

Abraham's Children

Galatians 3:7

“Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.”

The burden of the Epistle to the Galatians is the place of the law of God in salvation. Paul had stated again and again that if salvation depends even in the least bit upon our works, then the sacrifice of Christ becomes the most colossal mistake of eternity. If there were one man who could be saved by his own efforts, or works of the law, then the death of Christ was unnecessary, as seen in Galatians 2:21, "...if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

In light of this truth, Paul is amazed at the foolishness of these Galatians, who after having experienced deliverance from the curse of the law, would go back again under bondage. That is why he seems to be so concerned in Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?"

To illustrate his point, the apostle introduces Abraham. How was he saved? By believing what God said about a long promised, supernaturally born son. He believed the Gospel (Galatians 3:8). **The Gospel is the good news of the death and resurrection of this virgin-born Son of promise.** Abraham also believed God's Word concerning the miraculous birth of Isaac. When Isaac was full grown, God commanded Abraham to take this miraculously born son to a mountain to sacrifice him on an altar. **The story is in Genesis 22, and is one of the most complete pictures of the Gospel, of the death and resurrection of the virgin-born Son of, God.** Abraham obeys God, and takes his son Isaac, and there "potentially" put him to death. In God's eyes, Isaac was sacrificed, for God accepted the *motive* for the *act*. Abraham believed he would actually have to **kill his son**. For three days, Isaac was therefore potentially dead in the experience of Abraham.

This truth is seen in Hebrews 11:17a where we are told that, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." And the next part says, "... and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son."

Abraham actually offered up his son in the sight of God. It only means this: as far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was really dead. When Abraham started out on the journey early in the morning, he had no other idea than that God meant what He said, and that he must, after three days, put Isaac to death on Mount Mariah. **For three days he considered his son Isaac dead - potentially dead.** So Isaac becomes a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, for three days and three nights. Then follows the type of the resurrection, as seen in Genesis 22: 13, "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."

Isaac has been dead in the mind of Abraham for three days, and now all of a sudden he is returned to life. That is resurrection. Isaac had been considered dead for three days, but now God says, "Take the ram, and let Isaac live." That is resurrection. When we turn to Hebrews 11:17-19 we are told, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Abraham knew and believed all the time that God was going to do something miraculous. He knew God promised that Isaac would be the father of the covenant nation, but now he was to die. How then can God keep His promise? **There was only one way out!** In order to keep His promise; God would have to raise up Isaac from the dead. **That is all there is to it!** There was only one way for God to keep His Word under these circumstances, and that was to raise him up again; and after three days he was raised up from the dead in

type and figure, and the joy of resurrection was seen upon the mountain where the Son of God was to be slain.

Abraham believed in the death and the resurrection of his son. That is the Gospel; and undoubtedly that is what Paul referred to when he says, "that the gospel was before preached unto Abraham."

And today this Gospel is still the same. As Abraham was saved by believing what God said concerning a miraculously born son, his death and resurrection, so we must believe God's record of His Son of whom Isaac was the type. Abraham is the example of saving faith, and therefore is called the Father of the faithful, and believers are called the children of Abraham, as seen in Galatians 3:7, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Paul, again in verse 9, makes reference to Abraham, "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

We are not children of Abraham by natural birth, but by personal faith in the Word of God. Abraham's faith is our example, as seen in Romans 4:3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." And then he concludes in Romans 4:23-25, "Now it was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

This is exactly what John writes in 1 John 5:9-10, when he says that the Word of God is the only ground of salvation, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: (The witness of the Spirit is the witness of the Word of God. If you believe that, you have the Witness within yourself.) he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the *record* that God gave of his Son."

The witness of the Spirit is not some wonderful feeling, some wonderful sense of exhilaration. It is not voices from heaven, or visions, or sensations, dreams or emotions. The witness is God's Word, and when we believe it, we have the witness. This will result in joy and peace and may well be accompanied by great emotional responses or even happy dreams, but these are the *result* of believing the *testimony of the Spirit in the Word of God* - believing the record God has given of His Son!

What more can a believer ask than the promise of God? To ask for additional evidence is to insult God. To ask for additional evidence is an admission that God's Word is not enough. **Beloved, your feelings are subject to change, but God's Word never changes.** To depend upon emotions and feelings is a miserable experience. Even when I *feel* I am lost, I can still turn to the **Word of God** for my *assurance*. After asserting the fact that our salvation is wholly of faith, and illustrating it by the example of Abraham, Paul concludes his argument by one of the strongest statements in the entire epistle, as seen in Galatians 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Now, listen carefully. Can we be saved by the works of the law? Positively not! For "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Someone will say, "But after we are saved, then surely we can be kept by our works." **Absolutely not!** For it calls for *continued, unbroken, perfect obedience* in every single point. One slip and you are guilty. **Is there a saint who can say that he has ever lived one day without breaking God's law?** Have you ever lived one day without having an evil thought, speaking one hasty word, wasting one precious moment, one second in which you thought or spoke ill of a brother? One day in which you did not gossip or listen to gossip, one day in which you felt no bitterness or resentment toward your enemies? **One day in which not a single foolish thought entered your mind.** Remember, the Bible says in Proverbs 24:9, "The thought of foolishness is sin." Have you neglected to speak for Christ on just one occasion?

Then you are guilty, and if you are under the law, you are cursed the moment you fail!

Be honest now. Have you ever, since you were saved by grace, failed once, "to continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them?" **Then if you are under the law, you are under the curse!**

No wonder Paul says in Galatians 3:11-12, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."

Our only hope is in looking to Christ and His grace. It is: saved by grace - kept by grace - and taught by grace that: "...denying, ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2: 12). **And:** "... kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

Child of God, let me urge you to keep your faith in the Lord of glory, and to trust in the promises of His Word!