

## Abraham's Children

Study #7 Galatians 3:6-9

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### Being part of a loving and caring family is a great blessing.

It's good when **parents** raise their children **responsibly** with **love** and **caring discipline**.

It's good when **brothers and sisters** look after one another, even though they might not always agree on everything.

It's important for families to **stand by one another** in *tough times*,

to **create great memories** together in the *good times*,

and to **encourage one another** to put **God's ways** above their own ways *at all times*.

In our imperfect and fallen world, **not everybody** has a **family** like that.

Homes are sometimes **not** places of **refuge** from a troubled world.

**No home is perfect.** Those who live there are **sinners**, even those sinners who are **saved by God's grace**.

### Some families are able to know their backgrounds.

They have **stories passed down** about **where they came from**, and about their **parent's past**.

Probably, if we knew everything, everybody has **ancestors** they'd **rather not tell others about**.

And if we researched enough, all our families **probably** have some very **honorable ancestors**.

Some years ago we ordered a **book about our family**. It was just called "*Burridge*".

It told about the **origin of the name**, and traced our **ancestors** back to their homelands.

In the appendix it listed the names and addresses of the **known Burridges** at the time.

### But there's a family we're *all* a part of if you're one of God's children.

It's a **real family with a perfect Father**, and admittedly very *imperfect brothers and sisters*.

Though we aren't always what we should be, we're supposed to be **learning to love one another** anyway.

Our spiritual family has a **wonderful heritage** we all can **call our own**.

It **includes all** those in **all times** who are **redeemed** by God's grace and **united** in Christ.

We're the **spiritual descendants** of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We have **spiritual ancestors** who include: Joshua, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, Luke, and Peter.

The **Apostle Paul** many times refers to **Abraham** as our *Father in the Faith*.

In **Romans 4**, he wrote about **our rich heritage** as the *Children of Abraham*.

### In Galatians 3 Paul explained some of the rich benefits we have as Abraham's spiritual family.

But there were **problems in Galatia** at that time. There were some **popular heretics**.

Very **persuasive** and **attractive** people were saying things that **appealed** to imperfect hearts.

They **sounded very Godly** but their spirituality **wasn't** based on **God's pure truth**.

Paul was **correcting an infectious error** that was troubling the Galatian churches.

There were *Judaizers* who **didn't understand** that the **Jewish laws** were **fulfilled in Christ**.

They thought the **Gentile believers** needed to be **circumcised** and **live as Jews**.

They **believed the Jews** were *special* just because they were **physical descendants** of Abraham.

It was **as if God** was **obligated** to **love and bless** them because of their *physical heritage*.

But they put their **hopes of innocence** in **human efforts**; either **their own**, or their **forefathers**.

But that's **never** what **God's word** said.

Paul's message to the **Judaizers** was that they were **just plain wrong**.

What's more, they were living *nothing like Abraham*.

**Genesis 15:6** explains the **reason behind God's blessing of Abraham**.

"**he believed the LORD**, and he **counted** it to him as **righteousness**."

### Paul used the biblical story of Abraham to make his point in Galatians 3:6-9.

6. just as **Abraham** "**believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness**"?

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

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**."

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

His point is that Abraham was **pronounced righteous** because of his **faith** in God's promises.

Simply put, he was **moved by God's Grace to trust in what God said.**

Notice that it says **Abraham believed God, not just that he believed in God.**

Belief that a God exists saves nobody. The Bible tells us in **James 2:19,**

**"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder! "**

**God is a fact.** The **difference** is that the redeemed put their **trust** in God. That's more than just believing he exists.

Abraham was obviously **not a perfect man.**

He sometimes made **bad choices** and **did things** that were wrong.

**But he was a man of faith.** He **didn't** always just trust in himself.

He **trusted God** when he was called to **move his family** to the distant country of Canaan.

He was told to **take his son Isaac** to the mountain altar to **sacrifice his life.**

But when he got to the altar and was prepared to obey, **God stopped him.**

**God provided a ram to be sacrificed in place of his son.**

It was a **lesson** to teach that **another** was going to be provided as a **substitute** by God.

