

Galatians 3

Introduction

1. Here is one of the most glorious chapters for Gentiles, for it includes them in promises to Abraham!
2. In this chapter, Paul returns to a rebuke of the Galatians (1:6-10) after a lengthy defense (1:11 – 2:21).
3. The chapter also includes one of the strongest arguments based on a single word from the O.T. (3:16).
4. There is more to be considered about Abraham, which was in the sermon, “Abraham and the gospel.”
5. Read the following: Gen 12:1-9; 15:1-6; 17:23-26; 22:11-18; Rom 4:1-25; Heb 11:8-19; Jas 2:14-26.
6. Remember that eternal life is not the issue here, but rather conversion to the truth of the gospel: Paul was not worried about the eternal life of these believers, but rather the correctness of their doctrine.
7. God promised Abram land, seed, blessed nations, covenant, as many as stars, and defeat of enemies, which are heaven, Christ, Gentile conversions, salvation, many elect, defeat of Satan, sin, and death.
8. Due to heresies we face in our generation, we must rightly divide these verses to oppose Arminians and Calvinists, but we must remember the Spirit’s primary intent is a refutation of Jewish legalism.

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

- A. Is it right to call a brother foolish (Matt 5:22)? It is when your purpose is their profit in truth.
 1. Our Lord did so to His disciples in order to get their attention by a rebuke (Luke 24:25).
 2. Paul did so to church members at Corinth to get their attention by a rebuke (I Cor 15:36).
 3. Railing, or name-calling, in order to defame or harm another person is verbal murder!
 4. To leave Jesus Christ’s pure gospel as taught by the greatest apostle is truly very foolish.
- B. This designation is accurate and appropriate, for these believers had left the crucified Christ.
 1. Paul identified seducing teachers, who had taken them away from continuing in the truth.
 2. He implies the bewitching use of magical arts, for reason and truth surely could not do it.
 3. False teachers do not use reason and truth (Rom 16:17-18; II Cor 11:13-15; Col 2:4,8,18).
 4. Therefore, they are seducers, and the world does not have fewer of them (II Tim 3:13).
- C. The test of Christianity and salvation is to continue in the faith (John 8:30-32; Heb 3:6,14).
 1. They had started in the true gospel (1:6), but false teachers had corrupted them (1:7).
 2. Jesus Christ will accept the obedient, and crush the disobedient (Matt 7:21; II Thess 1:8).
- D. There is only one gospel to preach, which is Paul’s gospel (I Cor 2:1-5; Gal 1:8-9; 6:14).
 1. Paul had preached Christ crucified with plain speech and powerful evidences, which was his chosen manner and method to thin the audience (Acts 9:20; 17:2-3; II Cor 2:14-17).
 2. They had fully seen and understood Christ’s death and its purpose to save through Paul’s preaching, which made their crime so great in turning to the vain works of the Law.
 3. True churches of Christ can never compromise on this gospel to attract the unregenerate.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

- A. Here is the first of five consecutive rhetorical arguments rebuking the Galatians for apostasy.
- B. This is a sharp rebuke of these foolish churches and saints for leaving the gospel Paul taught.
 1. He is confronting them with the source of the great spiritual blessings they had enjoyed.
 2. Why in the world would they return to the works of the Law, which never provided such!
- C. *This only would I learn of you* is not Paul’s last question! But he stressed the important issue!
 1. We say, “I want to know just one thing,” but we are stressing one of many questions.

2. Note how Paul goes on to ask many questions (3:3,4,5,19,21; 4:9,15,16,21,30; 5:7,11).
- D. This is the promised gift of the Spirit from God through Christ (John 7:39; Ac 2:33-38; 5:32).
 1. The gift of the Holy Spirit was visible in the early church (Ac 8:14-19; 10:44-48; 19:1-7).
 2. The gift Paul is asking about is more than merely an invisible earnest (see 3:5 in context).
 3. This visible demonstration of supernatural blessing and divine confirmation was glorious.
 4. It is no longer visible, for such gifts ended (I Cor 13:8-10; II Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30).
- E. We must understand “faith” here for the object of faith, Jesus Christ or the gospel of Christ.
 1. You cannot literally hear faith, and faith cannot literally hear, for hearing is the use of your audio nerves to pick up audible sound, and faith is confident trust in some thing.
 2. A metonym substitutes a related aspect of a thing for the thing itself – here the means of receiving the good news of Jesus Christ and salvation by Him alone is described as faith.
 3. Metonyms add force to language by focusing on a particular relationship to the thing described, which in this case is stressing faith against the works of the Law of Moses.

