

# **Galatians 3 - Law vs Grace; Scriptural Argument for Faith; Logical Argument for Faith; Purpose of the Law; The Believer's Present Privileges**

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## **Galatians 3**

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- (A) The charge (3:1)

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**1** You foolish Galatians! Who put you under a spell? Was not Jesus the Messiah clearly portrayed before your very eyes as having been crucified?

**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?

- Paul's tone was direct and severe: You foolish Galatians! Their embrace of a doctrine that declared the death of Christ unnecessary was irrational (Cf. Gal 2:21)

- "...foolish" - not an insult of their intelligence, but rather a description of someone who rejects divine revelation

— A "fool" in the Bible is someone who takes what the Bible says, takes God's Word, and discards it or considers it irrelevant

— The same word is used by Jesus on the Road to Emmaus (Cf. Luke 24:25; Ps 14:1)

— The Galatian Christians had rejected the teaching of Paul, so therefore he labeled them as "fools"

- "...bewitched" - *baskainō*, to be charmed or fascinated in a misleading way as by flattery, false promises, occultic power, through the use of feelings over fact (emotion instead of clear thinking). They lost their grasp of the truth.

— It's as if these Galatians were put under a spell, they lost their rational faculties; Paul is telling them that their thinking is not rational, they are not thinking clearly

— These brand new converts were pulled away from the doctrine Paul taught them, at an emotional level. They were thinking with their emotions instead of with their minds. Their emotions were running away with them and their minds had not caught up yet.

— Paul says in the last verse (2:21) that if their salvation (sanctification) could come through human power, then Christ died needlessly. If a person could attain righteousness, at either the positional level or the practical level, without Jesus, by performing some sort of religious ritual, then Jesus died needlessly.

- Notice that Paul is asking a question: who did this to you?

— Paul's point is that I didn't do this to you. When I left Galatia and returned to Syrian Antioch, you were in a good place. You didn't get this salvation by work doctrine from me.

— Obviously they didn't get this teaching from Paul...they got it from false teachers, which invaded Galatia as soon as Paul left, and deceived these new believers, playing on their emotions rather than facts, putting them back under a legalistic manmade system.

— *A supplemented Christ is a supplanted Christ.* [Hendrickson]

- "...was publicly portrayed" - *prographō*, the posting of important notes on a public marketplace; public (not private information) that anyone can simply walk by and read

— This is how Paul taught the gospel in Galatia...out in the open, publicly, and in such a clear way that it was almost as if they were eyewitnesses to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

— Paul taught them as clearly as a human being can teach that salvation (justification and sanctification) is through the dead, buried, resurrected, and ascended Jesus Christ, not through the Law of Moses (Cf. Acts 13:39)

- "...crucified" - *estauromenos*, a perfect tense participle, meaning a past event with ongoing results

— What Paul is saying is that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is an event that happened at a point of time in history, yet the benefits of this one-time event continue into the present

— Even though the Galatians were under a spell from these Judaizers/Pharisees, the continuing benefits of Christ's crucifixion were available to them

— Paul is saying that if you would have clung to this teaching that I gave you, you would not have followed the works doctrine of the Judaizers. Legalism has no control over you if you understand that Christ's death occurred in the past, yet the benefits are on-going even up to the present time

— The Galatians would not have found false teaching attractive if they had truly appreciated the significance of Jesus' crucifixion

#### (B) The questions (3:2-5)

After a blistering introduction to the doctrinal section of the letter, Paul now poses four questions. These questions are designed by Paul (through the Holy Spirit) to get his readers to understand that the spiritual benefits that his readers now enjoy have come to them by faith alone, not through religion or adherence to the Mosaic Law, and not through human effort. The simple point of these questions is to get the Galatians to understand that everything that they own as a spiritual benefit, they received by faith alone in Christ alone.

So Paul urges the Galatians to continue to follow the trajectory: as you move out of justification into sanctification, keep availing yourself, by faith, to the resources of God and the same God who justified you is the same God who is going to help you grow and mature as a Christian.

#### (a) How did you receive the Spirit? (3:2)

2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

2 I want to learn only one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the actions of the Law or by believing what you heard?

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

- Paul asks the Galatians how they were saved...by following the Law or by faith? The answer is that they heard the message of the cross and believed it. Once they believed it, by faith, the Holy Spirit immediately indwelt them (Cf. Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13; Acts 10:44-45; 15:7-8).

— The Holy Spirit is the down payment that God gives us to ensure our glorification (Eph 1:13-14). Just as He executed the previous phase of our salvation (justification), the Holy Spirit is His guarantee that He will execute the future phases of our salvation (sanctification and glorification).

— Since these Galatians did not get the Holy Spirit through works, but instead by faith, then every future good thing that God will give to us will also come to us, not through works, but by faith

(b) Are you now being perfected by the flesh? (3:3)

3 Are you so **foolish**? Having **begun by the Spirit**, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

3 Are you so foolish? Having started out with the Spirit, are you now ending up with the flesh?

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

- "...foolish" - describes someone who rejects divine revelation (Cf. v1)

— When Paul repeats the same word in close proximity, he's trying to drive home a point that you are not thinking clearly and are rejecting what God has said

— The Galatians had come to their present theological beliefs (sanctification by works) because they had rejected Paul's clear teaching on the matter

- "...begun by the Spirit" - clearly describes Paul's audience as believers (Cf. 4:6); they already had the Holy Spirit

— Many people have the belief that once you become a Christian, it's impossible for you to fall into false doctrine. This is obviously not true, just because you are saved doesn't mean your mind cannot be co-opted into a wrong system. This is exactly what happened to these Galatians.

— This is why Scripture warns us over and over again about the dangers of false doctrine

(c) Have you suffered so much in vain? (3:4)

4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

4 Did you suffer so much for nothing? (If it really was for nothing!)

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

- Paul says that they came to their former (correct) position through suffering...

