

Galatians

Lesson Six

Galatians 3: 6-10

Abraham's Gospel

Verse 3: 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

Abraham was born, lived, and died before the Law came into existence.

Yet he was saved.

And, he was spiritual.

If Abraham could do that before the Law existed, surely you and I could do that after the Law was fulfilled.

The reason why we can do this is because neither salvation nor spirituality is contingent upon KEEPING THE LAW but upon BELIEVING THE LORD.

Look at ***Romans 4: 1-5 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?***

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

3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

So, we find here in Chapter 3 of the book of Galatians and in Chapter 4 of the book of Romans that Paul is pointing out to the Gentile believers that whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament the means of salvation is the same: faith.

Faith is nothing more or less than believing God.

That's what Adam and Eve did not do and that is why they fell.

Because the fall of man came about because of unbelief, the restoration of man is dependent upon belief.

So, Abraham was not justified because he kept the Jewish Law.

*Remember that the Jewish Law did not even exist in his day.

Rather he was justified or declared righteous because he believed God.

So, believing God was never limited to the New Testament.

If all of this is true, and it is, then what was the purpose of continually making animal sacrifices to God in the Old Testament?

Let's look at ***Romans 10: 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

We've already said that the Old Testament rituals were not the real thing but only a shadow of the true redeeming atonement which would take place when Jesus Christ would come to shed His own blood for the remission of sins of the people.

By rehearsing that future event symbolically over and over, day after day in the tabernacle and the temple using sacrificial animals to represent the Lamb of God, the people actually saw demonstrated continually before their eyes the atoning death of their Savior.

With their eyes they "heard" over and over the Word of God, the message of grace, the Gospel of the coming Messiah.

*In the New Testament, after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, people were saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

*In the Old Testament, they were saved by grace through faith in the future work of Christ on the cross.

*But in both these instances, the means of salvation is the same, by grace through faith.

Therefore, Paul referred to Abraham as, "the father of faith."

Look at ***Romans 4: 3-4 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."***

4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

Now look at ***Romans 4: 16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,***

So once again, salvation is by grace through faith.

In the Old Testament hearing came through the ritualistic sacrifices.

Every time the people saw their sins placed upon the head of a scapegoat which was then cast out into the wilderness, they saw again the picture of the coming Messiah, the Lamb of God, which would take away the sin of the world.

Every time they watched as an animal was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled upon the altar of the temple, they could say to themselves: “That animal speaks of the Messiah Who will one day come to take my sin from me.”

“It will be placed upon Him and He will be killed, shedding His blood for the remission of my sin.”

“He will die not only physically but spiritually, so that I can be born again spiritually.”

Take note, that I said that the people of the Old Testament were saved; I didn’t say they were born again.

I purposely used the word “saved” to indicate they were justified; however, they were not born again.

Why?

Because there was no provision for the New Birth until after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were counted righteous, but they did not become righteous until their spirits were re-created, and the Holy Spirit came to live within them.

That event did not happen for anyone until after the day of Pentecost.

Although they were not born again until after the coming of the Messiah, the Old Testament saints were saved the same way you and I were saved, by grace through faith.

Look again at ***Galatians 3: 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?***



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So, Abraham didn't get saved by keeping the Law.

He didn't get saved by works.

He wasn't saved by observing Do's and Don'ts.

He wasn't even saved by circumcision.

Let's look at ***Romans 4: 8-11 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.***"

9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

10 How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.

11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,

So, Abraham was not saved by being circumcised, but rather circumcision was given as a sign that he was saved, separated from the world and joined to God.

It wasn't circumcision that saved Abraham, it was only a seal of the Covenant between him and God.

It was faith that made the Covenant a reality in Abraham's life.

So, what has replaced circumcision in the New Testament as a sign of our Covenant of our salvation.

Let's face it, circumcision in the Old Testament never did much of anything to serve as a sign that women partook of the same Covenant as men did but were not required to complete anything like circumcision for obvious reasons.

Rather we who are partakers of the New Covenant are baptized, both men and women, as a sign of our identification with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection.

The Sons of Abraham

Verse 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.



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Notice that they who are of faith, not works or the Law, these are the children of Abraham.