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

- A. Here is the second of five consecutive rhetorical arguments rebuking Galatia for apostasy.
- B. Returning to the charge of foolishness (3:1), Paul rebuked them for leaving their first faith.
 1. They began with spiritual blessings in the gospel, and now they pursued fleshly rituals!
 2. Since you got started in great blessings through the Spirit, will you turn now to the flesh?
 3. Since you got started in great blessings through the Spirit, will the flesh lift you higher?
 4. How could the glorious and superior gospel of Christ be improved by the inferior Law?
- C. Their conversion had resulted in great blessings by the Spirit, but now they were in the flesh.
 1. The gift of the Spirit was based on spiritual faith to believe in Jesus Christ (John 7:39).
 2. The Galatians had believed and obeyed the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ, but now they had added works of the flesh apart from the Spirit of Christ, in order to improve further?
 3. The works of the Law did not involve the Spirit; they were flesh actions done outwardly.
 4. They thought to improve on Jesus Christ by circumcision and avoiding pepperoni pizza!
 5. Paul called the Law of Moses and its commandments *weak and unprofitable* (Heb 7:18), *carnal ordinances* (Heb 9:10), *rudiments of the world* (Col 2:8,20), and *beggarly elements* in this very epistle (Gal 4:9).

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

- A. Here is the third of five consecutive rhetorical arguments rebuking Galatia for apostasy.
- B. Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is glorious in marshalling rhetorical arguments!
- C. Here he turns to the persecution they endured for following Jesus Christ without the Law!
 1. The Jews had persecuted them, but they had not cared earlier, so their change was severe.
 2. In other words, After all you gave up to obey Christ, will you now follow men for peace?
 3. In other words, Did you pay a price to follow Christ, and now will you compromise Him?
 4. In other words, Was all your suffering for Jesus Christ just a stupid and empty decision?
 5. In other words, Only if you return to Christ will past suffering have been worthwhile.
 6. In other words, You counted and paid the cost of discipleship, but you want a refund?

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

- A. Here is the fourth of five consecutive rhetorical arguments rebuking Galatia for apostasy.

- B. Returning to a similar line of reasoning as 3:2, Paul refers to God's blessing on His ministers.
- C. What is the hearing of faith? It is believing the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
- D. The apostles had authority to dispense the Holy Spirit as a gift to men (Acts 8:14-17; 19:6).
- E. The test here is the power and sign of miracles: the gospel had many; the Law had none.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

- A. Here is the last of five consecutive arguments rebuking their heresy, but this one is positive.
- B. This is the most popular Bible quotation (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3,5,6,9,22,24; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23).
- C. Paul declared New Testament worship of Christ to be comparable to Abraham's worship.
 1. The adverbial phrase, *even as*, means that there is a very strong comparison to be seen.
 2. Paul has been mentioning faith over and over, and Abraham is the greatest example of it.
 3. The Galatians stood by faith (2:16; 3:1-5); God approved Abraham by faith (Gen 15:6).
 4. This is precious and sweet, if you grasp Paul introduced Abraham as father to Gentiles!
 5. The Judaizer false teachers could only offer some connection to Moses by circumcision.
- D. Why is Abraham so important? For very good reasons in opposing the legalism of Judaizers.
 1. All the Jews recognized Abraham as the great friend of God, inheritor of promises, and father of the nation, in whom they took great confidence (Matt 3:9; John 8:33; Ex 3:6).
 2. For those trusting Abraham, he was a man approved and commended by God for faith.
 3. For those trusting circumcision, Abraham was declared righteous before it (Rom 4:9-12).
 4. For those trusting Law, Abram was righteous 430 years before (Rom 4:13-16; Gal 3:17).
- E. What did Abraham believe? God promised him a son and a multitudinous seed (Gen 15:6).
- F. Did Abraham call forth faith in order to be justified and made righteous by God at this time?
 1. Here is where we greatly differ from Arminians and Calvinists alike about justification, whom we find to be very similar on this doctrine, when we press them for definitions.
 2. Arminians hold conditional justification – faith is the human condition for righteousness.
 3. Calvinists hold instrumental justification – faith is the instrument receiving righteousness.
 4. We deny both as being heretical notions, for our faith does not affect legal justification.
 5. The text says God accepted Abraham's faith and counted it as evidence for righteousness, which is how we understand it: our faith is the spiritual evidence and fruit of salvation.
 6. The difference is significant – is legal justification conditional, or is it unconditional? Is faith the means of righteousness before God, or is it only the evidence of righteousness?
 7. Abraham had believed God and his promises and trusted Him obediently long before this minor event (Gen 12:1-4; Heb 11:8; Gen 12:7,8; 13:4,14-18; 14:17-24).
 8. If this event was the conditional or instrumental cause of Abraham's justification, then he was a condemned pagan in his previous acts of worship, which God joyfully accepted!
 9. Did Melchizedek bless Abram as a condemned sinner on his way to hell (Gen 14:18-20)?
 10. Before Abraham could get started believing, God had already accepted him (Gen 15:1)!
 11. If this event was the conditional or instrumental cause of Abraham's justification, then the shish-ka-bob javelin act of Phinehas was his condition or instrument (Ps 106:30-31)!
 12. Is it an act of faith that justifies? A life of faith? Or only while you have faith? Or what?
- G. Why was this event singled out and quoted more in the New Testament than any passage?
 1. Abel, Enoch, and Noah were ignored, because they were not the "father" of Israel, though they proved their righteous character by their faith long before Abraham (Heb 11:4-7).
 2. God wrote Genesis 15:6 for the future use of Paul in showing the important role of faith to Jews trusting the Law that came 430 years later and to Gentiles that had no Law at all!