— The Galatians were arguing that their previous position (salvation by faith alone) now is wrong. Paul says, You obviously thought it was wrong now because you changed their position, and you obviously think that what I taught you, which you initially believed, is now wrong otherwise you would not have departed from that position so rapidly.

— So their previous (correct) understanding, they believe, is in error. Yet Paul makes the point that they came to their former understanding, the correct understanding, through suffering.

— Once they believed in Christ and received the Spirit, persecution and tribulations closely followed (Cf. Acts 14:22)

— Since that was the reality, their suffering would've been a waste of time ("in vain") if they continued to reject their previous faith alone position regarding their sanctification

— Basically, if your previous grace understanding was erroneous, and if you came to this understanding through suffering, then that suffering would be in vain if you rejected your previous grace position

(d) On what basis does God work miracles among you? (3:5)

5 So then, does He who **provides** you with the Spirit and works **miracles** among you, do it by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

5 Does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do the actions of the Law or because you believe what you heard?

**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?

- Paul's question is: On what basis does the Holy Spirit work miracles on your behalf?

- "...provides" - *epichorēgeō*, to supply abundantly or with great generosity

— As a result of the Galatians' faith, God was flowing with great abundance miracle after miracle into their lives

- "...miracles" - *dunamis*, as you read Acts 13-14, which chronicles Paul's first missionary journey through Galatia, you see miracle after miracle (Cf. Acts 14:3,8-11)

— Paul asks: Did all these miracles among you take place because of your perfection following the Mosaic Law, or were they are result of your faith in Christ? Not a single manifestation of God's power took place because the Galatians tried to do better in following the Mosaic Law.

— After the Judaizers knocked on your door and got you to believe the lie of works sanctification, not a single miracle took place after that time

— During the early church, miracles were confirmations of divine revelation; they accompanied the preaching of God's Word (Mark 16:20; Rom 15:19). However it is important to understand that it is never the miracle that produces faith...it is the preached Word of God that produces faith (Rom 10:17; Luke 16:27-31; James 1:18). As people were coming to faith, God was confirming to them through miracles that they were believing the right thing by backing it up/confirming it with signs and wonders.

- "...works" - *energeō*, present tense; after Paul left Galatia, the Holy Spirit continued to work miracles

### Six Old Testament Quotes

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. Gal 3:6-7   | Gen 15:6   |
| 2. Gal 3:8-9   | Gen 12:3   |
| 3. Gal 3:10    | Deut 27:26 |
| 4. Gal 3:11    | Hab 2:4    |
| 5. Gal 3:12    | Lev 18:5   |
| 6. Gal 3:13-14 | Deut 21:23 |

#### (C) The Children of Abraham (3:6-9)

##### (a) The pattern of Abraham (3:6)

6 Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

6 In the same way, Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

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

- Quoted from Gen 15:6...

- Paul brings up the subject of Abraham because the Judaizers wrapped themselves up in the patriarchs, the OT, Judaism, and the Mosaic Law. They implied in their teaching that the OT was "on their side" of the issue of faith alone vs works.

— So to counter that teaching, Paul goes back to the foundation of Judaism: Abraham

— By the time Paul finishes discussing Abraham, it will be clear to the Galatians that Paul's presentation of the gospel is much more closely aligned with God's original vision of salvation.

— If Paul can build his case with Abraham, he will have defeated his opponents because he will have shown because his presentation of the gospel (faith alone) is consistent with how God dealt with Abraham...the Judaizer's gospel was not.

- God's dealings with Abraham preceded the Mosaic Law by 550-600 years, so Abraham could not have been brought to faith through obedience to the Law because the Law did not exist during Abraham's lifetime

- What did Abraham believe?

— God promised Abraham that an heir would come from him and Sarah (not his servant Eliezer), showed him the stars of the sky and promised that his descendants would be as innumerable as the stars (Gen 15:3-5).

— Shortly after the promise was given to Abraham, he was 86 years old (Gen 16:16); then he was 99 years old (Gen 17:1); then he was 100 years old (Gen 17:17). Considering their advanced age, Abraham could have yielded to human thinking and rejected the promise (Cf. Rom 4:20), yet he did not, leaving no room for doubt he was "fully assured" that what God had promised, He was able to perform (Cf. Rom 4:21).

— Abraham set aside logic and the human perspective, and trusted fully in the character of God, that He was able to keep His promise. When he did this, he entered into a relationship with God and God took His own righteousness and credited to Abraham's account (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3,22).

