trad. emphasized A's obedience over that of his faith. Example, 1 Macc 2:52 says, “Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?”

Sacrifice of Isaac in Gen. 22 is merged w/Gen 15:6.

Result: A's obed./faithfulness emphasized over his faith.

Some Jews even taught that A. kept t/Law of Moses before it was given! Anchronistic fallacy.

**(7) “What about James 2:21?”**

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

That's a completely diff. context. James is addressing easy believism, that one can claim saving faith while living in sin. T/word "justified" in James 2:21 (δικαιόω) can also be transl. "vindicated." It's used that way in Matt. 11:19 where Jesus says, "... wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

Same thing. How do you recog. true wisdom? By what t/person claiming such wisdom does. How do you recog. true faith? By what t/person claiming saving faith does.

James 2:21 refers to A. offering up Isaac. That happened in Gen. 22, long after A. was justified by faith in chapt. 15.

Paul and James don't stand face-to-face opposing & contra. ea. other. They stand back-to-back facing diff. enemies of t/gospel. James: antinomianism; Paul: legalism.

So Paul counters that false, works-oriented understanding which emphasized what Abraham did and replaces it w/the true Gospel of grace centered on faith in God.

**6 . . . Abraham BELIEVED GOD AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

Justif. thru faith alone / imputation / righteousness of JC.  
That is our only hope.

"Without the righteousness of Christ you and I are finished."

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I recently read t/fascinating account of William Herschel, known to us as t/great 18th c. astronomer. He was also a gifted composer who grew up in Germany & joined t/military band.

When his nation went to war, he was one of those leading t/band. This was during t/Seven Years' War (1756-1763) when Germany and England were allied.

He was totally unprepared for t/horrors of war, & t/result was that before long he deserted his military unit & fled t/battle during an intense period of fighting.

He escaped to England, & began to pursue further training in both music and science. Thinking he was in t/clear, he did well in his new country. In fact he made various scientific discoveries that made him famous, & he gained great renown for his musical abilities. However, after Herschel came to the British Isles, another German came to live there—George who became King George III of England.

King George knew of Herschel's past & summoned him to appear before t/royal court. Herschel went w/great anxiety knowing that he faced death for desertion.

When he arrived at t/palace he was told to wait in a side-room until he was summoned. Finally, one of the King's servants came to Herschel & handed him a document. He opened it with fear, only to discover that it read "I George pardon you for your past offenses against our native land." George had pronounced t/verdict of no condemnation on William Herschel.

Ben Witherinton (to whom I am indebted for this illust.):  
“This story . . . illustrates Paul’s concept of justification—it is a matter of God pronouncing a verdict of no condemnation on the sinner, or, put positively, it is a matter of declaring that the person in question was justified, in right relationship to the Law and the Law giver, even though he was in fact far from perfect. With the legal judgment of no condemnation ... comes the implication that sins have been forgiven, and so one need no longer be estranged from God.” [Adapted from Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 195]

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

***B. The Relationship Between Faith and Forgiveness (6b)***

We are justified thru faith & X’s right. is imputed to us.

**C. Will the Real Children of Abraham Please Stand? (7)**

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

**1. Paul is answering the question: “who are those who can rightly claim to be children of Abraham?”**

This may have been how the Judaizers were framing t/issue (“we are true sons of Abraham”).

**a. Much like the Jews of Jesus' day**

**(1) Theirs was a religion of pride**

They prided themselves in t/Law / circumcision.

It was about who they were and what they have done.

Legacy of human religion . . .

**b. Paul answers the question: “Who are those who can rightly claim to be children of Abraham?”**

**(1) The answer?**

**7b . . . those of faith . . .**

“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 be given), but simply because he believed God.” [Stott, 72-73]

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

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Mentioned William Herschel a moment ago . . .

There's more to the story. He was declared by the King to be not guilty, but not only that, he was granted knighthood. From that point on he was one of King George's knights, honored t/o the UK as Sir William Herschel. He was not only justified, he also became a friend of the king. [Adapted from

Ryken, 104-05]

J. thru faith alone not only removes t/source of alienation (sin); it places us in a favored relationship w/G. by means of X's perfect R.