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

- A. What glorious comfort! Gentiles show they are Abraham's children in God's sight by faith!
 - 1. Paul has ended his sharp rebuke (3:1-5), as he preaches the gospel of peace to Gentiles.
 - 2. True identification with Abraham, the great friend of God, is by faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Instead of being Jewish proselytes of Moses' Law, faith takes Gentiles back to Abraham!
 - 4. God's promises to Abraham were made 430 years before He gave Moses the Law (3:17)!
 - 5. Delight in the plural *children* here, though the promises were to a singular *seed* (3:16), for Paul introduced the glorious fact that N.T. saints are the promised descendants!
- B. Does an act of believing or a life of believing make you Abraham's child or only prove it?
 - 1. It only proves we are a child, just as loving enemies proves us His children (Matt 5:48).
 - 2. No man would believe on Christ without life first (John 3:3; 5:24,40; 6:44,65; 8:43,47; 10:26; I Cor 1:18,24; 2:14; II Cor 2:14-17; 4:1-4; II Thess 2:9-14; Eph 2:1; I John 5:1)!
 - 3. James taught very clearly that faith by itself proves nothing of salvation (James 2:14-26).
 - 4. Peter taught very clearly that faith by itself proves nothing of salvation (II Peter 1:5-10).
- C. What faith is under consideration here? Just any old faith? In Moses? Or in Christ alone?
 - 1. This must be faith used in a specific way to describe those in the religion of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. For this is the way Paul will describe the children of Abraham momentarily (3:26-29).
 - 3. Paul had not been using "faith" for bare believing or decisional salvation, but rather as a metonym against the confidence of some in justification by the works of the Law (3:2).
 - 4. The contrast is between a doctrine of salvation by the finished work of Christ evidenced by faith versus a doctrine of salvation by earning acceptance with God by Moses' Law.
 - 5. The faith that proves justification and acceptance with God is faith that believes God justifies the ungodly through Jesus Christ without human cooperation at all (Rom 4:5).
- D. Paul is not describing the children of Abraham as those who made a mere decision for Jesus.
 - 1. The issue is plainly stated in many places, including 3:11, that the just shall live by faith.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus Christ condemned Jews that believed on Him momentarily (Jn 8:30-31).
 - 3. Faith is not decisional regeneration, but a strong commitment to believe and obey the gospel of Christ, bearing fruit of good works (I Thess 1:2-4; Jas 2:14-26; II Pet 1:5-11).
 - 4. The heresy of decisional regeneration is damnable. Paul means the life of faith, not an emotional moment in some "evangelistic" crusade with an organ creating your response.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

- A. Paul, introducing Abraham and faith versus Law works, raises further proof from the O.T.
- B. God preached the gospel to Abram in Genesis 12:3; 18:18; and 22:18 by His foreknowledge.
 - 1. Observe the personification of scripture ... foreseeing ... preaching ... and saying.
 - 2. Paul took his readers all the way back to the first words about Abraham in Moses' Law!
 - 3. Paul's Gentile audience was the very heathen that God referred to in His gospel promise.
 - 4. The gospel is good news about Christ, and it was preached to Abraham in these words.
 - 5. Abraham knew his Seed was Christ as much as he knew the land was heaven (John 8:56).
- C. How are nations blessed in Abraham? There is great confusion and heresy about this today.
 - 1. First, the blessing is not carnal; it is the spiritual blessing of justification through Christ.
 - 2. The blessing is eternal life in Christ and the gospel about Him that is believed by faith.

3. Second, it is not based on Abraham's biological seed, or the so-called Jews in Palestine, which cannot even prove (and highly doubt themselves) they are even related to Shem!
4. American public policy toward Israel has been fueled by errors taken from Genesis 12:3 and related verses. John Hagee and Jerry Falwell greatly err thinking that more F-15's for Israel is the condition for this blessing and America's prosperity is the promised blessing.
5. Read how Jesus and Caiaphas prophesied of Gentile conversions (John 10:16; 11:49-52).
- D. Is faith the conditional means, instrumental means, or evidential means of our justification?
 1. If it is the conditional or instrumental, then why did God bypass much of the human race?
 2. You must remember that Paul had never met an Arminian or Calvinist when writing this.
 3. He did not use faith in a way to clearly identify it as a condition, instrument, or evidence.
 4. We go to other places in the New Testament to learn the role of faith in our justification.
 5. He contrasted faith – believing the gospel about Jesus Christ – to the works of the Law.
 6. The “faith” and “hearing of faith” used here in context refer to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, God's grace in justifying the ungodly without works, the gospel truth declaring these glad tidings, and the work-rejecting faith of Gentiles laying hold of those promises.
 7. If you do not see this important distinction, meditate on 1:23; 3:2,5,23,25; 6:10; Eph 4:5; James 2:1; etc., to recognize the use of faith as a metonym for the religion of Jesus Christ.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

