

# Father Abraham

Genesis 12:1-8; 15:1-6 Galatians 3:1-14 John 6:28-29

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The **NEW TESTAMENT** is filled with **Old Testament** people; repeatedly, Jesus and His Apostles in the New Testament point us back to Old Testament people *as examples for us to learn from*. St Paul even writes that the Old Testament was written *as examples and warnings for us today* (1 Cor 10:11). God expects you to know your Old Testament as well as your New Testament. Here are some examples of *Old Testament people in the New Testament*:

- ➡ The **prophets** are examples for us of patient endurance while suffering and enduring persecution (James 5:10)
- ➡ **Cain, Balaam, and Korah** serve as examples of rebellion, apostasy and falling away from the Lord (Jude 11)
- ➡ **Sarah** serves as an example of a godly wife (1 Peter 3:6)
- ➡ **Moses** serves as an example of a faithful servant of the Lord (Hebrews 3:3)
- ➡ **Noah** serves as a picture of someone saved by water, as the water of Holy Baptism saves us (1 Peter 3:20)
- ➡ **Jonah** serves as an illustration of the Resurrection of Jesus on the Third Day; just as Jonah was in the belly of a whale for 3 days; so too the Son of God was in the grave for 3 days. (Matthew 12:40)
- ➡ **Abel** serves as the faithful and noble martyr who was killed for his faith (Mt 23:35)
- ➡ **Melchizedek** is an Old Testament Priest and King, who foreshadows Jesus, who is our eternal High Priest and King (Hebrews 6:20)
- ➡ **Jezebel** is the epitome of all the rebellious and deceitful false teachers in the Church that leads people astray and away from Christ (Revelation 2:20)
- ➡ **Sodom and Gomorrah** stand forever as a warning of homosexuality and the approaching Judgment Day (2 Peter 2:6)

There are many Old Testament people referenced in the New Testament --- they help us to understand the Christian faith and life even today. Some are examples for us to follow; some are warnings for us to learn from.

**Of all the people spoken of from the Old Testament,  
the greatest is Abraham.**

Abraham is considered the “Father of the Jews;” God made promises to Abraham that he would have a great nation, a promised land, a son in his old age, and that one of his descendants would bless the entire earth. **That descendant to come would be Jesus, the long awaited Old Testament Messiah, the promised Savior of the world!** Jesus is the promised descendent of Abraham Who blesses the entire earth by His work of salvation<sup>1</sup>. Jesus lived and He died for every single person ever conceived. His work of salvation forgives the sins of all people; He brings life and salvation into the world for all people. *Abraham believed this promise of God; Abraham becomes the perfect example of being saved by faith and not by works.*

In the book of Galatians, there were false teachers who claimed that you had to contribute your own work and effort to your salvation. Back then, they were telling people they had to follow the Jewish Old Testament laws, including circumcision. Today there are still teachers who claimed that you have to contribute your own work and effort to your salvation. What Jesus did was not enough they say, that was only the beginning. **You have to do your part**, you have to make your **decision**, you have to do your own **good works**, you have to earn your **merit**. There still are many people teaching that we are saved by works inside the Holy Christian Church, even though the New Testament condemns it in so many places.

St Paul uses Abraham as the prime example that we are saved by faith and not by works.

So also Abraham “**believed** God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, **that those who have faith are children of Abraham** Galatians 3:6-7

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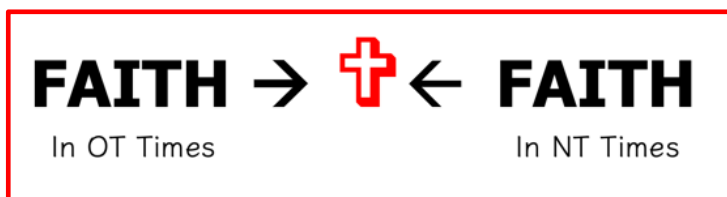
<sup>1</sup> If you want to brush up on God's Promises to Abraham, see Genesis 12:1-8 and Genesis 15:1-6.

It is through faith that you are righteous in God's eyes, like Abraham was. It is very, very important that you understand, know, and believe that salvation is NOT earned by a single thing that you do, but given as a gift -- through faith -- in Jesus who does all the work for you.