A **Redeemer** would come who would **die in place of his people.**

This man **Abraham knew he was a sinner.**

He **understood the offense** of his sins, and **repented** of them, and **wanted to overcome** them.

He trusted God that he **could be forgiven** by God's **grace** through his **trust** in a promised Redeemer.

The **righteousness** Abraham enjoyed came by **Imputation.**

That means it was **credited** to him, it was considered to be his **by God himself, the offended party and his judge.**

Our translation says it was "**counted**" to Abraham. It **wasn't done by him** personally.

It was a **righteousness** that would in God's time be **earned by Jesus Christ,** by his life and death.

It was **applied** to Abraham as an unworthy sinner by **grace** alone.

The **evidence** of it was his **faith, his confidence** in God's promises.

When Abraham **trusted God's promise, his faith was counted as righteousness.**

**This faith isn't just a vague hope that all things will work out.**

It has a **particular object.** It's an **absolute trust and confidence in God's word and provisions** for us.

It's a **full confidence** in all **Jesus Christ accomplished.**

Jesus said in **John 8:56** that **this future hope** is what **gave Abraham** spiritual **understanding and confidence.**

**"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."**

**Hebrews 11:13** explains that **he saw the promises afar off.**

After **reviewing the hope** that was **in Abraham** and the **other** Old Testament believers, it says,

**"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them**

**and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."**

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**If Abraham is our Father in the Faith, then we who believe are his children.**

Paul makes this point here in **Galatians 3:7,**

**"Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham."**

**Sonship** in the Bible has to do with **sameness.** Jesus said to the Jews in **John 8:39,**

**"If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did"**

**Sameness** is also the **evidence** that we are the **Sons of God.**

In **Ephesians 5:1** Paul says, **"Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children."**

In **1 John 2:29** John says, **"... everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him."**

Then later in that same letter, in **1 John 3:8-10,** John says more about this **sameness,**

**"8. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.**

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

**9. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him,**

and he **cannot keep on sinning** because he has been **born of God.**

**10. By this it is evident** who are the **children of God,** and who are the **children of the devil:**

**whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."**

The **verbs** in that passage are **not** saying that **God's children never do anything wrong.**

The **tenses** are what we call *constative*, they mean that **sin isn't their way of life.**

More accurately it means, "**they cannot keep sinning**". They **aren't** people *characterized by sinning.*  
**They're striving to be like their Father.**

We are **Abraham's children** when we **have faith like Abraham.**

It shows that the **same God** is at **work in our hearts**, who was **at work** in our **father in the faith.**

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It's this **same gospel promise** that **we and our spiritual ancestors** trust in.

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.**"

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

Paul was **quoting** directly from God's promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**, where he said,  
"... **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"

**Abraham was pronounced righteous and blessed** not by rituals, not by his works, and not by his ancestors,  
but **by faith** in God's sure **promise of redemption** through the **coming Messiah.**

In **Ephesians 1** Paul explained **where our sonship** with Abraham **comes from.**

In **verse 11** he said that in Jesus Christ **we also**, along with Abraham ...

"**In him we have obtained an inheritance**, having been **predestined according to the purpose of him** who works all things according to the counsel of **his will**,"

We **don't get** this faith by **God looking ahead** to see what we would do if He didn't do anything.

It says in Ephesians 1:4 & 5,

"**even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**,  
that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love  
**he predestined us for adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,"

Those blessed with Abraham are **believers** in the **same promises** that **encouraged and redeemed** this ancestor.

**Today's church** is that **same olive tree with Israel**, as Paul puts it in **Romans 11.**

We are the **same church**, with the **same Savior**, and the **same wonderful gospel.**

We are **Abraham's seed**, his **spiritual descendants.**

We have the **same promises** within the *Covenant of God's Grace.*

While many of us have **our own families** here on earth into which we were born or raised,  
we **all who believe in Christ** have a **spiritual family** with a **wonderful history.**

Our **ancestors** in the faith haven't been perfect, but we're **united** by one **special blessing**:  
**a grace-given faith** in God's promises through Jesus Christ.