- A. If a person believes the promises of God in the gospel, even heathen Gentiles, they are partakers in the blessings God promised to Abraham and all nations through him.
- B. Being “of faith” trusts Jesus Christ and His work alone for justification and not any works of the Law, for Abraham's faith was the believing of God's promises proving His eternal life.
- C. How was Abraham blessed? God declared him righteous based on the evidence of faith, which we have declared for us by the scriptures, when we believe God's grace in Christ.
- D. God's blessing is spiritual – Jesus Christ; and the evidence for it is spiritual – faith in Christ.
- E. Gentiles can be intimately related to Abraham, the father of Israel and the Jews, though they never heard of Moses, his Law, or ever considered circumcision or the evil of bacon.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

- A. The quotation here proving Law duty from the Old Testament is taken from Deut 27:26.
- B. Looking to the Law for justification leaves you condemned, because no man can keep it all.
 1. Paul had already declared this fact for even Jews in his recorded rebuke of Peter (2:16).
 2. If a person trusted the Law for righteousness, he missed God's promise of justification.
 3. As we shall learn before leaving the chapter, the Law was to drive us to Christ (3:21-26), and Paul taught its purpose was to make us exceedingly sinful before God (Rom 7:9-14).
 4. Do you remember how righteous you felt after hearing the Sermon on the Mount explained with our Lord's broad definitions to include even the attitude of the heart?
 5. But the curse of the Law has been totally destroyed by Jesus Christ our Lord (3:13)!
- C. Is the issue here the status of Galatians in heaven, or the integrity of their religious system?
 1. What was the eternal, legal, and vital status of Cornelius before Peter (Acts 10:34-35)?
 2. If we go ahead to Paul's reasoning in 5:1-7, we see he is dealing with religious systems.
 3. Paul knew the Galatians were already justified before God (1:1-5; 3:2; 4:4-6,19,28; 5:1).
 4. Confusion about justification does not alter God's purpose (Eph 1:3-6; II Timothy 2:13).

5. The elect will be justified, but maybe not converted (Rom 8:29-34; 10:1-5; II Tim 2:10).

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

- A. The Old Testament itself bore witness to the fact that Moses' Law could not justify men, so Paul brings another argument to bear against the Judaizers from their own Scriptures.
- B. Therefore, the Gentiles were foolish to believe false teachers stressing the Law of Moses.
- C. The quotation here is from Habakkuk 2:4, where the life of the just is based on faith in God.
- D. This quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 is also used by Paul in Romans 1:17 and Hebrews 10:38.
- E. Those just before God and accepted with Him live by faith, rather than by works of the Law.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

- A. Faith and Law are mutually exclusive – one trusts free promises; one earns by performance.
- B. Jesus answered a young man how he could be saved according to the Law (Matt 19:16-17).
- C. However, faith as a condition is a work of the Law (Matt 23:23; John 6:28-29; I John 3:23).
- D. Faith that is not of the Law ... is faith understood as only evidence of God's free justification of the ungodly by Christ, rather than the conditional or instrumental basis for it (Rom 4:5).

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

- A. The Law of Moses could not justify any man; it could only condemn and curse men for sins.
 - 1. Remember from 3:10 that the Law of Moses only cursed men with condemnation.
 - 2. The Galatian readers had to know a remedy for being cursed by the Law of Moses.
 - 3. God applied the Law's penalty against Him, though He was holy and sinless (Heb 7:26).
 - 4. Here is the first half of justification – His death made me “just as if I'd never sinned.”
 - 5. What is the other half? “Just as if I'd lived His holy life” (Rom 5:17-19; II Cor 5:21).
- B. Here is the great means of justification – the death of Christ – even for those with the Law!
 - 1. While the Law condemned and cursed all men, Jesus Christ became a curse by the Law!
 - 2. God's curse against sin under the Law was applied to Christ on the cross (II Cor 5:21)!
 - 3. It pleased God to bruise the Lord Jesus Christ in our place for sin (Dan 9:24; Is 53:10).
- C. Any man hung on a tree according to capital punishment by the Law was under God's curse.
 - 1. Capital punishment was God's most severe penalty attached to any crime under the Law.
 - 2. But capital punishment by hanging was a severe measure of cursing (Deut 21:22-23).

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- A. We had a similar verse earlier (3:8), where the blessing of justification was *through faith*, but we knew it was a metonym for Jesus Christ and the full gospel scheme of salvation by grace.
 - 1. The blessings and promises of God are all wrapped up in Jesus Christ and Him alone.
 - 2. Here it is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins by being made a curse for us (3:13).
 - 3. Our faith merely lays hold of promises God made before the world began, to Abraham, and in the gospel; and we must add good works to that faith for it to be true evidence.
 - 4. It is our holy duty to rightly divide the word of truth to exalt Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of His people, and His death and resurrection as the only means of justification.