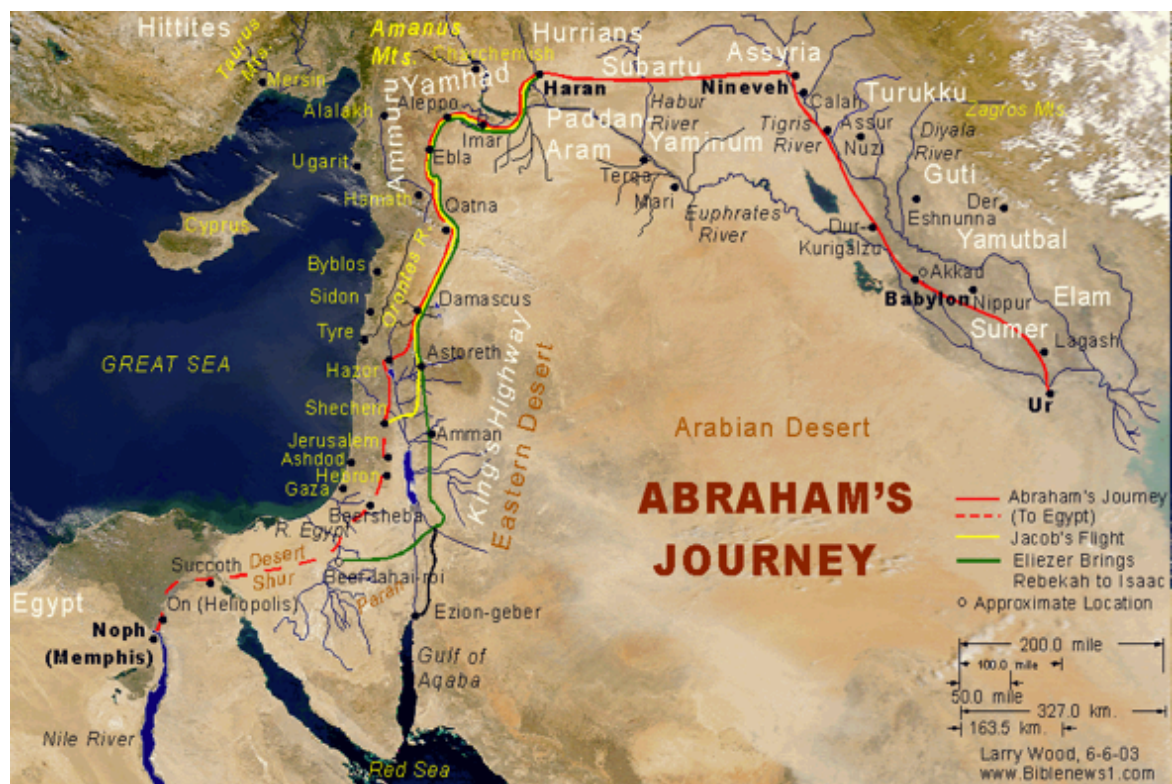
- The Judaizers were also saying that Abraham was saved by circumcision, which originated in Gen 17, and was a ritual designed to show that a person (male) was a member of the covenant community

— Abraham could not have been saved by circumcision because when Abraham was saved (Gen 15:6), God had not given any instructions regarding circumcision. Abraham's salvation preceded God's instructions on circumcision by at least 14 years (compare Gen 16:16 with 17:1).

— Thus it's very clear that Abraham entered into a right relationship with God independent of circumcision (Cf. Rom 4:9-12)

- So what Paul is demonstrating in this passage is that it is his gospel, originally taught to the Galatians, that is consistent with God's original intention for Israel. The pattern of salvation that God instituted with Abraham, separate from both circumcision and the Law, was the same pattern that Paul taught.

— The Judaizers, on the other hand, were teaching a gospel that was not consistent with God's intentions.



#### (b) The progeny of Abraham (3:7)

- 7 Therefore, recognize that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.
- 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.
- 7 You see, then, that those who have faith are Abraham's real descendants.
- 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
- When Church Age believers trust in Christ by faith alone, just as Abraham did, we are essentially following in Abraham's footsteps. Thus, we become "sons of Abraham."
- Just as Abraham entered into a relationship with God by faith alone, we also enter into a relationship with God by faith alone (Cf. Rom 4:23-25). Abraham is essentially our "prototype" for salvation by faith alone.
- Replacement theology loves this verse because they believe that it transfers ownership of God's OT promises to Abraham/Israel over to the church...that the church has "replaced" Israel in God's program
- The problem with this belief is that this is not what Paul is saying here...
  1. The verse is "anarthous" meaning that it does not contain a definite article ("the") before "sons of Abraham." If it was speaking of the Jews specifically, it would read "the" sons of Abraham.
    - Without the definite article, the phrase "sons of Abraham" is not limited to the Jews only, but by default includes all people (Gentiles)



2. To be a Jew, it's not enough to simply be called a "son of Abraham." Ishmael was a son of Abraham, but he was not a Jew. Being a Jew is defined as being a son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- If this verse were teaching Replacement Theology, it would have to say that those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

— This verse does not teach the notion of Replacement Theology. This interpretation misses the entire point of what Paul is saying, which is that Abraham is our spiritual father, our prototype of how salvation occurs in the life of a human being.

#### (c) The purpose of Abraham (3:8)

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

8 Because the Scripture saw ahead of time that God would justify the gentiles by faith, it announced the gospel to Abraham beforehand when it said, "Through you all nations will be blessed."

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.

- After demonstrating that God's plan of salvation for all people has always been the same (faith alone), from Abraham through that day (and even to today), Paul now demonstrates that the gospel he preached is consistent with what God had always planned to do

— God has always super-intended that the Messiah, whom He would bring into the world through Israel, would provide salvation to all mankind, by faith alone

#### (d) The promise of Abraham (3:9)

9 **So then**, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

9 Therefore, those who believe are blessed together with Abraham, the one who believed.

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

- "So then" - Paul is wrapping up his thoughts on this topic and his arguments with this verse

— What Paul is saying here is that in retrospect, Abraham was blessed by faith alone, not by the Law, which came 600 years later, and not by circumcision, which came at least 14 years later.

— Abraham was saved by faith in what looked irrational, illogical, but Abraham trusted in the promise of God and the character of God, because He knew the power of God. And by his faith, the righteousness of God was transferred to Abraham by faith.

(D) The purpose of the Law (3:10-25)

After Paul's use of Abraham to argue for faith alone and against adherence to the Mosaic Law for salvation, he anticipates a question: If Abraham was not justified by the Law (works), then why did God give the Law to Moses? What then is the purpose of the Law?

(a) The Law's inability to justify (3:10-12)

**10** For all who are of works of the Law are **under a curse**; for it is written: "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THE THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO DO THEM."

**10** For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."

**10** Certainly all who depend on the actions of the Law are under a curse. For it is written, "A curse on everyone who does not obey everything that is written in the Book of the Law!"

**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.

- Quoted from Deut 27:26...

- The first thing to understand about the Mosaic Law is that it was not given to save anyone. The Law is not a path to salvation.