Remember in the book of Genesis, we are told that Abraham had two sons, one by his wife Sarah, and the other by her handmaid, Hagar.

Out of **Ishmael**, the offspring of **Abraham and Hagar**, there came the race known in our time as the **Arabs**.

From **Isaac**, the offspring of **Abraham and Sarah**, there came the **Hebrews**.

So, **Abraham** produced two sets of offspring: **the Arabs and the Jews**.

However, looking at it from a different perspective, **Abraham** also produced two other sets of offspring: **A natural race called the Jews, and a spiritual race called the seed of Christ, the Church today.**

We can learn a great deal about the spiritual race by taking a good look at the Jewish nation today.

Some people today, mistakenly hold up the Jews as an example of how God washes His hands of a people who are unfaithful to Him.

But that's not so.

God has never abandoned nor forsaken the Jewish people.

Despite everything the Jewish people have said and done, God still honors His Covenant with them.

People may break God's Covenant, but God never does.

One day that Covenant will be fulfilled in every detail, just as God has said through His servants.

In the meantime, God's Covenant is still in full effect.

That's why there is still a nation called Israel to this day, and why there will continue to be one.

What does that have to do with us under the New Covenant?

A great deal.

There is a book book called the *"Cambridge Ancient History."*

This book notes that it's amazing how you can trace the rise and fall of nations based on how they treated Israel.

The book provides numerous examples of how governments had fallen as a result of how they had treated the Jews.

The worst of which was the German's Third Reich which Hitler boasted would last for a thousand years.

As we know, it failed for obvious reasons.

No government or nation can long endure which sets out to oppose and annihilate the people of the Covenant.

Author Hilton Sutton often spoke about the Shah of Iran, calling attention to the fact that it was only two days after he turned his people against Israel that he was removed from his throne and his reign began to crumble.

People, God honors His Word.

That's why it's important how we, as a people and a government, treat the nation of Israel.

The True Israel

Look again at ***Verse 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.***

Notice in verse 7 that sons come into being through faith.

Then how do Children come into being?

What is the difference between the children of Abraham and the sons of Abraham?

Whether we realize it or not, these two phrases are not used interchangeably.

The children of Abraham are the physical Jews.

The sons of Abraham are those who put their faith in Christ.

Do you remember that in Jesus' day the Jews prided themselves on the fact that they were the "seed of Abraham?"



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But Jesus told them that God could raise up that kind of physical “seed” from the stones of the earth in ***Matthew 3: 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.***

The true seed of Abraham is spiritual.

Becoming a seed of Abraham does not depend upon a person’s nationality or race, but upon faith.

Just because a person is a Jew physically does mean he is one spiritually.

Let’s look at ***Romans 9: 1-8 I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—***

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”

8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

Notice in ***Verse 7, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”***



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What does that mean?

How many male offspring did Abraham produce?

Two: Ishmael and Isaac.

They were both the “seed of Abraham.”

Paul points out that just because both were Abraham’s seed it didn’t make them both sons of Abraham.

Only Isaac was referred to in the Bible as a son of Abraham, not Ismael.

Why?

Natural birth is not as important to God as spiritual birth.

This is important to note, legitimacy of a person’s birth is not what makes a person acceptable to God, rather, it is faith that makes them approved of the Lord.

Take the example of Esau and Jacob.

Both were legitimate sons of Isaac, twins born of the same mother Rebecca.

Yet even though Jacob was a cheat and a scoundrel, he received the blessing of God, whereas Esau, the firstborn and rightful heir, was rejected of God.

In some respects, Esau was a better man Jacob.

Why was he rejected, and his conniving brother accepted?

Let’s look at what Paul had to say about this in ***Romans 9: 9-13 For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”***

10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,

11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—

12 she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”

13 As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”



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In this passage it is made clear that God chose Jacob over Esau while they were still in the womb.

Before they were even born, before they had done anything either good or bad, the Lord accepted Jacob and rejected Esau.

Why?

The unbelief of Esau.

So, God made His choice based on His foreknowledge of their faith.

Because He knew that Jacob would believe Him in the future and Esau would not, God made His choice between them.

Not according to their actions in the natural realm, but in accordance with their faith.

Not of their works, good or bad, but because of their faith in God.