**This is the most important teaching  
in all of Holy Scripture<sup>2,3,4</sup>.**

St Paul goes all the way back to Abraham, the Father of the Jews, to show that it has always been like this, even in the Old Testament times.

- ➡ The Old Testament people were saved because they believed in the promises that God would send the Messiah, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.



- ➡ For us in the New Testament times, we look back to the same Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world.

The only difference between us and the Old Testament believers is which side of the timeline you live in. They lived *before the cross*, we live *after the cross*. But both Old Testament believers and New Testament believers put their faith

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<sup>2</sup> As conservative Lutherans, we confess that “Justification by Faith” is the doctrine on which the church either stands or falls. It is easy to see today how churches have fallen, drifted away from Christ, abandoned Scripture, and swerved into apostasy and gross immorality when they abandon Justification by Faith.

<sup>3</sup> This is so important, that it is the main theme in the New Testament books of Romans and Galatians, and spoken of in the other New Testament books! Justification by Faith is the Bible’s chief way of speaking about the Gospel: the good news of Jesus!

<sup>4</sup> “All theological thinking must begin at this article, center on it, and culminate in it. As the various facets of a diamond catch, refract, reflect the light, so the phrase “justification by faith alone” gives brilliance to every phase of Christian revelation, and in turn each facet of Christian truth sheds new brilliance on this so called central doctrine, whether it is viewed as Justification by faith, or as the work of Christ, or as the distinction between Law and Gospel, or as faith in Christ, or as the doctrine of righteousness before God.” H.J.A. Bouman, CTM,

in the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>. He is the one God promised to send for us to do the work of salvation that we could not do.

- ➡ It has **never ever** been salvation by works.
- ➡ It has **never ever** been that your own good works can save you.
- ➡ God will **never ever** accept anything from you for salvation.

Jesus has done it all. His life, His death was for you. Your sins are forgiven; you are given eternal life because of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Him alone.

We confess this with **no apologies whatsoever**  
when we confess that we are saved by  
*Grace alone! Faith alone! Christ alone!*

Through faith in Christ, you are Abraham's children. What that means is that you are included in the blessings of Abraham and his descendants. God promised Abraham a **Savior**, a **nation**, and a **promised land**. Those blessings are yours as well:

- ➡ you believe in Jesus, the descendant of Abraham, the **Savior**, who has rescued you from your sin.
- ➡ You are part of the Holy Christian Church, all believers of all times and all places, who have the faith of Abraham, and trust in his promised *Descendant (Jesus!)*. Abraham's promised **nation** is now the Holy Christian Church -- both Jews, and Gentiles, who trust in Christ.
- ➡ You look forward to the **promised land** of Heaven; the eternal land flowing with milk and honey, that is, all the blessings from God's good hand!

There are many Old Testament people referenced in the New Testament! Abraham is the greatest of all! Like him, you too are justified by faith, and never by your own good works! Amen!

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<sup>5</sup> If you want to get a feel of Old Testament faith, then think about Heaven. We believe the promises God makes about Heaven, even though we don't know too much about it and we have a lot of questions about what it will be like. But yet we still believe God's promises about Heaven. In the same way, the Old Testament people believed in the coming Messiah, but they didn't know too much about Him, and they probably had a lot of questions about how He would save the world. But yet they believed in the promises God made about Him, like we believe the promises God has given us about Heaven. That faith in the coming Messiah/Savior saved them; not anything they themselves did.

## Genesis 12:1-8

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. 6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

## Genesis 15:1-6

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 **Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**

## Galatians 3:1-14

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? 4 Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? 5 So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? **6 So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.** 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

## John 6:28-29

Then they asked him, “What must **we do** to do the works God requires?” 29 Jesus answered, “The **work of God** is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”



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God the Father,  
we thank you for giving Abraham faith in your Son  
Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
By that same powerful Spirit,  
you have also given us faith  
in your Son Jesus.  
Help us, O Lord,  
to renounce every form of works righteousness,  
and to abandon any thought of earning our own  
salvation.  
Grant us deep faith in Jesus alone,  
knowing that we are saved by your grace through  
faith without any work, merit, or worthiness in  
ourselves.  
Allow us to be lights that shine,  
so that we may boldly confess  
that we are saved by grace alone, through faith  
alone, in Christ alone.  
In Jesus name, Amen!