— The Mosaic Law was not given to redeem people, it was given to a redeemed people

— To understand this, we have to understand the chronology of the Exodus generation:

- God redeemed (purchased) His people through the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, when the Israelites placed the blood of the Lamb on their doorposts and lintel of their home, and by faith believed that their firstborn would be safe
- When the angel of death came through Egypt, he "passed over" the homes anointed with the blood and killed the firstborn in every home without the blood applied
- When God exercised His great power and drown the pursuing Egyptians in the Red Sea, the Israelites saw this and their faith was strengthened (Ex 14:31)
- God led them to Mount Sinai and there He gave Moses the Law. The Law is made up of the 10 Commandments, and 603 other commands that flow out of them.
- The Law taught the Israelites how to order their lives under God; it laid out God's will for them and instructed them how to live once they entered the Promised Land: how to relate to God, how to relate with each other, and how to relate with outsiders (the world). Remember, the Israelites had just come out of 400 years of bondage and paganism, and they had no understanding of the things of God.

- It taught them that when they sinned (transgressed the Law), there was a mechanism to restore a right relationship with God (the sacrificial system). When they utilized this system to keep short accounts with God, it allowed God to remain in their camp/midst.
- The Mosaic Law was only given to Israel; it was not given, nor does it have authority over, any other nation (Ps 147:19-20).

- "...under a curse" - the Mosaic Law was designed to be a blessing, when it is understood properly. However, it becomes a curse if it is abused.

— When we take the Mosaic Law and use it in a way that God did not intend, the Law becomes a curse. This is why Paul is so upset with the Judaizers/Pharisees in this epistle, because they took something that God gave that was good, that was a blessing, and misused it and thus turned it into something that was a curse.

— They turned it into a curse because they were teaching that the Mosaic Law was the way to justification, which is not what God intended

— What they were doing, the "curse" so to speak, is that as soon as someone goes back under the Mosaic Law, they had to keep the whole thing. One who seeks to be justified by the Mosaic Law must keep the whole thing. God does not grade on a curve. When you saddle people with 100% adherence to the Law, you are putting upon them an impossible burden (Cf. Acts 15:10).

— Someone seeking to be justified by the Law can't ever screw up...they can't break a single command of the Mosaic Law, ever. That is impossible for someone to do. This is the "curse" that Paul is describing.

— If someone rejects God's method of salvation, by faith alone, and seeks to come up with their own means of salvation (works, religion, rituals, adherence to the Law), then you better be a darn good religionist or ritualist because the only standard God will accept is 100%.

11 Now, that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH."

11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."

11 Now it is obvious that no one is justified in the sight of God by the Law, because "The righteous will live by faith."

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.

- Quoted from Hab 2:4...

- The reality that the Mosaic Law was not given by God to save anyone is seen by the fact that during the dispensation of Law, God's people were all saved by faith

— Regarding salvation in the OT, some might dismiss this passage as only applying to the NT, but Paul quotes Hab 2:4, showing that salvation by faith, apart from the Law, was an OT principle (Cf. Rom 3:20; Gal 3:24; Heb 10:1-10)

— Since Scripture says that it is the person who is righteous by faith who will live, no one can be justified by works of the Law

- OT saints were not saved by keeping the law; they were saved by faith. In Whom? God. In what? God's promise. What promise? This varied from age to age:

- Adam: believed God's promise to him recorded in Gen 3:15
- Noah: believed God would send judgment, but provide deliverance from it (Gen 6:9)
- Abraham: believed God would fulfill His promises to him concerning his future (Gen 15:6)
- Moses: believed that God redeemed them at the Exodus (Ex 12:13). Many believe the Israelites were saved by believing that a Messiah would come one day, but the OT never connects their salvation with believing in a coming Messiah. Instead, it constantly refers back to the Exodus.
- Other OT Saints: believed in the promises outlined in the Law and Prophets about a coming Messiah

- God never states in Scripture exactly what each individual or group believed that resulted in their salvation, but we know that they all believed a promise from Him

12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "THE PERSON WHO PERFORMS THEM WILL LIVE BY THEM."

12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."

12 But the Law has nothing to do with faith. Instead, "The person who keeps the commandments will have life in them."

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

- Quoted from Lev 18:5...

- What Paul is saying is that living a life under the Law requires performance (works)

— The notion of performance/works is the exact opposite of faith

— Both the law and faith are not necessary for salvation; only faith is necessary, the Law adds nothing

— Only perfect performance could win divine approval under the Law, but since that was not achievable, the Law could only condemn a person and cause him to cast himself on God in faith (Cf. James 2:10)

(b) Christ redeemed us from the Law's curse (3:13-14)

13 Christ redeemed us from the **curse of the Law**, having become a curse for us—for it is written: “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO **HANGS ON A TREE**”—

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

13 The Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, “A curse on everyone who is hung on a tree!”

**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:

- Quoted from Deut 21:23...

- Paul is not saying that the Law is a curse (Cf. notes on v10), but rather that Christ redeemed/ransomed us from having to perform works of the Law in order to be saved

— The Judaizers/Pharisees told people that they had to adhere to the Mosaic Law for salvation, which is a curse. Paul says that Jesus provided a means outside of the Law to be saved, thus saving us from the curse of the Law.

- Jesus removed the curse of the Law from us by becoming cursed in our place (Cf. Deut 21:23)

— This passage speaks of criminals in the ancient world during the Mosaic Law. Criminals during that time were hung on a tree (not crucified), which illustrated the rejection that had come upon them because of their life of crime.

— Paul here takes this ancient concept and applies it to Jesus Christ. He similarly suffered divine rejection when He bore the wrath of a holy God against sin by dying on the cross. Jesus was rejected by God the Father when He bore our sins on the cross in the same way criminals in the OT were rejected by society for their crimes as they hung on a tree.

— This is why in the Garden of Gethsemane, just minutes before His arrest and subsequent trial, Jesus prayed earnestly to the Father that if there be any other way to secure salvation for mankind, that the Father would choose it instead of His torture and death. The reason why Jesus prayed this prayer is because He did not want to experience divine rejection, the wrath and anger of God, for the sin of the entire world.

