

Abraham 4 - The Children of Abraham

We have watched as Abraham has gone from strength to strength.

Ps 84:5-9 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.
6*Who* passing through the valley of Baca [**the valley of tears**] make it a well [**turn it into a refreshing oasis**]; the rain also filleth the pools.

7They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God.

8O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

9Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

As he answered God's call, learned to trust Him, severed his ties to the world, and demonstrated his devotion to Jesus Christ through his offering to Melchizedek. In Genesis 15, Abram reaches another milestone of faith in a seed promised through God's grace.

1. The Promised Seed

In Genesis 12, God had made a covenant with Abram, which we aptly call the Abrahamic Covenant.

Gen 12:2-3 I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

After going through some spiritual growth experiences, God affirmed, expanded, and formalized that covenant in Genesis 15:

Gen 15:1-6 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.

2And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?

3And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

What was missing in Genesis 12 was the Promised Seed. Abram was appropriately concerned about this because it was common to be revered for your family. There are two components here: a promised seed, and so many descendants that they would be as difficult to count as the stars of heaven.

In the New Testament, Paul explains the significance of this.

Gal 3:16-17 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Paul points out that when God told Abram he was going to have children as the stars of heaven it was going to be through an heir that was born to Abraham. It was not going to be through a servant in his house, which would have happened by default if he had not seed. Abram's faith in the one who God was to provide was then counted to him for righteousness. The faith that Abram had in God was not just a confidence in God's material provision and not just a confidence in God's spiritual provision. It was more than that. It was a confidence in the provision of the Savior, Jesus, the Promised Seed. This was then going to be fulfilled in two ways.

The first would be through his son Isaac and the children of the flesh, the Jews. We will see later on in Genesis how Abram reasonably expected that Isaac was the Savior seed.

The second way was through his great descendent, Jesus Christ, and the children of faith.

Gal 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Rom 9:4-8 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

5Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. **[Not everyone who was Jewish, or of Israel, were *true* Israel]**

Just as the Hebrews were in Isaac, *we* are the promised seed in Christ. That is, we are the children of God because Jesus is *the* promised seed and we are in Him.

Eph 1:3-4 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

4According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Now, those who are in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are joined together:

Eph 2:11-20 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are

called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
12That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,
and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
13But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of
Christ.

14For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of
partition *between us*;

15Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained in*
ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

16And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the
enmity thereby:

17And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints,
and of the household of God;

20And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being
the chief corner *stone*;

2. God's grace

The significance of God's blessing for Abram has another very important aspect. It is a covenant of grace. This is vitally important to understand about this covenant because it is the essence of the New Testament. Paul will refer to this to help the Jews and the Gentiles understand the new dispensation that was created in Christ: the Law had performed its work of bringing conviction for sin, but the Pharisees were clinging to it and even expanding it in the hope of using it to achieve righteousness. Jesus challenged their error of depending on the Law for salvation and introduced the next age.

John 1:15-17 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul contended with Jews who tried to bring an obedience to the Law as part of salvation when he wrote to the Galatians.

Today, false Christianity is characterized by that same dependence on performance of the Law doing good deeds and works for salvation.

The Covenant of Abraham supercedes the Law and eliminates any claim of salvation by the works of the Law. Listen to Paul's arguments:

- Salvation is not a function of works.

We were saved by faith and we are kept by faith.

Gal 3:1-5 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

4Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

5He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

- Any role of works by the law came later and could not disannul the message of salvation of faith.

Because the Galatians were being influenced by the Judaizers, those who sought to make salvation dependent on keeping the Jewish Law, Paul strikes at the very foundation of the Judaism they were pushing and strips away any possibility of Law for salvation. He goes back to the Abraham, the father of the Jews and the father of faith.

Gal 3:6-9,13-14 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

13Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

14That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Next, Paul used the Abrahamic Covenant to preach the absence of the Law for salvation.

Gal 3:17-19 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

That Covenant of Promise was given in the absence of the Law. The Law was given 430 years later through Moses and could not disannul that covenant. Paul is explicit when he says that the only purpose of the Law was to clarify what sin was until Jesus should come.

Paul points out that all this was done long before circumcision was even given to Abraham:

Rom 4:9-11 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

The Judaizers made a big deal out of Jewish circumcision as prescribed in the Law. The problem for the Judaizers, then, was that not only was Abraham counted righteous before any Mosaic law concerning circumcision, but even before it was given to Abraham at all.

- The formalization and confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant was a thorough demonstration of grace.

Gen 15:8-17 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. **[vs. 13-16 are a side note for our purposes]**

13And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is not theirs*, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is not yet full*.

17And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. **[Think of the burning bush that Moses stood before]**

This was the manner of making a covenant. A sacrifice was made and the halves of the sacrifice were placed against each other for the two parties of the covenant to walk through together. A covenant of this nature was conditional. If one party of the covenant failed then the other party was not obliged to fulfill the covenant. However, God turned this into an *unconditional* covenant. Abram prepared and protected the sacrifices. But, when it came time to pass between them, God passed through by Himself. He caused a deep sleep and an horror of darkness to come over Abram so that only God could pass through. This is the grace of God in action. God committed Himself to fulfill the promise of a Savior seed no matter what Abram did.

Today, you play no part in your salvation. God does it all. All you have to do is surrender yourself to God and He does the saving work.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Paul wrote to the Romans and amplified this. Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness

without any works.

Rom 4:1-5 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

3For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Today, you can receive the Promise of God that cannot lie.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

To receive His promise means to receive the One Who He promised, Jesus Christ. Jesus did all the work on the cross for our salvation, all we have to do is receive it. Don't make the mistake that the Law is nothing just because we are now saved by grace. By all means, quake before the Law. When you find yourself avoiding the Law because it is all just so impossible to live up to it, know that at the same time you are in danger, heading to an eternity of Hell. Don't assume that Hell is unreal just because your ability to live by the Law is unreal. The message here is not, you better do the works of the Law so you can escape Hell. The message is that God's grace should be so much more a precious refuge to flee to. It is then at that point that God will give you a new heart and the strength to live in that grace.

For those who are living in fear of failure before the Law, we know that our victory was won on the cross about 2000 years ago. All we have to do is walk in God's grace.

Eph 1:12-13 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Ps 84:5-9

1. The Promised Seed – Gen 12:2-3, 15:1-6, Gal 3:16-17,26-29, Rom 9:4-8, Eph 1:3-4, 2:11-20
2. God's grace – John 1:15-17, Gal 3:1-9,13-14,17-19, Rom 4:9-11 , Gen 15:8-17, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 4:1-5, Titus 1:2, Eph 1:12-13