PROTOTYPE

Scripture Reading: Read Galatians 3

The dictionary defines a prototype as an original or model on which something is based or formed. When Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, he was forced to defend his gospel of righteousness by faith from legalistic false teachers who wanted to add law to the message of grace. Paul utilized multiple arguments to defend his position and to show the utter futility of walking away from grace.

One of those arguments was to present Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, as a prototype of faith. Seven times in this chapter, and once more in chapter 4, Paul holds Abraham out as an example of faith. The first of these references occurs in verse 6.

In its original context, this verse was in connection to Abraham's belief in God's promise that he and Sarah would have a child in their old age. Yet, Paul saw in Abraham the model by which God would put people in right relationship with himself. It would not be based on our works, but on God's gracious promise received by faith instead. In other words, Abraham's example was the prototype, the paradigm, God would use from then on out. This is made clear by Paul in verse 8: "*The 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."* It is also confirmed by the prophet Habakkuk whom Paul quotes in verse 11: "*The righteous will live by faith."* When we exercise faith in Christ, then, we show ourselves to be Abraham's children (verse 7) and find ourselves *"blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith"* (verse 9) and "*heirs according to the promise"* (verse 29). Paul builds on this theme of blessing by adding that Christ *"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"* (verse 14).

Four hundred thirty years after God's promise to Abraham, the Lord gave his laws to Israel through the prophet Moses. The law did not supersede the promise nor did it nullify it according to Paul (verses 17-18). This does not mean the law was purposeless or that it was opposed to God's promises. Rather, as we saw in Romans 7, and see here again in Galatians 3, the law has a valuable role to play in our lives. By revealing to us the character of God in His holiness, the law exposes our sinfulness and brings us face to face with our own inadequacy in meeting God's standards by our own self-efforts. It leaves us locked up as prisoner in our sin and under the curse of the law (verse 10). In so doing, it brings us to the end of ourselves and to the foot of the cross where we find grace. Or, as Paul puts it in verse 24: *"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."*

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Have you trusted Christ for your salvation or are you trusting in your good works? No one is capable of doing enough good works to make it to heaven. As a result, you're under a curse (verses 10-11). Christ became a curse for you so that He could redeem you from the curse of the law (verse 13). He took your curse so that you could have his blessing, the blessing promised to Abraham. Repent and receive him today by faith. If you already know him, give Him thanks and share Him with others.

Take-a-way: *God's prototype is clear: salvation's blessing comes by faith!*