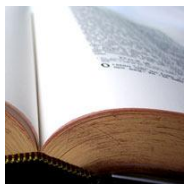


Conclusion

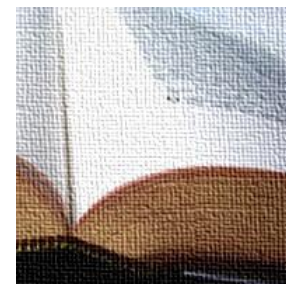


The Abiding Principle of Justification by Faith counters the false doctrine of justification by works of the law that is at cross-purposes with the gospel message (Gal. 2:21). For the Galatians to attempt to be justified by the Law of Moses, or any other legal system, and not “by faith,” which is the grounds of our salvation, is equal to putting one’s trust in their own ability. They would clearly be putting their trust in the power of their own ability to make atonement for their sins. If their theology is correct, then they are clearly saying that Christ died in vain.

The absolute Abiding Principle of Justification was in Abraham’s day “by faith” and for the Galatians and every man afterwards. May we always remember Paul’s words: *“So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”* (Gal. 3:9).

**Church of Christ in
Northern Virginia**

*“The Abiding
Principle of
Justification by
Faith”*



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We are justified today, just as Abraham was—“by faith”.

Definition of Terms:

The Apostle Paul uses the following terms in order to defend the argument to the Galatians and are important to understand the letter:

- Law—a code/system of deeds & regulations for human behavior
- Justification—to reckon a sinner’s faith in Christ for righteousness
- Legalism—in theology; a code of deeds & observances as a means of justification
- Righteousness—to declare or to account the sinful man as righteous, to vindicate
- Judiazers—**not** a Bible term; those false brethren who bound the Law on the Gentiles as essential for salvation

Abraham’s Example

The Apostle Paul appeals to Galatians 3:6-9 to sustain the proposition that Abraham was justified by God because he believed the promise made to him in Gen. 12:3. The ground of Abraham’s justification was that “he believed God [by faith] and it [his faith] was accounted [reckoned] to him for righteousness” (Gal. 3:6). As a result of Abraham’s faith, he acted by going out of the land. Paul used Abraham as an example of justification by faith in order to demonstrate that God justified him [Abraham] 500 years before the Law was given. Paul went on to state that the promise to Abraham foresaw that, “In you [Abraham] all the nations shall be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:3). The point here is that the promise to Abraham included the fact that God would justify not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. “All nations” would be justified in the same way Abraham was—“by faith”.

Faith was the means

For the Galatians to believe and teach that they could be justified on the basis of their being Abraham’s sons by birth, or on the grounds of the Law of Moses, was not in harmony with the means by which Abraham himself was justified—“by faith” (Gal. 3:9). Paul wishes to point out to the Galatians that faith was the means of Abraham’s justification and he likens his justification with it being “reckon for righteousness”. To use any other reasoning therefore on their parts as a means of justification, was completely erroneous and Paul clearly exposes the error of their teaching.

Mankind today cannot be justified by any legal means, because the Law by nature could never justify (Gal. 3:11), the law itself is not of faith and demands perfection (Gal. 3:12a), and condemned the violator at the first infraction (Gal. 3:12b). Therefore, the very nature of the law is contrary to those who attempt to keep it. The law condemns and cannot offer justification to the Judaizers, or mankind today. Moreover, for the Galatians or man today to attempt to appeal to the law as a legal means for justification is wrong because it is not of faith. Their theology is equal to legalism today which would make a person feel that they have to eat enough Lord’s Suppers, baptize enough people, keep enough of the commandments, or any other human effort to out-weigh their sins. The sum total of this type of theology is that the Galatians as well as men today, put their trust in the wrong thing and person.

Their understanding of the nature of the law was wrong, as well as their understanding of the nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Had they understood that Abraham was justified by faith without works of the law and/ or any other legal means; they would have not attempted to bind their theology on others. Men today must understand that the law condemns sinners and is the means by which a sinner is saved.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”—Galatians 3:7 (KJV)