



GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



Session 8: Galatians 3:6-11

Galatians 3:6-9 | The Example of the Abrahamic Promise

- Verse 6 –
 - This verse gets misinterpreted countless times. Context is king!
 - In the context, Paul is arguing that salvation is **by the hearing of faith** (v. 5) and not **by the works of the law** (v. 5). Then he brings up an *illustration* which is often made to be a *theological doctrine*, an error that has countless implications.
 - The key is the modifier and introductory phrase **Even as**. The point is this: God is working today by faith **even as** the Abrahamic promise was by faith.
 - Questions to consider:
 - Did the Abrahamic covenant *save* anyone?
 - Would anyone be saved by believing in the Abrahamic covenant at any time in history?
 - Does this verse (in any of the places it is quoted) teach that Abraham entered into a relationship with God (or was saved) *by grace, through faith*?
 - This verse was intended by Paul to show that the basis of the Abrahamic covenant is also the basis of the Salvation message. It does not follow that things with the same basis have the same purpose or meaning.
- Verse 7 –
 - Once again, this verse has been more often *misinterpreted* than correctly interpreted. Taken alone, with no context, it appears to say that *if you have faith, you are a child of Abraham*.
 - Let's ask some questions:
 - Do all people of any faith become children of Abraham?
 - Does anything in the verse prohibit the above interpretation from including Buddhists or Mormons or Muslim people today? (They are, after all, people **of faith**).
 - If this is somehow limited just to the Christian faith, does this mean that all Christians are Jews?
 - Perhaps these questions help display the absurdity of the common interpretation.
 - In context, Paul is pointing out that Judaism itself is built on a faith premise, not a circumcision premise. This being true, do the Judaizers have an argument?
- Verse 8 –
 - Yet again, another oft misunderstood verse!
 - The Scripture did indeed foresee **that God would justify the heathen through faith** and indeed the Scripture **preached before** (previously) **the gospel unto Abraham**. This is undeniable from this verse.
 - Does this mean, however, that Paul's Gospel was preached to Abraham or even foreseen in Abraham?
 - Such a conclusion would be shortsighted and would make the verse say *more* than it actually says.
 - Does the Scripture predict that God will **justify the heathen through faith**?
 - See Joel 2:32, for example.
 - Was this a **gospel** that was **preached before** Paul? Certainly!

- So how does this align with Paul’s insistence that the Gospel he preaches is one that was given to him and entrusted to him alone and was not previously known, even that it was unsearchable (See Ephesians 3:1-12, for example)?
 - Here is the key: the mystery is not the salvation of gentiles by grace through faith. Rather, it is that such a time would come completely separate from the commonwealth and covenants of Israel.
- Verse 9 –
 - Paul concludes the *illustration* by saying that **they which be of faith** are the ones who receive the blessings of faith, just like Abraham.
- Summary of verses 6-9:
 - These verses are used to illustrate that God has other promises which are *by grace through faith*. The illustration for such a promise is the Abrahamic covenant, which was given almost 25 years before circumcision and 430 years before the Law, thus it is not based on either circumcision nor law obedience.
 - An illustration must never become the primary truth. It always and only serves to *illustrate* the primary truth. The primary truth, in context, is that salvation in the Pauline mystery dispensation is not based on circumcision or any work of the flesh.
 - Misinterpretation of this segment produces a covenantal, anti-dispensational view of salvation and a “we are better than you are” anti-Semitism and replacement theology.

Galatians 3:10-14 | The Law Is a Curse

- Verse 10 –
 - This sweeping verse is unbelievable in its clarity and its condemnation of Judaizers (both ancient and modern).
 - The verse pertains to **as many as are of the works of the law**, not *some* or *most* but *all*.
 - Though the works of the law may make someone feel better about themselves, they actually put them under a curse.
 - For proof, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 which is echoed in Jeremiah 11:3.
 - The key word is **all**. The one who does *some* of the works of the law but **continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law** is **cursed**.
 - Clearly this was a problem for the Judaizers, who were not asking Gentiles to do all of the law, but only to be circumcised.
 - This is also a huge problem for those who teach tithing, Sabbatarianism, kosher-eating or other *bits and pieces* of the Law.
- Verse 11 –
 - The key in this verse is the *present passive* of the verb **justified**. Thus, Paul says that **no man is [presently] justified by the law**.
 - This is required because Paul himself spoke of **righteousness...of the law** in Rom. 10:5.
 - In that verse, he proclaimed that which was true in Moses’ day: **the man which doeth those things shall live by them** (quoted in Gal. 3:12).
 - Now (in our dispensation), however, **the just shall live by faith** (a passage quoted from Hab.2:4 in the *future* tense). Paul will say in Gal. 3:24 that the law has served its purpose and is now obsolete because *faith* has come.
 - From Romans 10:5, note that the verb **is** (speaking of the **righteousness...of the law**) is assumed by the translators and not in the text itself.
 - How does one deal with this without being a dispensationalist? Clearly there was a time when **the man that doeth** the things of the law **shall live in them** (v. 12). Clearly that time is *not* the current time.