- B. The blessing God promised all nations through Abraham was free justification by Christ, which is seen in heaven by a great multitude *out of* every nation (Rev 5:9; 7:9; Rom 9:24).
- C. A purchased benefit of this free justification is the promise of God's presence by the Spirit.
 - 1. This is the promised gift of the Spirit given to Christ and then us, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Acts 2:33; Eph 1:14).
 - 2. Moses' Law had nothing like this at all – only the letter, condemnation, and death (3:2-5).
 - 3. Not any faith will do, but faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel of justification by promise.
 - 4. The Holy Spirit is obtained by faith and obedience (John 7:37-39; Eph 1:13; Acts 5:32).

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

- A. Paul introduced a natural argument understood by his readers that confirmed covenants and promises are not added to, which is what he means by the words *after the manner of men!*
- B. There was nothing to be added to the finished work of Christ, especially Law works, for the promises to Abraham had been given, confirmed, and accepted. Nothing could be added.
- C. No one could argue or object that the Law had added certain conditions to the promises, because others cannot disannul confirmed covenants, nor can any additions be made.
- D. Paul will apply this natural argument in 3:17, after he proves the promises were in Christ.
- E. The heresy Paul had to fight was combining Christ's death with circumcision and the Law.
- F. The covenant and promises of God are based on Him and oath – the words of the Testator!
- G. And by what means were the covenants and promises put into force – by death (Heb 9:15).
- H. There is no place for frustrated grace (2:21) by adding anything to Christ's finished work.
- I. How was the covenant confirmed that God made to Abraham? By an oath (Heb 6:16-20)!
- J. What was the role of circumcision? Only the outward sign of the covenant (Gen 17:1-11).

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

- A. The several promises to Abraham and his seed are in Genesis, recorded by Moses, but given 430 years before Sinai (Gen 12:7; 13:15-16; 15:5,13,18; 17:8-10,19; 21:12; 22:17-18; 24:7).
 - 1. The great friend of God and covenant head who received terrific promises was Abraham.
 - 2. When read carefully and understood correctly, the promises were chiefly through Christ.
 - 3. Therefore, what Paul has said and will say about Gentiles being blessed in Abraham is based on the very wording of the Law that the Jews took so much pride in! Glory!
- B. These promises are very specifically made to Abraham and his singular seed, which is Christ.
 - 1. God's promises were not to plural descendants through any of his eight sons, but rather in his singular descendant, Jesus Christ, in whom God had chosen all the elect in eternity.
 - 2. Note Paul's dogmatism about this wording, though he had used the plural *children* (3:7), which he will tie together neatly with the plural elect in the singular Christ shortly (3:29).
 - 3. Every one of the promises should be understood spiritually first in Christ and His elect.
 - 4. Any fulfillment in Israel is beggarly, carnal, inferior, and shadowy compared to Christ.
 - 5. The two seeds – of Jews and Gentiles – are united in one seed spiritually in Christ (3:28).
 - 6. This is glorious news for Gentiles, especially those being treated as inferior by Judaizers!
 - 7. This greatly despises Zionism, exalts the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and refutes Futurism.
- C. What are the promises God made to Abraham and his seed that Gentile believers can claim?
 - 1. There are twelve specific promises to Abraham and his seed, with some duplication (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 13:16; 15:5; 15:18; 17:7; 17:8; 17:19; 21:12; 22:17; 22:18; 24:7).

2. Even the promise of land is to be viewed in Christ, for Abraham never owned any land, never wanted any land, and only desired heaven (Luke 16:22; Acts 7:3-5; Heb 11:8-16).
 3. Even the promise of an innumerable family is to be viewed in Christ, which is realized by the multitude that no man can number of elect in heaven (Rev 5:9-10; 7:9-10).
 4. Even the promise of possessing the gate of his enemies is to be viewed in Christ, which is realized by our Lord's great victory over satan, sin, death, and hell (Gen 3:15; Matt 16:18; Luke 11:21-22; I Cor 15:25-26; Col 2:14-15).
 5. Even the promise of blessing all nations is to be viewed in Christ, which is realized by justification by grace through faith for Gentiles (Gal 3:8; Rom 1:5; 16:26; Rev 5:9-10).
- D. Counterfeit Bible versions, like the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the New King James Version, and The Message, corrupt these sweet promises.
1. Every modern version uses the plural "descendants" or "children" or the indefinite "offspring" for Abraham's promises, which reveals indeed a great battle for the Bible.
 2. How can men endorse a Bible that has "seed" in Gal 3:16 and "descendants" in Genesis?
 - a. This shows you the character and commitment of modern Bible translators to truth.
 - b. They make a translation of a particular word in Gal 3:16 and then deny it in Genesis.
 - c. This should get you very angry at a profane perversion of scripture to serve Zionists.
 - d. While seed can mean plural descendant, and seeds is never used anywhere in the Bible, yet we know from Genesis 3:15-16 that the Holy Spirit can distinguish the two.
 3. Since Paul argued justification by free grace on the certainty that the Old Testament must read the singular, "Seed," then any plural noun in Genesis is a profane perversion.
 - a. Such a Bible is not scripture, for it makes Paul's and the Holy Spirit's argument a lie.
 - b. Such a Bible is not scripture, for it contradicts itself (Pr 8:8; John 10:35; I John 2:21).
 - c. Such a Bible replaces Paul's doctrine of salvation by grace with salvation by race.
 - d. Such a Bible replaces Paul's doctrine of salvation by grace with nationalism by race.
 - e. Such a Bible proves that modern editors are either very ignorant or malicious liars.
 - f. Such a Bible promotes Jewish fables that Paul opposed 2000 years ago (Titus 1:14).
 - g. Such a Bible leads Americans to support the most antichristian government on earth!
 - h. Such a Bible steals the good news and joyful sound of God's blessings on Gentiles!
 - i. Such a Bible replaces the Lord Jesus Christ with Golda Meir and Menachem Begin!
 - j. Such a Bible relegates the kingdom and churches of Christ to a pitiful after-thought!
 - k. Such a Bible starves saints by removing the every word of God they need (Luke 4:4).
 - l. Such a Bible exalts those people who claim to be Jews in synagogues (Rev 2:9; 3:9).

