

Romans (19): Our Father Abraham (part 3)

Introduction:

Let us turn in our Bibles to Romans 4. We have before us testimony from the Old Testament record that God saves sinners through faith alone. Paul called upon Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, to demonstrate that God had justified him through faith. Abraham was arguably the man most revered by the Jews. If God had justified him by faith, and not by his works, then it is clear that God *only* justifies sinners through faith alone.

Our outline gives us a sense of the flow of the apostle's argument.

- III. God's Righteousness in the Sinner's Justification (3:21-4:25)
 - A. The righteousness of God in the believer's justification through faith (3:21-26)
 - B. The righteousness of God through faith and the law of God (3:27-31)
 - C. Abraham as the Father of All who have Faith (4:1-25)

We considered last Lord's Day that...

1. God had justified Abraham through faith alone (4:1-8).

Faith must be the instrument through which God saves people, or else salvation would not be due to God's grace, but rather due to man's "good" works, which cannot be the case (4:5). And so Paul affirmed in **verse 5**, "And to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."

Paul cited the example of **king David** to testify of the same truth. David had written Psalm 32, in which he had affirmed the happy condition, the blessedness, of the man to whom God will not hold his sins against him. Paul quoted David's words from **Psalm 32:1** and **2**.

⁷Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. (Rom 4:7f)

But now Paul desired to show that this same blessing that had been experienced by the Jewish people was not exclusive to them. God also justifies Gentiles through faith alone. And since God's blessing of salvation comes through faith alone, then Abraham is also the father of Gentile believers. In the next argument, Paul shows that...

2. Abraham is the father of all who have true faith (4:9-12)

Paul would show that all people everywhere who have the same kind of faith that Abraham had toward God are the true people of God. Paul would prove to his readers that Gentiles, who believe in the same manner as Abraham, enjoy the same blessing as Jews who believe like their father Abraham. This is the goal of his argument in **verses 9-12**.

⁹Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹He received the sign of

circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

What Paul shows is that being a physical descendant of Abraham, or being identified as a member of the visible covenantal people of Israel, is not what brings one into relationship with God. God forgives sinners through faith alone, irrespective of Jewish birth or of Gentile descent. The “blessedness” of forgiveness of sins and right relationship with God is through faith alone.

Paul opens with the statement that affirms justification through faith alone. **Verse 9** reads, *“Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.”*

The “blessing” to which Paul was referring was mentioned in Psalm 32, which Paul had quoted in verses 7 and 8. This blessing of God was the free forgiveness of sins that God extends to guilty sinners.

Paul leads his readers to consider the question, which essentially asks, “Are only Jews the recipients of blessing or are Gentiles also objects of God’s free grace?” Paul proves that God had pronounced the forgiveness of sins of Abraham before he was circumcised. Paul alludes to his earlier quotation of Genesis 15:6 in which we read of God’s Word describing the occasion when Abraham’s faith resulted in his justification before God. There we read, “And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness.” But God did not command Abraham to be circumcised until later, for it is recorded in Genesis 17. We read in **Romans 4:10**,

“How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.”

Since Abraham was justified through faith before he was circumcised, Paul shows that circumcision, that entrance rite which identified the Jews as God’s people, was not what brought the Jews into a right relationship with God. That occurred through faith alone.

What, then, is the role and nature of the rite of circumcision? Paul defines for us what the meaning was for the rite of circumcision in **verse 11**:

“He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. “

Paul describes circumcision as a “sign” and as a “seal”—“the sign of circumcision” and “the seal of the righteousness that he had by faith.” Reformed paedobaptists, that is, those who practice infant and child baptism, but who believe and affirm reformed theology¹, state that we should understand a distinction between the meaning of “sign” and “seal.” **John Murray** set forth this view in his commentary of Romans:

It is usual to discover a distinction between a sign and a seal; a sign points to the existence of that it signifies, whereas a seal authenticates, confirms, and guarantees the genuineness of that which is signified. This distinction was no doubt intended by the apostle.²

But not all believe that we should understand that there is a distinction between the ideas of “sign” and “seal.”

¹ In other words, they affirm as we do the five *solae* of the reformation and the five doctrines of grace. They argue that infant baptism in the New Testament serves the same function under the new covenant.

² John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (William B. Eerdmans, 1959), p. 138.