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Fourth point ==>

## **D. Justification and the Heart of the Gospel? (8)**

### **1. Three key words in verse 8: “justify” / “faith” / “gospel”**

**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.”**

#### **a. We have “justify” (justification) + “faith” + “gospel”**

##### **(1) We are justified (declared righteous)**

We're not made righteous. That's religion. That cannot save you because you can never be made righteous enough. Why? Because of your sin. In order to be justified B4 G. you must be perfectly right. JC alone can provide that.

##### **(2) Faith**

How is that gift received? By faith – belief – trust.

**8a And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith . . .**

Instrumental means of our salv. Faith is t/hand that rec. t/gift.

**6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS**

##### **(3) The Gospel (“good news” “JC slain for sinners”)**



**(a) Word used here: προεναγγελίζομαι**  
“To proclaim good news in advance.” Hapax.

**8a And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel ahead of time to Abraham: . . .**

T/O.T. Scripture looked forward to embracing t/whole world in proclaiming t/Gospel. What we see at t/end of t/v.==>

**8b “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”**

**(b) That’s a quote from Genesis 12:3**  
“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.” [MT]

Here in t/Grk text reflected in your NT ==>

**8b “ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”**

**3. Nations = ἔθνος (cf. “ethnic”) = nation, people, family groups, tribes**

Not merely t/Jews by ethnicity, but all believers by faith.

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

If you have Abraham as your spiritual father [quoting John Piper] “God reckons you to be righteous. If you are a child of

Abraham, all the things you have done wrong or ever will do wrong are forgiven because of Christ, and God does not hold your sins against you. I don't know of any cultural, intellectual, or technological changes over the past two thousand years that makes this inheritance any less needed or less desirable today than it was for the Galatians. This and this alone can take away the fear of meeting an infinitely holy God loaded with our sin. So the first thing we inherit from God as children of Abraham is justification, acquittal of all our sin. (And this is the basis for all the other blessings!)

[John Piper: "Those Who Have Faith Are the Sons of Abraham." Sermon dated March 20, 1983.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/those-who-have-faith-are-the-sons-of-abraham>]

#### **4. That brings us back to the immediate context of why Paul was writing this letter in the first place!**

1:7 "some who are disturbing you and distorting the gospel of Christ." Judaizers -

##### **a. Abraham wasn't a Jew -**

He was a Gentile like most of t/Galatian Xns.

He was no more a Jew than Adam or Noah. He knew nothing of T/Law, t/Temple, dietary regulations, or t/Sabbath.

He was justified (add sanctified) by faith.

##### **b. Point: The Gospel is for everyone without distinction**

It's what we see in t/very last book of t/Bible where we read how X was slain and has purchased for G. w/His blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Thru t/message of t/Cross, G. is calling His people out of their own “Ur of the Chaldeans” – ppl. consisting of atheists, agnostics, prostitutes, drug dealers, educated, ignorant, rich, poor, adulterers, homosexuals, self-righteous religionists & seemingly “good people” – & He transforms them into new creations w/new affections.

1 Cor. 6:9–11 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Last point ==>

### **E. Paul Closes His Case (9)**

**1. Paul closes his second argument for justification thru faith alone with these words ==>**

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

#### **a. Inclusio with verse 6**

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

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

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford Univ.:

“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]

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*Final Thoughts . . .*

### **1. Jesus Christ is the Gospel.**

From t/time that our first parents led t/entire creation into sin G has been at work bringing all of human history to t/point of t/Cross.

Predicted after t/fall of man into sin back in Gen. 3:15==>

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

6 vv. later we see t/first death of an innocent ==>

“. . . And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”

From Adam to Abraham to Moses and David – all of OT history points forward to a grand fulfillment in t/Cross of X.

## **2. To receive the Gospel is to Receive Christ.**

Phil. 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

Great doctrine of Uw/X that we spent sev. weeks on (2:20).

## **3. God is not Looking for Perfect People or Perfect Faith.**

Jesus said that He came to save sinners.

As for our faith, it's not perfect.

I quoted Calvin last week ==>

“Surely, while we teach that faith ought to be certain and assured, we cannot imagine any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety. On the other hand, we say that believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief.”

[Calvin, Institutes 3.2.17]

Can't get perfect faith from imperfect people.

It is t/perfect Object of faith that saves, JC.

## **4. Rest in God's grace.**

Preach grace to yourself. Rom. 8:1.

**5. Be sure you are a child of Abraham.**

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

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

*Abraham is the father of faith for all who believe.*

Are you a child of Abraham?