— While this was a time of treachery for Jesus Christ, it was a time of great blessing for Adam's fallen race because all of my infractions of the Law, both big and small, have now been paid for, past, present, and future.

— Jesus Christ redeemed me from the Law and my inability to 100% keep it 100% of the time (the curse of the Law) by becoming a curse in my place

- “...curse of the law” - the curse pronounced by the Law on the lawbreaker

- “...HANGS ON A TREE” - the proof that Christ became a “curse for us” was the fact that He was executed by being hung on a tree. Under the Law, this was the fate of criminals whom God had cursed.

— God did not curse Christ because He hung on a tree; Christ hung on a tree because God cursed Him

— When Christ was crucified, it was evidence He had come under the curse of God. The manner of His death was a great obstacle to faith for Jews until they realized the curse He bore was for them (Cf. Is 53; Ps 22).

14 **in order that** in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit **through faith**.

14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

14 This happened in order that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to the gentiles through the Messiah Jesus, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

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.

- "in order that" - this rejection that Jesus went through was necessary because it allowed something to happen, it produced something, it brought something into existence: it allowed us mere mortals, us lawbreakers, to receive something:

1. The blessing of Abraham (v9); we are Abraham's "spiritual children" because we are saved in the exact same way that Abraham was saved: by faith alone. Abraham was saved completely by believing God's promise.
2. The promise of the Holy Spirit; we received the Holy Spirit by faith alone, not through compliance with the Law (v2).

- Now that the Gentiles have received these two blessings/results from Christ's rejection, how foolish is it to abandon the doctrine of salvation by faith alone and turn to works and religiosity, which are manmade systems not ordained by God

- "...through faith" - again the apostle emphasized that salvation and sanctification come by faith, not by works

### **Review: The Scriptural Argument (v6-14)**

1. Gal 3:6-7 quotes Gen 15:6
  - The Judaizers pointed to Abraham, the "father of the Jews," as their example, and Paul does the same thing.
  - How was Abraham saved? By faith! And all who trust Christ are children of Abraham, the father of the believing (Cf. Rom 4:1-8)
2. Gal 3:8-9 quotes Gen 12:3
  - God promised to bless the heathen (Gentiles) through Abraham, which means that Jews and Gentiles are saved the very same way.

- The gospel Abraham believed was the good news that God would bless Abraham and make him a mighty nation. Abraham believed this promise and this faith was accounted for righteousness.
  - It was certainly not the full Gospel of the grace of God that we preach today; even the apostles did not fully understand the meaning of Christ's death until it was explained to them.
3. Gal 3:10 quotes Deut 27:26
    - "You want to be saved by the works of the law? But the law does not save—it curses!"
  4. Gal 3:11 quotes Hab 2:4
    - "The just shall live by faith" (Cf. Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38). This little verse from Habakkuk is so rich that God wrote three NT commentaries on it!
  5. Gal 3:12 quotes Lev 18:5
    - There is a vast difference between "doing" and "believing"! Nobody was ever saved by doing the Law, because nobody can ever fully obey the Law.
  6. Gal 3:13-14 quote Deut 21:23
    - The law puts us under a curse, but Christ died to remove that curse. He died on a tree (the Cross—1 Peter 2:24) and fulfilled the word given in Deuteronomy. Because He has taken our curse upon Himself, we are free to live in Christ. The blessing God promised Abraham is now available to the Gentiles by faith.

(c) The Law does not nullify faith (3:15-18)

Paul now anticipates a response along the lines of...ok Paul, Abraham was indeed saved by faith outside the Law (works), but God changed all that 600 years later when He gave Moses the Law. God saved Abraham by faith, but then reversed Himself when the Law came into existence. So salvation was by faith before the Law, but after the Law was given, adherence to the Law replaced faith alone.

Paul argues in this passage that this is absolutely wrong. If you think that the Law somehow altered God's plan of salvation, you are misunderstanding the Law. Paul argues this with four points:

1. He describes the nature of a contract (v15); an argument from the natural world
2. He will illustrate his point through the principle of a coming Messiah (v16); a messianic argument
3. He will explain that faith came long before the Law (v17); a chronological argument
4. He will explain that inheritance is received by faith alone (v18); a theological argument

Once Paul completes these arguments, it will be obvious that the coming of the Law did not alter God's principle of salvation by faith alone that God established with Abraham.

**15** Brothers *and sisters*, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is *only* a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

**15** Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is *only* a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

**15** Brothers, let me use an example from everyday life. Once an agreement has been ratified, no one can cancel it or add conditions to it.

**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.

- Paul first deals with an argument from the natural world...

— Once a contract is fully executed, it cannot be dissolved by either party. A contract is indissoluble once it is established.

— The same is true with the "contract" of faith alone that God established with Abraham. In other words, once God setup a principle in Gen 15:6, in essence God was setting up a contract for how He will justify man. And if that blessing of justification came by faith alone, how much more will your sanctification come by faith alone?

— So if this is a true principle in the natural world, God can't change it later on during the time of Moses. If we couldn't do that to other people in the natural world, how much *less* can God do it to us in the realm of salvation?

— Salvation by faith alone always has been and always will be an irrevocable principle, just like contracts contain irrevocable principles, and nothing can change that

— Paul declared that just as a properly executed Roman covenant (or will, based on ancient Greek law) cannot arbitrarily be set aside or changed until the fulfillment of their terms, so the covenant God made with Abraham remains in full force until God fulfills it completely.

— In addition, the promises spoken to Abraham and to his seed were not fulfilled before the giving of the Law. Rather, they found fulfillment in Christ and are in effect forever. The blessing of justification by faith is therefore permanent and could not be changed by the Law.

**16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his **seed**. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *one would in referring* to many, but *rather as in referring* to one, "And to your **seed**," that is, Christ.

**16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

**16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his descendant. It doesn't say "descendants," referring to many, but "your descendant," referring to one person, who is the Messiah.