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

- B. This verse is connected to 3:15, where Paul argued that once human covenants are made and confirmed, they cannot be disannulled or added to, and neither can the covenant of grace.
1. The covenant promise was made to Abram when he left Haran for Canaan (Gen 12:1-4).
 2. It was confirmed in numerous ways and at various times during Abram's life (Gen 15:7-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18), which was *before* the Law of Moses by 430 years.
- C. This verse is also connected to 3:16, for Paul refers here to the covenant being confirmed by God in Christ, which we can read repeatedly in Genesis by virtue of the singular noun *seed*!
- D. What about the 430 years? They are the period of time from Genesis 12:4 to Exodus 19:1.

1. All modern Bible versions alter Exodus 12:40 to place Israel in Egypt for 430 years, though the KJV correctly states they sojourned in Canaan and Egypt for the 430 years.
 2. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned in Canaan for 215 years, and Jacob and his family sojourned in Egypt for 215 years. The time they dwelt in Egypt is not stated in Ex 12:40.
 3. See the web document linked below, “Do Commas Matter?” that covers the issue further.
- E. Therefore, Paul argued here that God’s promise of justification of Gentiles through Christ is antecedent and superior to and unalterable by the Law of Moses, which the Judaizers adored.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

- A. God promised Abraham an inheritance of land, which both Abraham and we understand to be heaven and the heavenly Jerusalem (Luke 16:22; Acts 7:1-2; Heb 11:8-16).
- B. If, like the Judaizers out of Jerusalem taught, the inheritance of heaven was by Moses’ Law, then it could not be by covenant promise to Abraham, for law and promise are incompatible.
- C. God defined a contrast between grace and works and between promise and law (Rom 1:5-6).

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

- A. Paul by the Spirit raised an obvious question or argument, Why then did God give the Law?
 1. Of course, Judaizers sought to bewitch the Galatians that it was needed for justification!
 2. They would object to Paul, if the Law was not for justification, then what was it for?
- B. If the covenant promises to Abram are antecedent and superior to and unalterable by Moses’ Law, what was the purpose for Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the rest?
- C. The Law was *added* to the promises made to Abraham, but they did not alter the promises.
- D. It was added to restrain the wickedness of God’s people, because of their sinful tendencies.
 1. By comparing spiritual with spiritual (I Cor 2:13), we can fill out this explanation further.
 2. It was added, because all men, including the people of God, are depraved; and they need a check on their lives to keep them from further sinfulness (I Tim 1:5-11; Matt 19:3-9).
 3. It was added, because the people of God needed to know how exceeding sinful they truly were to appreciate the promised Seed – Jesus Christ our Saviour (Rom 5:20-21; 7:7-13).
 4. The Law of Moses was a schoolmaster to show the great need for a real Saviour, not become a stone Saviour through a code of works by which men could earn heaven (3:24)!
- E. The Law as a religious system – moral and ceremonial – was only to last until Jesus Christ.
 1. The Law and the prophets were until John the Baptist, and then they ended (Luke 16:16).
 2. The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14-18).
 3. Since it is not a permanent form of religious service, it is inferior again (Hebrews 7:12).
 4. It is good at a point like this to appreciate the greater glory of the gospel (II Cor 3:6-14).
 5. The book of Hebrews was written to convince converted Jews of its great superiority.
- F. Moses gave the Law to Israel, the mediator who received it from angels on Mt Sinai, when Israel left Egypt, 430 years after Gen 12:1-4 (Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Acts 7:53; Heb 2:1-4).
 1. God gave promises to Abraham directly, which shows another aspect of their superiority.
 2. Israel did not want God to speak to them, so they chose Moses (Ex 20:18-21; Acts 7:38).
 3. The giving of the Law was so terrible the people were afraid to have God talk with them, and they could not touch Sinai; so Moses intervened to bring the Law (Heb 12:18-21).
 4. Moses was a faithful man, but he was far inferior to God and Jesus Christ (Heb 3:1-6).