We should **treasure the church family** of which God has made us a part. There we **worship, serve and learn** together.

**We should be an encouragement** to one another. We're **brothers and sisters forever.**

There **in glory**, we'll be **at home** with all our **ancestors.**

**Some** may have accomplished **great things** here on earth.

**Some** we did very bad things - but they too were **saved by grace.**

There we'll also find our **spiritual ancestors.**

**Adam**, the only man who ever lived before the fall into sin.

**Noah**, who survived the greatest flood with his sons and their wives.

**Abraham**, the father of God's covenant people.

We'll be with our brothers **Moses, Joshua, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Peter, Paul, Luke, and John.**

We as **Abraham's children** have a lot more to **appreciate** than our **Father Abraham had.**

**He saw stars** in the sky that somehow shine there every night declaring the glory of God.

We know **how the stars work**, and have seen pictures of **distant galaxies**, a new world in the **deep seas**,  
and know the **tiny world of atoms, protons, and quarks.**

We've seen **God's hand** in the **long history of the world** since then.

We see how he **moved nations and people** through the turns of time to **shape today's world.**

We have **more information about the past** than the ancients did about their own time and place on earth.

We have a **completed Bible** in our own language, the complete word of God.

We have good solid **commentaries** and **computer Bible study software** to dig into it's depths. We have the **advantage of good lessons** in worship sermons, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies. Don't **let all these advantages** of our age **slip away day after day** so you can watch tv, shop for shoes, or play games.

**Don't head for heaven as malnourished children -- guilty of neglecting God's spiritual provisions.**

You can **do your part** for the Kingdom of God **as your Father Abraham did.**

He wasn't much more than a **simple father** of a family that moved out of town.

He **didn't travel** to big cities **teaching** with earth-shaking **eloquence.**

He **didn't write a book**, or compose a popular **song**, or invent a **cure** for some disease.

He was **a man of faith.** He **trusted God**, **prayed** for his children, and **repented** honestly when he sinned.

**We remember him** (this **fallible, imperfect** head of an ancient home) -- as our **Father in the Faith.**

**When God calls us** to simple **daily work**, or to do **something hard**, something **challenging** ...

**like Abraham** when he was called to go to a distant country -

**we should take up what God's providence brings our way, and do it well**, trusting in the power of Christ.

When we **wonder** if our **weaknesses and sins** would **disqualify us** as God's child -- **admit that they do!**

**Don't brush them off** as if they were nothing.

**Trust** the way Abraham did - that **God's provided forgiveness by his grace.**

Today we know it was **accomplished** by the **perfect work** of the **Savior.**

**He can't fail** and his **promises** are **always reliable.**

**We're encouraged** knowing that **when this life is completed**, we will have an **eternity of blessing ahead.**

We'll live in our **Heavenly Father's house forever** -- with **all our ancestors in the faith** --

**American or Russian, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, Black or White, Democrat or Republican.**

**All redeemed** by God's **Sovereign Grace**, and **moved** by him to a **sincere faith** in Christ's redemption are together the **spiritual children of Abraham** - children of God - forever!

Note: Bible quotations are from the *English Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

ESV Galatians 3:1-9

1. O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.
2. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by 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. Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith--
6. just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?
7. Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.
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."
9. So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

6. καθὼς Ἰβραὰμ ἐπίστευσε τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
7. Γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοί εἰσιν υἱοὶ Ἰβραάμ.
8. προῖδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφὴ ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ Θεὸς, προεηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἰβραάμ ὅτι ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.
9. ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἰβραάμ.

NKJV

- 6 just as **Abraham** "*believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*"
- 7 Therefore know that **only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**
- 8 And **the Scripture**, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel to Abraham** beforehand, saying, "*In you all the nations shall be blessed.*"
- 9 So then those who *are* of faith are **blessed with believing Abraham.**