Circumcision is described as a “sign” (σημεῖον, *semeion*) and as a “seal of the righteousness of faith” (σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως, *sphragida tes dikaiosynes tes pisteos*). Distinctions should not be drawn between the words σημεῖον and σφραγίδα (contra Murray 1959:138). The purpose in using both words is to say that circumcision is not intrinsic or essential to faith. Instead, it confirms, documents, ratifies, and authenticates the right standing by faith that Abraham already had.³

Another commentator wrote of the idea of the “sign”:

In any case, Paul uses the word to denote something that “confirms” the truth or reality of something else, as in 1 Corinthians 9:2, where Paul describes the Corinthian believers themselves as the “seal, the confirmation and authentication, of his apostleship. In like manner, Abraham’s circumcision confirms his righteous status, a status that was his by virtue of his faith. Circumcision, therefore, has no independent value. It cannot effect one’s entrance into the people of God; nor does it even “mark” a person as belonging to God’s people apart from a prior justifying act. Abraham was declared righteous while still uncircumcised. His later circumcision added nothing materially to that transaction; it simply signified and confirmed it.⁴

Circumcision was indeed a “sign” by which the people of God were identified and set apart from all others in the world. It was also a “seal”, that is, a guarantor of God’s blessing for those who had faith.

Our paedobaptist friends who are Presbyterian or Congregational, those who baptize infants of believing parents, argue that under the new covenant God has given baptism to replace the role of circumcision in the Old Testament. They argue that as Abraham and his descendants circumcised the male children as a sign and seal of their covenant relationship with God, so Christian parents are to have their children baptized, and that is to be done most often by sprinkling as the mode of baptism.

We who are Baptist have a number of arguments to counter this teaching. **First**, we argue that the Greek word translated “baptize” itself means to dip or immerse, and that sprinkling as a mode of baptism was never practiced or prescribed in the New Testament or early church. **Second**, we would say that there is no place in the New Testament where Christian parents are commanded to baptize their children nor is there any example of it being performed. **Third**, we would argue that circumcision in the Old Testament is not a precursor to New Testament baptism. There is only one place in the New Testament, of which I am aware, that circumcision and baptism are spoken of in the same context, which would be Colossians

¹¹In Him *you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands*, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, *by the circumcision of Christ*, ¹²buried with Him *in baptism*, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:11-14)

We would argue that this passage does not show that baptism is a New Testament substitute for Old Testament circumcision, but rather, this passage reflects the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). Old Testament circumcision is the type; the circumcision of the heart which the grace of God effects, in other words, regeneration, is the New Testament antitype. Paul mentions first the regeneration of the sinner (v. 11), he speaks of the faith of the sinner (v. 12), and the subsequent baptism of the believer (v. 12).

Fourth, we would say that circumcision of the Old Testament was a “sign” which signified that the person was a member of the external people of God, Israel, but New Testament is not the “sign” of the new

³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Academic, 1998), pp. 224f. Schreiner cites the work of Fitzer, in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 7:949, as well as Ernst Kaesemann (1971:85) and Schiler (1977:127).

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (William B. Eerdmans, 1996), p. 269.

covenant, but rather the presence of “love” is the sign that sets apart the true people of God from all others. A sign, if it is to be a sign, must continue to exist, pointing to something else. Physical circumcision was a perpetual sign identifying the physical people of God. However, New Testament baptism is a onetime event, which does not serve, therefore, as a perpetual “sign.” The Lord Jesus told us what “sign” would be evident among His people that would testify that they were indeed the people of God. Jesus said, **“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”** (John 13:35). Love is the sign of the covenant, or we might say, “faith working by love.” Paul wrote in **Galatians 5:6**, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” Here, Paul says that physical circumcision does not signify (serve as a sign), but rather faith working itself out in love is that which signifies or identifies the true people of God.

Fifth, what of circumcision as a “seal” of the righteousness of faith? Is baptism the New Testament counter to Old Testament circumcision? We would argue, “No, rather the sealing of the Holy Spirit answers to the Old Testament circumcision as a “seal.” Paul wrote,

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph 1:13 NKJ)

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2Co 1:21f)

And so, we Baptists believe the new birth is the spiritual circumcision that God performs in regenerating our hearts, cutting away the insensitivity of sin, making us to desire to know Him and submit to Him in faith and obedience.

Let us return to our text in Romans 4. Paul then explains that God had a purpose for dealing with Abraham in this manner, justifying him through faith alone before he was circumcised. **Verses 11 and 12** read,

“The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well,¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”

Here we see that Abraham is the “father” of all who have justifying faith, whether they are Jewish believers or Gentile believers. Faith is the determining factor.

It was God’s intention to make Abraham the father of all believers. Circumcision had no bearing on whether or not people were related to Abraham with respect to God’s eternal blessing promised to Abraham and enjoyed by his descendants. Faith was the basis of the relationship. With the presence of faith, God conferred the gift of righteousness. With the gift of righteousness, the believer thereby stands with Abraham in a right relationship with God, having entered the same kind of relationship that Abraham had with God. Abraham was in a “right” relationship with God through faith; everyone who has that faith enjoys the same “right” relationship with God.

