

Matthew 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Analysis

John attacks the foundational error of Judaism—presuming that Abrahamic descent guarantees salvation. His radical statement that 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' demonstrates that true Abrahamic sonship is spiritual, not merely physical (Romans 9:6-8). God's sovereign election, not ethnic privilege, determines covenant membership. This principle undergirds Paul's later theology of justification by faith alone.

Historical Context

First-century Jews believed descent from Abraham assured covenant blessing. This ethnic confidence undergirded their rejection of Jesus. Paul later develops John's principle that the true Israel consists of those who have Abraham's faith (Galatians 3:7-9).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does John's statement anticipate Paul's teaching about spiritual versus ethnic Israel (Romans 2:28-29)?
2. What false securities do people trust today instead of genuine faith in Christ?

Interlinear Text

καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγω ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν
And not think I say within yourselves to our father We have G3588
G2532 G3361 G1380 G3004 G1722 G1438 G3962 G2192

Ἄβραάμ λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ
Abraham I say for unto you that is able G3588 God of
G11 G3004 G1063 G5213 G3754 G1410 G2316 G1537

τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Αβραάμ
G3588 stones these to raise up children G3588 Abraham
G3037 G5130 G1453 G5043 G11

Additional Cross-References

Luke 3:8 (Resurrection): Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

John 8:33 (References Abraham): They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Acts 13:26 (References God): Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Romans 4:1 (References Abraham): What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Luke 16:24 (References Abraham): And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Mark 7:21 (Parallel theme): For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

John 8:53 (References Abraham): Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Luke 5:22 (Parallel theme): But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Ezekiel 33:24 (References Abraham): Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.

Acts 15:14 (References God): Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.