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

- A. Verses like this one have baffled commentators, making this one of the N.T.'s problem texts.
- B. This is another very short argument about the superiority of the gospel by the last clause of 3:19 and this short verse. Paul will return immediately to the first half of 3:19 with 3:21-25.
- C. Considering the context will reduce this "problem text" to a very simple Pauline argument.
 - 1. The context is very clear – the Law given to a mediator is inferior to promises from God!
 - 2. A mediator is a go-between helping two other parties, so there are a total of three parties.
 - 3. God gave the promises directly to Abraham, the Friend of God, without any mediator, for the blessed God has secured justification for the elect entirely by His own work.
 - 4. But Moses received the Law from angels, who were assigned the task by God (3:19).
 - 5. Moses, whom the Jews thought was really a great man, was merely a messenger boy.
 - 6. The Law was so terrible and distant from God it required a mediator to speak for God.
 - 7. Not even Moses enjoyed the job, because the situation was so terrifying (Heb 12:18-21).
 - 8. Therefore, the Law is inferior by its communication to man and its distance from God.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

- A. Paul heads off another objection of legalists – Paul is making Moses to be contrary to Abram.
- B. The question implies that Paul was guilty of teaching God is contradictory in His covenants.
- C. Paul answered with a strong negative, but clarified kindly that the Law was not for salvation.
 - 1. If God had given the Law for purposes of justification, then life would have been by Law.
 - 2. But God did not give the Law for purposes of justification, so do not confuse its purpose.
 - 3. Paul had already proven from scripture that the Law could not justify anyone (3:10-11).
 - 4. And he has just proven further that the purpose of the Law was for displaying sin (3:19).
 - 5. There was not a Law given that required faith as the condition for justification (Matt 23:23); for the faith that counts before God believes He justifies the ungodly (Rom 4:5)!

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

- A. The *scripture* here is a metonym for the Law, because the O.T. scriptures revealed the Law!
- B. The Law was not given to justify any – it was to condemn all (Rom 3:19; 5:20-21; 7:7-13)!
- C. The result is simple, when the Law is understood – all men are condemned needing a Savior!
- D. Eternal life and all the wonderful promises to Abraham are through Jesus Christ to believers.
 - 1. God gave the inheritance and all the associated blessings to Abraham by way of promise.
 - 2. The *faith of Jesus Christ* here, as in 2:16, is either Christ's faith or the gospel of Christ.
 - 3. We choose Christ's faith for reasons there: He is the Second Adam of our justification.
 - 4. Even if you choose the gospel, religion, or system of Jesus Christ, it precludes conditional or instrumental justification, for the promise is by Jesus Christ, not by faith.
 - 5. Faith lines one up with Abraham (3:7,9,26,29), so that believers can claim the promises.
 - 6. God's design of the covenants is to shut every mouth and make Jesus Christ preeminent.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

- A. Here we have a plain use of *faith* as a metonym for Jesus Christ and His gospel and doctrine.
 - 1. What is the event of *before* and *afterwards*? The arrival of Christ, Abraham's seed (3:19).
 - 2. Did men have faith before Jesus? Yes! Did they have it before Moses? Yes! Abram? Yes!
 - 3. Abel had the first justifying faith we can read about, and his was very early (Heb 11:4).
 - 4. The word *faith* is not being used as your belief, confidence, or trust in Christ, but as Christ Himself, Who is our sole Saviour by the grace of God and the object of our faith.
- B. Prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, we were under the Law of Moses waiting for the gospel.
 - 1. God chose to leave His people for about 1500 years condemned under the Law of Moses.
 - 2. Since it could not justify, and only reminded of sins (Heb 10:1-4), it kept men in prison!
 - 3. The gospel of Jesus Christ and its clear and full revelation of how God justifies men through His grace in Jesus Christ is a glorious blessing that is greatly neglected by many.
 - 4. God promised eternal life to the elect, but revealed it in Christ (II Tim 1:9-10; Titus 1:3).

24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

- A. Arriving at an intermediate conclusion, Paul summarizes that the Law was pointing to Christ.
- B. Since the Law could not justify anyone, but only condemned everyone – it looked elsewhere.
- C. Paul is referring here to 1500 years of Jewish history, during which the Law pointed forward.
- D. Due to Paul's varying use of *faith*, we must decide the sense of faith here in this context.
 - 1. If we make it our simple faith in Christ, then it is encouraging believers with promises.
 - 2. If we make it Christ Himself and His gospel, as the previous verse, it is for believers.
 - 3. *Faith* is used for Christ, the gospel of grace, and God's promises of life to believers.
- E. All men are justified and saved the same way – by the grace of God in Jesus Christ – but the Law was a schoolmaster in directing the understanding of men toward the gospel of Christ.