3. The Promise of God to Abraham and his Offspring is realized through Faith (4:13-15)

¹³For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

Paul describes God’s promise to Abraham and his offspring as the promise “that he would be the heir of the **world**.” This should cause you to pause and think, for if you are familiar with the Old Testament

record, you know of God's promise to Abraham regarding his future inheritance. Here Paul refers to the promise of God to Abraham that he would inherit the "world." But there is no place in the Old Testament where God promises Abraham that he would inherit the "world." Rather, God promised Abraham and his descendants the Promised Land, not the "world."

Verse 13 defines the content of the promise for us by saying that Abraham would become heir of the world. Examining the Old Testament we find no statement that Abraham would become the heir of the world. God had promised that he would have descendants (Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4-6, 16-20; 18:18; 22:17), the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7, 18-21; 17:8), and that all the nations would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).⁵

Douglas Moo stated the same fact in his commentary:

This language does not exactly match any promise to Abraham founding the Old Testament but succinctly summarizes the three key provisions of the promise as it unfolds in Genesis that Abraham would have an immense number of descendants, embracing "many nations" (Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4-6; 16-20; 22:17), that he would possess "the land" (Gen. 13:15-17; 15:12-21; 17:8), and that he would be the medium of blessing to "all the peoples of the earth" (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).⁶

And yet we should not think that the Old Testament does not hint or suggest of such a future for Abraham and his descendants. We read the prophecy of the coming Messiah, the promised Seed of Abraham (Cf Gal. 3:16), that He would inherit the nations of the world. **Psalm 2** records:

⁷"I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
⁸Ask of Me, and I will give You
***The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.***
⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

¹⁰***Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.***

¹¹Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.

¹²Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.(Psalm 2:7-12)

We may also see this suggested in **Psalm 22**.

²⁷***All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.***

²⁸For the kingdom is the LORD's,

⁵ Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 227.

⁶ Ibid., p. 274.

And He rules over the nations.

²⁹ All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

³⁰ A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,

³¹ They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done this.

There is also a world-wide prospect of the kingdom of God in **Psalm 47**.

⁵ God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

⁷ **For God is the King of all the earth;**
Sing praises with understanding.

⁸ **God reigns over the nations;**

God sits on His holy throne.

⁹ The princes of the people have gathered together,

The people of the God of Abraham.

For the shields of the earth belong to God;

He is greatly exalted.

There are actually quite a number of Old Testament passages that speak of the people of God possessing or indwelling the whole world.⁷

That Paul speaks of Abraham inheriting “the world” in Romans 4:13, and yet it is not promised directly to Abraham as we read of his life in the early accounts of Genesis, provides us a principle of interpreting Scripture that we should take to heart. In God’s revelation of His plan and purpose in history, that He may gradually reveal more details and a clearer understanding of His purposes among His people as the history of redemption unfolds. His purposes may expand beyond previous expectations, in that God is able, and often times willing, “to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Cf Eph. 3:20). Since this is the case, it would be wise for us in our efforts to understand the Scriptures to anticipate a development, an elaboration, an expansion of God’s promises as the biblical record unfolds. This is particularly true when we come to the New Testament Scriptures. For God has in the New Testament made clear to us what He meant in the Old Testament. As the old adage states it: **God meant what He said in the Old Testament; God says what He meant in the New Testament.** The true and full nature and extent of God’s promised destiny and destination of His people unfolds through the course of biblical history, or the story of redemption, not being fully disclosed and made clear until the revelation of God’s purpose which is contained in the New Testament Scriptures.

But there are many evangelicals that do not hold or practice this principle. Rather than understanding the Old Testament through what the New Testament teaches, they interpret the New Testament by what the Old Testament teaches. They fail or refuse to see or acknowledge the progressive revelation of God’s purposes in history.

⁷ See also Psalm 72:8-11, 17; Isa. 2:1-4; 19:18-25; 49:6-7; 52:7-10; 55:3-5; 66:23; Amos 9:11-12; Zech. 14:9.

The expansion of God's intention to give Abraham the "world" rather than simply the Promised Land of Canaan does not fit into the understanding of many who profess to believe the Scriptures. They take a promise of God to Abraham, say in Genesis 15 or 17, and then they say that it will be fulfilled exactly and literally as stated, that it cannot undergo enhancement or embellishment as the Scriptural account of the matter unfolds. They will then make a false assumption, say, claiming that the Old Testament never records that God had given the full possession of the Promised land to Israel, Abraham's physical descendants, and because God promised that it would be an "eternal inheritance", then the Israel of today, comprised of the physical descendants of Abraham, have a legitimate God-given title to the land of Canaan.