Jacob went on to become Israel.

He produced twelve sons born of two wives and two handmaids.

Yet all those sons were men of faith, so they became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

So, natural birth, whether legitimate or illegitimate is not the determining factor in a person's election by God.

It is their faith.

The genealogy of Jesus includes several Gentiles.

We have three of the four women mentioned in Matthew that were Gentiles, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba.

Rahab, a former prostitute, Ruth, a former pagan, Bathsheba, a former adulterer.

God knew what kind of man Jacob and these women would become, people of faith.

What does this mean?

So, even Jesus was not a "pure" Jew by birth.

He was a son of Abraham not because of His physical descent from Abraham but because He was born of the Holy Spirit of God.



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Look at it like this, God's election or choice before birth is not unfair; it's just based on foreknowledge.

A person's fate is not pre-determined or pre-destined so that he or she has no choice in the matter.

Want a little piece of revelation knowledge on this subject?

Take a close look at ***1 Peter 1: 1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,***

2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

So, election, salvation, is by grace based upon faith.

The First Jew

Verse 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

The last part of this verse is a reference to ***Genesis 12: 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

In this verse, we learn that God promised Abraham that because he believed Him, he would be blessed and that through him, all nations would be blessed.

All nations refers not only to the Gentiles, the non-Jews, but also to the Jews, because at the time that this verse was penned, the Jews did not exist.

Now we should look at the part of the verse that says, ***And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.***

How are we saved?



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Through faith.

You and me.

And again, how are the Jews saved?

The same way, through faith.

At the time God gave this promise to Abraham there were no Jews.

Everyone was a Gentile, including Abraham.

So, Abraham was not yet a physical Jew when he was justified.

Here is some homework for you, go back and really study Romans chapter 4 for the proof of what I just penned.

Verse 8, is the answer to the question that we didn't even know to ask until now is, how did Abraham know about Christ?

Because this verse tells us that God Himself preached the Gospel to Abraham.

What this passage tells me is that Abraham received the Gospel message while he was still a Gentile.

The KJV used the word heathen instead of Gentile.

In other words, Abraham received the Gospel while he was still a heathen.

His belief in that Word changed him from a heathen to a believer.

Abraham became the first Jew because of his faith.

The mark or sign of Abraham's faith was circumcision.

Even the Old Covenant, like the New Covenant, was established on faith, not works.

What proof do we have?

Let's look at **John 8: 56-59** *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."*

57 *So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"*

58 *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."*



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59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

What was the Gospel that was preached to Abraham that is referred to in verse 8?

What could it be other than **John 3: 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**

Or how about **Romans 10: 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

For a person to be saved he must hear the Good News.

The book of John tells me that Abraham had the Gospel preached to him by none other than Christ Himself.

How would you have liked to have been saved directly under the ministry of the most influential evangelist to ever walk the earth.

Why did the Jews in John 10 want to stone Jesus?

They were angry because Jesus claimed He was God, the all-Knowing One, the All-Sufficient One, the Ever Existent One, the Great I AM.

They didn't see who He really was.

They looked at the outward man, but they didn't perceive the Spirit that was within Him.

Blessed With Abraham.

Verses 9-10 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

Verse 9a So then, those who are of faith are blessed

Note that this does not say that “those which be of works are blessed” but “those who are faith.”



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Verse 9b along with Abraham

The King James Version includes the word “*believing*.”

In other words, ***along with “believing” Abraham.***

If you are a Christian and you are not being blessed along with believing Abraham, you may be wondering what’s wrong.

Why are others being blessed while I go through life just getting by.

Faith is a little like muscles.

We all have muscles, but some of us have much larger and more powerful muscles.

Why?

Those with strong muscles are usually those who continually use the ones they have.

In the same way, people are not blessed by having faith but by exercising it.

It’s not just hearing that matters, though we do have to hear it, it’s doing the Word that matters.

It’s the doing of faith that brings the blessing of Abraham.

What is the three-fold curse of the Law?

Poverty, sickness and death.

As believers, we are not subject to the curse of the Law because we have been redeemed from it.

What we need to remember about **Verse 10**, is that because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, we, which be of faith, are truly blessed with faithful Abraham.



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