

Title: **Father Abraham (Part 1)**

Passage: **Galatians 3:6a**

Theme: **Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Abraham**

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Father Abraham

Father Abraham had many sons

Had many sons had Father Abraham

I am one of them

And so are you

So let's just praise the Lord

{song stuck in your head – pray for me}

[ii] Song does express truths from Scripture . . .

Jews – A. their father (t/o t/OT) – expressed by Jews of Jesus' day:

Matthew 3:9 **and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.**

Rich man suffering in Hades 2x uses title “Father Abraham”

Lk. 16:24/30

Stephen in Acts 7:2 . . . **The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,**

Romans 4:16 TAP connects Abraham to gen. faith calling him “the father of us all.”

[iii] Back to Galatians – 3:7

Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

. . . *for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.* (and He did!)

3:6-9 – Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Abraham

Chapter 2 TAP introduces us to t/doctrine of JBF (2:16)

Chapters 3-4 he defends it . . .

. . . here - by demonstrating that it is a doctrine that reaches back before t/Law // Israel as a nation – OT Patr. A.

[iv] Verses 1-5 marked Paul's first defense

Justification by Faith Alone: Don't Forget the Change

The Galatians' Spiritual Experience Was Received by Believing, not Doing

The gift of the Spirit is received by believing not doing.

[v] Six Rhetorical Questions

6 R?'s that Paul asks in rapid-fire succession –

* *Who has bewitched you?*

* *Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?*

* *Are you so foolish?*

** Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

** Did you suffer so many things in vain?*

** Does He provide you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?*

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

First “change” Paul addresses is that brought about by JC →

A. Has Christ Changed You? (3:1)

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

B. Has the Holy Spirit Changed You? (3:2-4)

1. The central question

All t/other ?'s asked in these 5 vv. hinge on and relate to this one.

Why Paul prefaces it with:

This is the only thing I want to learn from you:

What is that one thing?

. . . did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

a. “Receive” = Aorist Verb – Past action / Moment of Salvation

Entrance into t/faith // justification.

Central to Paul's theology (theology of the entire Bible): when a person comes to faith and is justified that individual receives the gift of the H.S.

. . . did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

By hearing and believing or by doing and obeying?

3:14 **in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

2. Fourth Question (v. 3)

. . . Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Perf. by t/Flesh – perhaps a veiled reference to circumcision – t/ultimate work of t/flesh so to speak.

3. Fifth Question: Did You Suffering For Nothing? (v. 4)

Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

C. Has the Father Changed You? (3:5)

1. Sixth Question: Does He Provide the Spirit by Your Doing or Believing?

This verse parallels v. 1.

Consequently, indicates that Paul is bringing his argument to an end. does He provide you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

a. God has done 2 things for them:

(1) He provides them with the Spirit

Idea of “abundantly,” “giving freely and liberally.”

Present tense – t/gift of t/Spirit is not merely in the past but in progress.

(2) work miracles among you

2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

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

A. Has Christ Changed You? (3:1)

B. Has the Holy Spirit Changed You? (3:2-4)

C. Has the Father Changed You? (3:5)

Next –

I. Paul's Second Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Abraham

A. Verse 6 begins with a Conjunction

Schoolhouse Rock

Conjunction junction, what's your function?

Hooking up words and phrases and clauses

Conjunction junction, how's that function?

I've got three favorite cars that get most of my job done
(“and,” “but” and “or”)

Conjunction junction, what's your function?

Hooking up two boxcars and making 'em run right

Milk and honey, bread and butter, peas and rice

Hey, that's nice

Just as (Καθὼς)

1. Conjunction καθὼς can make a strong or loose connection

a. What is the connection between vv. 1-5 and 6-9?

(1) It's a loose connection

Paul is not saying that A. received t/HS in t/same way as t/Gal Xns.
Gift of t/Spirit is a gift unique to t/NC under JC.

Not to say that the Spirit was not active in the OT, but it was diff.
Diff. dynamic at work.

OT HS “came upon people” (service). Selective and temporary.
NT, following X's resurr., believers are baptized by t/HS into t/body,
t/univ. CH; sealed unto t/day of redemption. Permanent.

Nowhere in OT or New do we have direct evidence that A. had the Spirit.

Was a future promise (Acts 2:33)

(2) Point?

Gift of righteousness is received solely by faith. Not t/law, good deeds, religiosity – by believing.

Abraham stands representative in Scripture as a prime example of faith. Taking G. at his word in trusting him.

