

Galatians 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Analysis

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. The imperative 'know ye' (ginōskete, γινώσκετε) demands recognition of an inescapable conclusion: 'they which are of faith' (hoi ek pisteōs, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως)—literally 'those out of faith,' whose source and origin is faith—these alone are 'sons of Abraham' (huioi Abraam, υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ). Paul redefines Jewish identity: true Abrahamic sonship is by faith, not ethnicity or circumcision.

The emphatic 'the same' (houtoi, οὗτοι)—'these and these alone'—excludes all others. This is radical redefinition: uncircumcised Gentile believers are the true children of Abraham, while circumcised Jews trusting in Law-works are outside the family. The article hoi (οἱ) makes this a class definition: the faith-people constitute Abraham's seed. Jesus made the same argument against unbelieving Jews (John 8:39-40).

This verse explodes ethnic privilege. Abraham's true children are identified not by genealogy but by faith like his. The Judaizers claimed Gentiles must become Jews (via circumcision) to join Abraham's family; Paul insists the opposite—Jews and Gentiles alike must have Abraham's faith to be his children. Faith, not flesh, defines the people of God.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism equated Abrahamic descent with ethnic lineage—circumcision was the covenant sign marking out Abraham's physical children (Genesis 17:9-14). The Judaizers insisted Gentile converts must be circumcised to join the covenant people. Paul's redefinition was revolutionary and offensive to Jewish Christians: spiritual lineage through faith supersedes physical lineage through flesh. Romans 9:6-8 develops this further: 'not all Israel is Israel'—true Israel is defined by faith. This same principle grounds the church as the new covenant people of God.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's redefinition of 'children of Abraham' as faith-people rather than ethnic-people transform your understanding of the church?
2. What modern equivalents of 'ethnic privilege' (church membership, family heritage, denominational identity) might you be trusting in rather than faith alone?
3. How does verse 7's radical inclusivity (all faith-people are Abraham's children) guard against both legalism and ethnocentrism in the church?

Interlinear Text

Γινώσκετε	ἄρα	ὅτι	οἱ	ἐκ	πίστεως	οὗτοι
Know ye	therefore	that	G3588	they which are of	faith	the same
G1097	G686	G3754		G1537	G4102	G3778
εἰσιν	υἱοί	Ἀβραάμ				
are	the children	of Abraham				
G1526	G5207	G11				

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:9 (Faith): So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Psalms 100:3 (Parallel theme): Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Romans 4:24 (Faith): But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

John 8:39 (References Abraham): They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

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