**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.



- Paul uses OT prophecies regarding the Messiah...
- In the OT, Israel always recognized the reality of a coming Messiah. They knew this because the OT told them about (predicted) it.
- To do this, Moses doesn't use all the OT verses that refer to the Messiah, he only uses one: Gen 22:18
- Gen 22:18: And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
- "...seed" [2x] - the Hebrew word for "seed" (*zera*) is a collective singular (a word that remains the same in both the singular and the plural sense; i.e. sheep) that can refer to one or many descendants
- *zera* denotes all of the descendants of an ancestor, but isn't normally used of one person. When it is, such as this case, it points to the person who is in some way outstanding; not one descendant among many, but *the* descendant.
- Paul notes that the "seed" God had in mind in Gen 13:15 and 17:8 was *the* one descendant, Jesus
- Abraham didn't just believe in the promise of seed (plural, referring to Isaac and descendants), he believed in a seed singular, referring to Jesus Christ
- The interesting thing about "seed" in this verse is that it is a collective singular (a word that remains the same in both the singular and the plural sense; i.e. sheep). What this means is that there is a double promise here, and elsewhere in the OT: the promise is both to Abraham's "seed" (plural) meaning his numerous descendants, and also to a "seed" (singular) referring to the Messiah.
- What Abraham believed is that from he and Sarah would come innumerable seed (plural) and from that innumerable seed would come one seed (the Messiah)
- See [Soteriology 15 Justification \(Rom 5:16\); Salvation in the OT \(Gal 3:16\)](#) for more information on Salvation in the OT.
- So based on this, does the Mosaic Law given 600 years later somehow erase the principle of faith alone given to Abraham? No, because the OT predicted this coming Messiah, all the way back beginning in Gen 3:15.
- Paul's comparison is...given the OT predictions of the Messiah, as noted in Gen 22:18, et al, which came before the giving of the Law, did the giving of the Law erase the principle of a coming Messiah? No.
- Just as the Mosaic Law did not erase the salvific purposes of God outlined prior to the giving of the Law, neither did the Law erase God's principle of faith alone, which also was given to Abraham way before the Law was given. So just as the giving of the Law did not abrogate the prior predictions of a coming Messiah, it also did not abrogate the prior principle of salvation by faith alone.

— Said another way, the promise of a coming Messiah was not altered by the giving of the Law. Similarly the principle of faith was not altered by the later giving of the Law.

### **The Four Seeds of Abraham**

1. Natural Seed - all physical descendants of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3,7, et al)
2. Natural-Spiritual Seed - believing physical descendants of Abraham (Is 41:8; Rom 9:6,8; Gal 6:16)
3. Spiritual Seed - believing non-physical descendants of Abraham (Gentiles) (Gal 3:6-9,29)
4. Ultimate Seed - Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16; Heb 2:16-17)

17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came **430 years later**, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

17 This is what I mean: The Law that came 430 years later did not cancel the covenant that God ratified previously. The promise was never nullified.

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.

- Paul's third (chronological) argument says that the principle of faith as established through Abraham, made long before the Mosaic Law was given, could not be altered by the coming of the Mosaic Law because the principle of faith was already in the theological record

— The principle of salvation through faith alone was already in existence, instituted by God with Abraham, and was already in the biblical record when the Mosaic Law was given

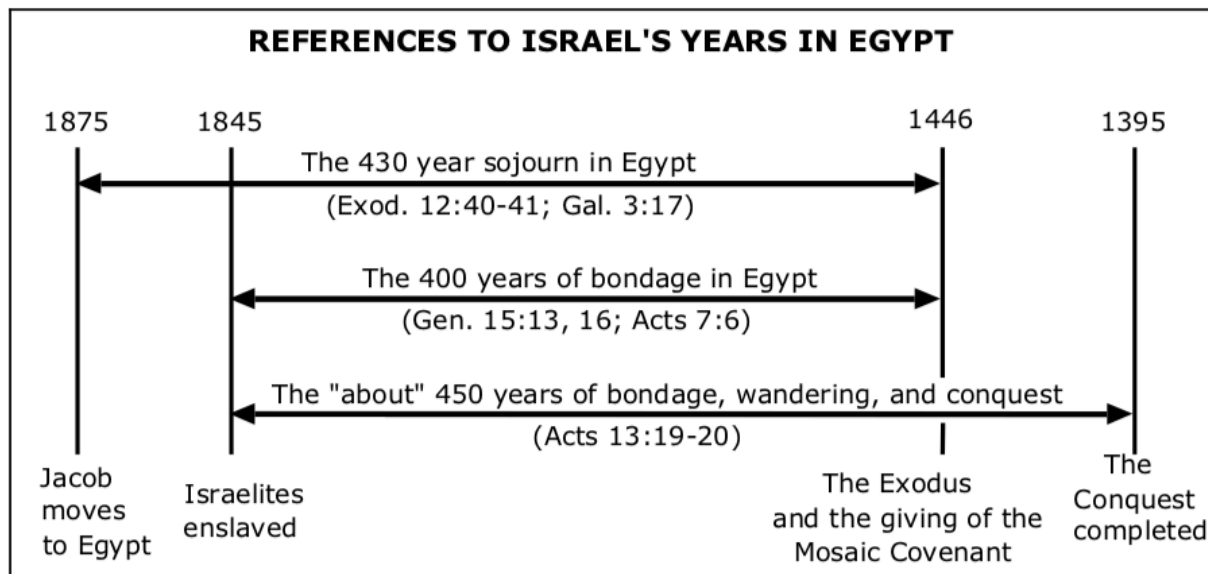
- "...430 years later" - began with God reiterating the promises to Jacob at Beersheba as he left Canaan to settle in Egypt (1875 BC, Gen 46:1-4). It ended with the giving of the Mosaic Law (in 1446 BC, Ex 19). Note that the Abrahamic Covenant was not only given to Abraham, but it was re-ratified/confirmed by God to Isaac and to Jacob. 1875-1445 = 430.