B. Here in Verse 6 of Chapter 3 we have Abraham Mentioned for the first time in Galatians – but not the Last!

1. Abraham is mentioned by name 1x in each of these 4 verses (6-9)

Also – 14,16,18, 4:22 – (8x total)

2. Personal Names in Galatians

Paul 2x

James 3x

Barnabas 3x

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

Hagar (A's concubine) 2x

John - Titus - Isaac 1x

David (0x); Moses (0x)

Abraham 8x – more than any other in Gal.

C. Why Abraham?

What is A's signific. that Paul would refer back to him so many times?
Chief OT Patriarch.

As we'll see – A. is t/physical father of t/Jews & t/spiritual father of all believers.

Paul is arguing out of t/Judaizer's own playbook.

They likely appealed to Abraham and circumcision (Gen 17:9–14) as support for their arguments that t/Law was necessary for salvation.

Problem was: A. predated Moses & t/Law. A. was justified by faith alone, not by t/Law or works. Powerful Polemic . . .

C. Who Was Abraham? Spend t/rest of our time here

"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]

1. Genesis 11:27–32 – 2100 BC

27 Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot.

Abraham intro. as Abram (G. changes his name later from Abram “exalted father” to Abraham “father of many / nations”).

28 And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Ur of t/Chaldeans – City of Ur was in ancient Chaldea – t/land that would later be occupied by Babylon (Chaldeans).

Ruins of Ur are about 150 mi. NW of t/Persian Gulf in present-day Iraq.

Ur and pagan worship.

Ur was the principal center of worship of the Sumerian moon god. Ziggurat (a rectangular stepped tower) devoted to this deity about 70 ft above the desert.

29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.³⁰ And Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.

Why were they heading to Canaan? Acts 7:2-3 A. was in UR when God called him. I believe that v. 1 can be translated "had" . . .

Haran about 2/3 of t/way following t/route of t/Ephrates River (avoiding t/Arabian Desert).

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

This sets t/stage for the events of chapter 12 . . .

2. Genesis 12:1-5

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;

Verse 4 – A. was 75 years old.

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.”

Abraham - The Supreme Immigrant –

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Rest of chapter 12, 13 & 14:

A. travels to Egypt to find relief from a famine. Lies about his wife. Separates from Lot (Canaan / Sodom – where Lots gets into trouble more than once. A. rescues him for 1st time in chapter 14 where we aer also introduced to Melchizedek. (Hebrew – v. 13)

3. Genesis 15:1–6

1 AFTER these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” 2 And Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Since Thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.”

At this point Abraham is 75-80 y/o. He has a servant – Eliezer (adopt?)

4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.” 5 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.

Cuts a covenant – bilateral (unconditional covt.).

Some 20 years later that this promise is reiterated in ch. 17.

A. name is changed from Abram to Abraham.

Circm. is given as a sign of t/covt.

Sarai becomes Sarah “princess”

Isaac is named as t/child of promise.

Gen. 15:6 **Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.**

Galatians 3:6 **Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

4. Romans 4:1-12, 16 - 5:1

Hebrews 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.

39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

John 8:56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Galatians 4:28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

A. was 1st person called by God for a specific role in t/plan of redemption (JC). Cf. Matt genealogy which begins w/Abraham (1:1)

Matthew 1:1 THE book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

So much more we could say about A.

Offering up of Isaac (Gen. 22) – portrayal of X.

Concluding Thoughts - Application

1. Nothing in Abraham to commend him to God

- God's sov. grace (cf. Jacob and Esau).

God called A. out of paganism. (Josh 24:2-3).

ISW – nothing w/i us that commends us to God.

Not to say that we have no value – created in God's image and likeness. But it isn't like God looked at you and said, “you are so great I just have to draft you onto my team.”

2. Why did God call Abraham?

Why did He call you? Me?

Deuteronomy 7:7–8 7 “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

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]

John 10:3–4 3 “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.4 “When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

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

Offering of Isaac – Gen. 22 (James 2:21)

4. Saving faith doesn't have to be perfect to save

Nor do we . . .

A's faith stuttered from time to time.

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.

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

David was called and yet his life was marked by several failures culminating w/adultery and murder (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.

We have t/HS.

John 10:27–29 27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. 29 “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

Come Thou Fount

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood;
How His kindness yet pursues me
Mortal tongue can never tell,
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me
I cannot proclaim it well.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

5. Justification by Faith Alone is at the Heart of the Gospel