

But now we must ask a pointed question. If Abraham is not merely an illustration but an example of justification by faith, does this imply that Abraham was saved by faith?

Abraham was not only saved through the instrumentality of faith; he was saved on the basis of Christ's atoning work. That is, the basis of salvation was Christ's redemption, and the instrument of salvation was faith.

That this is not strictly and solely a Reformed view of salvation during the Old Testament period may be seen in the doctrinal statement of Dallas Theological Seminary, Article V. The statement declares: "We believe that according to the 'eternal purpose' of God (Eph. 3:11) salvation in the divine reckoning is always 'by grace, through faith', and rests upon the basis of the shed blood of Christ."

However, here we strike another problem. If saving faith is defined as "trust in Christ and His redemptive work as revealed in the gospel," then we must ask: Did Abraham know about and trust in Christ and His redemptive work? That is, what we are asking concerns the content of Abraham's faith: did he believe implicitly in God and the salvation which He would somehow provide, or did Abraham believe explicitly in Christ and the salvation He would accomplish?

I believe at least a partial answer to this question lies in the relationship between the content of Old Testament saving revelation and the content of Old Testament saving faith.

Two diagrams may help to make this clear. The first concerns the unfolding of the content of the old Testament saving revelation; the second concerns development in the content of Old Testament saving faith.

I believe that the development from implicit to explicit content of Old Testament saving faith runs essentially parallel to the unfolding from implicit to explicit content of Old Testament saving revelation. I believe that, as the mix of implicit and explicit elements in the content of Old Testament saving revelation became more explicit and less implicit, Israelites were responsible to believe and trust in as much about Christ and His salvation as had been revealed to that point in time.

- C. The third segment of this section (5:1-11) details some of the blessings that accompany justification by faith.

We will simply glance at them in passing, although each one is worthy of extended exposition.

Verse 1 mentions peace with God.

Verse 2 speaks of our rejoicing in the confident expectation ("hope" in the New Testament terminology) of the future manifestation of God's glory in our lives.

Verses 3-4 mention our rejoicing in sufferings, not as sadomasochists, who derive pleasure from the infliction of physical or