- How do we get a 1445 BC date for the giving of the Law at Sinai? See notes on 1 Kings 6:1. All scholars (even liberals) agree that Solomon's reign was 971-931 BC. 1 Kings 6:1 states that temple construction began in the 4th year of Solomon's reign (966 BC), 480 years after the Exodus. Go back 480 years from 966 BC and you get the date for the Exodus: 1446 BC. The Mosaic Law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai about a year after the Exodus from Egypt: 1445 BC.

— To get back to the dates of Abraham, we need to use another date marker verse: Ex 12:40. This verse says that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years. If you take the date of

the Exodus (1445 BC) and go back another 430 years, you get 1875 BC, which was the date that Jacob left Israel for Egypt because of the famine.

- So why should we care about these dates in the context of Paul's argument? Because Paul's point is that because faith, as clearly established through the Abrahamic Covenant, came centuries before the Law, the principle of faith could not be altered by the giving of the Law.



18 For if the **inheritance** is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

18 For if the inheritance comes about through the Law, it no longer comes about through the promise. But it was through a promise that God so graciously gave it to Abraham.

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

- "...inheritance" - the promise of a future blessing

— Everything promised to Abraham in Genesis was an inheritance (a future promise). For example, he was promised a tract of land from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Iraq. But by the time of his death, the only land he owned in Israel was a small burial plot that he purchased for Sarah.

— Reception of this did not depend on obedience to the Law, but God guaranteed to provide it nonetheless

— Additionally, the Law could not alter God's dealing with Abraham on the basis of a promise because the two are fundamentally different in nature. They do not commingle;

they cannot be combined. Instead, the inheritance (justification by faith) was given by God as an unconditional gift to those who believe.

— Contrary to the claim of the Judaizers, obedience to the Law was not necessary to gain the inheritance. God's way of salvation has always been by grace through faith. The promise concerning Christ was made before the Mosaic Law was given, and that promise holds as good as though there had been no Law given. The promise was made irrespective of the Law.

- If the inheritance could be received by some means other than faith alone, it would no longer be an inheritance. Stated another way, if an inheritance could be received by adherence to the Law, then it would no longer be an inheritance (future promise). It could no longer be received as a gift, because it was worked for and earned by the person receiving it.

— How did Abraham receive his inheritance? By faith in a promise, not through works of the Law (because the Law didn't exist).

- The inheritance of Gal 3:18 and 4:30 are parallel, not with the land promises, but with the justification of the Gentiles

— This passage is used by some to equate the inheritance of the land of Canaan with heaven, but the land of Canaan is not the subject of this passage

(d) The purpose of the Law is to lead us to Christ (3:19-25)

In the final part of Paul's defense of salvation by faith alone, not by works of the Law, he now gives us the purpose of the Law. If the Law cannot save/justify and the Law cannot sanctify, then why did God bother to give Israel the Law?

Paul will explain that the Law can't get you into heaven, but it does have a good purpose. He will explain in this passage how the Law works in harmony with faith.

**19** Why the Law then? It was **added** on account of the violations, having been **ordered through angels at the hand of a mediator, until** the Seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

**19** Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

**19** Why, then, was the Law added? Because of transgressions, until the descendant came about whom the promise pertained. It was put into effect through angels by means of a mediator.

**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.

- Paul explains that the Law was added, alongside faith, to keep sin in check or to put a lid on sin

— The Law explains to us very clearly what God considers as sinful and not sinful, what is pleasing to Him and what is displeasing to Him. The Law of God is the perfect manifestation of the character of God. Once we know what is sin and what is not, it's theoretically easier for us to stay away from sin.

- "...added" - the Law of God did not replace faith (as some of the Judaizers argued), but rather it was added alongside faith, not to get a person into a right relationship with God, but to reveal the character of God to mankind (Cf. Rom 7:7; 1 Tim 1:8-10)

— All of the subsequent covenants (Land, Davidic, New) are "branches" of the Abrahamic Covenant. In contrast, the Mosaic Covenant does not relate organically to the Abrahamic Covenant, but "was added" as an appendage.

— It explained how the Israelites could maximize the benefits God had promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, thus when God terminated the Old Covenant, it did not eliminate anything He had promised Abraham.

— One of the primary purposes of the Law is to reveal sin. The Law cannot forgive sin that I have already committed, but it can reveal sin.

- In the second half of the verse, Paul begins to compare faith and the Law and state that the Law is inferior to faith; faith is the most important principle. The Law has a role to play, but faith is the most important. In comparison to the Law, faith is the overarching principle of God.

— The Judaizers had this backward...they were placing all of their focus on the Law, not faith. Paul now tries to balance their thinking by putting faith and the Law into the proper perspective.

— In this passage, "faith" is represented by the Abrahamic Covenant because God entered into this covenant with Abraham based on Abraham's faith. It is contrasted here with the Law (Mosaic Covenant).

— Paul compares faith (Abrahamic Covenant) and the Law (Mosaic Covenant) here in three ways:

1. How it was given
2. How long will it last
3. Conditionality

- "...ordered through angels at the hand of a mediator" - when Moses was on Mount Sinai, he did not receive the Law of God directly from God Himself, but rather God gave it to an angel ("mediator"), who in turn gave it to Moses

- "...until" - shows the temporary nature of the Mosaic Covenant. The Law was never intended by God to last forever; it was temporary, "until" the Messiah would come

— The function of the Law was to point people to Christ (their need for Christ), not to provide the way people should live for all time

	Faith (Gen 15)	Law (Ex 19-24)
How it was given?	Directly by God (Gen 15:18)	Indirectly through angels (Gal 3:19b)
Duration?	Forever (Gen 17:18)	Temporary (Gal 3:19c)
Conditional?	Unilateral (unconditional) (Gen 15:12)	Bilateral (conditional) (Ex 19:5-6; Gal 3:20)