25 *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

- A. Connected to 3:23 by the same use of *faith*, this verse declares the Old Testament to be gone.
- B. After 1500 years of bondage under a covenant of works, the promised Savior finally arrived.
- C. Men had faith from Abel forward, but this is the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel of free justification by the grace of God upon those who believe the promises.
- D. Jesus Christ and His gospel reveal how eternal life was secured all along (II Timothy 1:9-10).
- E. Since Jesus Christ, the promised seed of Abraham, and His gospel and religious system have arrived, there is no further need for the Law of Moses which simply pointed to Jesus Christ.

26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

- A. Our claim to being God's children is not by the Law, but by laying hold of Christ by faith.
- B. Remember, Paul is writing Gentiles, who are children of God by the evidence of their faith.
- C. Faith does not make God's children, for faith follows regeneration (John 1:13; Gal 4:6; 5:22).
- D. A man is born again before he believes, loves, or does righteousness (John 3:3; 5:24; 6:44,65; 8:43,47; 10:26; Romans 8:7-8; I Corinthians 2:14-16; I John 3:14; 4:7,15; 5:1).
- E. There is no reason to make this Christ's faith, for the following text shows its practical sense.
- F. The language no more requires a condition or instrument than Matt 5:45 or II Cor 6:14-18.

27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

- A. Baptism is the public act that shows our faith in God as Just and our Justifier (Luke 7:29-30).
- B. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience, not a request for a good conscience (I Pet 3:21).
- C. Baptism is how we publicly and practically identify with Jesus Christ's gospel (Mark 16:16).
- D. Baptism is the public act that shows faith and obedience in three resurrections (Rom 6:3-5).
- E. Baptism has nothing at all to do with how we get into Christ eternally, legally, or vitally.
- F. This is no different than putting on the new man, when we are baptized to put on Christ.
- G. The followers of Alexander Campbell err greatly when they require baptism for eternal life, for this is the fourth relationship in Jesus Christ in time and importance. See the five phases.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

- A. The distinction between Jew and Gentile in free justification before God and the worship and religion of God have been ended. Any effort to recreate a "special people" misses the point!
- B. No man can say there are any further distinctions between Jews and Gentiles for salvation.
- C. Our position in Christ is not affected by race, by nationality, by economic class, or by sex.
- D. In Jesus Christ, as far as salvation is concerned, Jews and Gentiles are on the same footing.
- E. In practice, the differences of employment and sex still stand (I Cor 7:20-23; I Tim 2:8-14).

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- A. Abraham, the father of the faithful and the Friend of God, to whom God gave many great and precious promises, is the father of all who believe in Christ, making them his legitimate heirs.
- B. If you have aligned yourself with Christ by faith and baptism, you are the heir of Abraham.
- C. It is baptized Christians who are the seed of Abraham and can claim the promises (3:26-27)!
- D. What singular promise is intended here? Free justification through Christ on Gentiles (3:8).
- E. How do you become Christ's in order to be Abram's seed? Practically by faith and baptism!
 - 1. Eternally, God chosen you in Christ by election (Eph 1:3-6; II Tim 1:9; I Cor 1:30-31).
 - 2. Legally, Jesus Christ obeyed, died, and lives for the elect (Romans 5:19; I Cor 15:22).
 - 3. Vitally, the Holy Spirit regenerates you in Christ (Eph 2:4-6,10; I Peter 1:2; John 3:6-8).
 - 4. Practically, we are Christ's by our faith and baptism (Rom 13:14; Ep 4:24; Phil 2:12-13).
 - 5. Finally, we are Christ's by glorification in heaven (Romans 8:23,29-30; 9:23; I Peter 1:5).

Conclusion

- 1. What a chapter! Paul crushed carnal and naturalistic ideas of Abraham's seed and God's blessings.
- 2. Those Christian churches believing and teaching that the "Jews" in the Middle East are Abraham's seed are horribly mistaken and greatly diverted from the spiritual fulfillment of the New Testament.
- 3. But reader! Rather than rejoice in God's rejection of natural Jews to include Gentiles by faith, have you fled to Jesus Christ to lay hold of Him by faith and identify yourself with Him by immersion?
- 4. Do you have the gift of the Spirit promised to those who are baptized? Are you walking in that Spirit?

For Further Study:

- 1. The sermon outline or audio tapes for a sermon series entitled, "Abraham and the Gospel," preached in 2003.
- 2. The web document, "[Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation](#)," gives many reasons for rejecting conditions.
- 3. The web document, "[When Were You Saved?](#)" rightly divides salvation to five phases for reconciling scripture.
- 4. The web document, "[Justification By Christ Alone](#)," denying faith a condition, by Samuel Richardson in 1647.
- 5. The web document, "[Do Commas Matter?](#)" which shows the error of modern versions in Exodus 12:40.
- 6. The web document, "[Who Is the Seed of Abraham?](#)" which proves it is Christ and refutes common heresies.
- 7. The sermon outline, "[II Corinthians 3](#)," which proves the superiority of the new testament from this place.

8. The sermon outline, "How Do Sinners Get Into Christ?" prepared and presented against the Church of Christ.