But the Scriptures declare that although God did give the land of Canaan to Israel which He fulfilled completely in the days of Joshua through King Solomon, the promised land served as a type of the new Jerusalem that God Himself will make for the eternal home of the people of God on a new earth that He will create for their habitation. The New Testament record shows us their understanding of matters in a way that we might not readily conclude from our own reading of the Old Testament record. The New Testament Scriptures gives us a divine perspective and interpretation of the matters. Let us turn to Hebrews 11.

In Hebrews 11:8-12 we read of the faith of Abraham and Sarah (11:8-12).

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Verse 8 reads, "***By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.***" Abraham's faith led to his obedience. He left Ur not knowing where he was going. His inheritance was "unseen," but because God's word had promised it to him, he believed (obeyed). God told him to do something and Abraham believed Him and so he did it, he left his family, his home, and his homeland. And so, the ***first*** way that Abraham exhibited faith was in ***his willingness to leave Ur.***

We next read of Abraham's faith after he had arrived in the land of promise. ***Verses 9 and 10, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*** Once Abraham arrived in the land which was promised him, he did not settle down to city life. He lived in tents, temporary dwelling places. The Promised Land was not his true home or inheritance. This is why Abraham lived as a sojourner in the land of promise; he "saw" the land as simply foreshadowing something as yet "unseen." He anticipated that God would one day build the New Jerusalem, a city in which he and all of his promised children would dwell in fellowship with God. In summary, the ***second*** way in which Abraham exhibited faith was ***in the manner that he lived once he arrived in Canaan.***

We then learn of the nature of the faith of Abraham's wife, Sarah. ***Verse 11 reads, "By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."*** What Paul attributed as faith to Abraham in Romans 4, the writer here states of Sarah; however, Abraham remains in view. Although Sarah was past the age of bearing she believed God's promise, because of her faith, she was enabled to conceive a child. We then read in ***verse 12, "Therefore from one man, and his as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude -- innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore."*** Abraham was dead as far as his ability to bear children; nevertheless, God gave Abraham what He had promised him, as we read in the following verses:

Then He (God) brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” (Genesis 15:5)

“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—¹⁷blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Gen. 22:16-18)

Hebrews 11:13-16 tell of **the city of God the homeland of the faithful**. What moved these people to persevere in faith was the prospect of what they would inherit one day. Their hope was not fixed on anything earthly, rather they looked for a heavenly city. Beginning with **verse 13** we read,

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

“These all” refer to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. Even the certain prospect of death did not discourage these people of faith for they foresaw that God was faithful who promised; even death would not prevent God from fulfilling His word.

They viewed themselves as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” They saw themselves as journeying throughout this life in this strange world, anticipating arriving to their promised homeland and city. This pilgrimage idea is conveyed in their own words. For example, Abraham described his life in this way even after having lived in Canaan many years. We read in **Genesis 24:1ff**.

¹Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. ²So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. ³Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, ⁴***I am a foreigner and a visitor among you.*** Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

We also read of Jacob describing his life in the same way:

⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of ***my pilgrimage*** are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of ***their pilgrimage***.” (Gen. 47:9)

In the same way we should view ourselves as “strangers and exiles” in this life on this earth. We are citizens of another realm. It is imperative that a child of God to walk as a citizen of heaven, as we read in **Philippians 3:17-20**:

¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and not those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame -- ***who set their mind on earthly things.*** ²⁰***For our citizenship is in heaven,*** from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Indeed, the patriarchs desired a homeland, but it was nothing that this world offered them. Earthly Canaan was no more their home than was the wilderness for those who would later come out of Egypt. Lest the readers think that Abraham and his descendants regarded themselves as pilgrims only because they were homesick for having left their homeland of Ur, the writer says that they had no concern for returning. *Verse 15* reads, **“And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.”** No, they saw their homeland as in heaven, awaiting them after they had completed their journey through this life. *Verse 16*, **“But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”** They took God at His word and He would not disappoint them.

“The earthly Canaan and the earthly Jerusalem were but temporary object-lessons pointing to the saints’ everlasting rest, the well-founded city of God.”⁸

The writer is making it clear that the Old Testament saints, including the patriarchs of Israel, looked to inherit the same promises that God has promised New Testament Christians.⁹

What may we say in conclusion, as we consider these matters? Let us turn and fix our hearts afresh on the promises of God of the glorious future before us. Do not become distracted or diverted by the things of this world, but remember always that we are citizens of another realm. We are ambassadors in a *strange* land. As Paul wrote:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

⁵Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

⁸But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col. 3:1-17)

⁸ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 305.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 307. “Words could hardly make it clearer that the patriarchs and the other men and women of God who lived before Christ have a share in the same inheritance of glory as is promised to believers in Christ of New Testament times.”