### Wherefore the Law?

1. The Law was added to give sin the character of transgressions (i.e., personal guilt)
  - Men had been sinning before Moses but, in the absence of the Law, their sins were not put to their account (Rom 5:13).
  - Since men not only continued to sin after the Law was given, but were provoked to transgress by the very Law which forbade it (Rom 7:8), it conclusively proved the inveterate sinfulness of man's nature (Rom 7:11-13).
2. The Law, therefore, "concluded all under sin" (Rom 3:19-20,23)
3. The Law was an ad interim dealing, "till the seed should come" (Gal 3:16)
4. The Law shut sinful man up to faith as the only avenue of escape (Gal 3:23)
5. The Law was to the Jews what the child-discipliner was in a Greek household, a custodian of the children in their minority, and it has this character until Christ (Gal 3:23-25)
6. Christ having come, the believer becomes a disciple of Christ Himself (Matt 11:29; Luke 10:39; John 17:6-8; Titus 2:11-13)

20 Now a **mediator** is not for one *party only*; but God is *only* one.

20 Now a mediator is not for one *party only*; whereas God is *only* one.

20 Now a mediator involves more than one party, but God is one.

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

- "...mediator" - a mediator is necessary when two parties making an agreement both assume responsibilities, as in the reciprocal Mosaic Covenant

— A mediator is not necessary when the covenant is unilateral, such as when God made the Abrahamic Covenant

— This implies that the Law, given through a mediator (the angels), came from God indirectly. The Abrahamic Covenant came directly from God.

**21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? Far from it!** For if a law had been given that was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

21 So is the Law in conflict with the promises of God? Of course not! For if a law had been given that could give us life, then certainly righteousness would come through the Law.

**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.

- Paul now makes the point that the Law has a divine, although different, purpose than faith  
- "...Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God?" - is the Law antagonistic or contradictory to faith? Is the Law working against faith?

- "...Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, the strongest possible negation in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" Paul says: This is not a proper conclusion!! God gave both the Law and promises, but for different purposes. It was not the purpose of the Law to give life.

— The purpose of the Law was never to provide justification. It served as a mirror to show people their sinfulness. When they realize they cannot save themselves, they will be open to receiving salvation as a gift of faith.

— The Law is a mirror that helps us see our dirty face (James 1:22-25)—but you do not wash your face with a mirror. It is grace that provides the cleansing, through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7b).

— Paul is against the notion that the Law of God has no purpose to play at all

— His point is that faith and Law have different purposes/functions in God's redemptive program. He is very clear that the Law cannot provide salvation (justification or sanctification).

— If obeying the 10 Commandments were able to save mankind, then man would be saved by obeying the 10 Commandments, and there would be no purpose for God the Father to send Jesus Christ to earth to take the wrath and punishment for man's sin.

- Theoretically salvation could have come by the Law if people had been capable of keeping it perfectly, but they could not (Rom 8:3-4)

— The life promised to those who sought to obey the Law refers to temporal blessing on earth (Deut 8:1; Cf. The Gethsemane prayer).

— But if the Law is not opposed to the promises, if there is no conflict between them, how can their harmony be demonstrated? — By recognizing that while the Law could not justify

or give life, it prepared the way for the gospel.

22 But the Scripture has **confined everyone under sin**, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

22 But the Scripture has captured everything by means of sin's net, so that what was promised by the faithfulness of the Messiah might be granted to those who believe.

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

- "...confined everyone under sin" - since the Law had no power to forgive sin, only the ability to reveal sin, it "shut man up" under sin until the fulfillment of the Law (Jesus Christ) came. Only He has the power to forgive sin.

— When you study the Law of God, you find yourself guilty not only of sinful actions, but also my thoughts/motives. And you begin to cry out to God for an answer, and His answer is in Jesus Christ.

— Righteousness will be attained for you, not by obeying the Law because the Law is a curse to you (the more you try to keep it, the more you fail). Righteousness is only available to us through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for all of my violations of the Law, past, present and future.

— When I simply trust in what He has done, and suddenly the righteousness of God that I tried to gain by obeying the 10 Commandments is "given" to me.

- Yet I have no real incentive to reach out to Jesus Christ until I realize that I have a problem. If I don't know that I have a problem, I don't go looking for a solution. It's only after I recognize I have a problem that the solution starts making sense.

— The Law was given and we have a record of sin, what we should do and what we should not do, a record of things that are pleasing to God and things that are displeasing to God

— The Law has a purpose of teaching us something; the Law can't "do" anything (it can't forgive sin or keep me from sinning), but it can inform or teach me what sin is. It reveals to us the reality of our sin nature. It is not until you study the Law of Moses that you realize that we have a nature that is constantly pulling us into the opposite direction of the Law.

— The Law not only stands in judgment of our external actions, but it also stands in judgment on the motives of our heart (covetousness, Ex 20:17)

— The Protestant Reformers called this "terrorizing people with the Law." The believed (correctly) that in order for people to be saved, they first needed to recognize their need for salvation. This is the purpose of the Law, to demonstrate and communicate the character of God, so that when we study and understand it, then look at ourselves, we see a massive gap between the two.



— The Law is a "schoolmaster" that makes people realize their sin, then faith is the mechanism by which they are saved. The Law is our incentive to trust in Christ.

**23** But **before faith came, we** were kept in custody under the Law, being confined for the faith that was destined to be revealed.

**23** But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

23 Now before faith came about, we were held in custody and confined under the Law in preparation for the faith that was to be revealed.

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

- Paul used two figures of speech, likening the Law to a prison warden (v22) and a child-custodian relationship (*paidagōgos*, v24); in 4:1-3, Paul likens the Law to a trustee appointed to care for a young child and his property

— All three comparisons were to clarify the difference between the previous historical period of spiritual immaturity and the present period of spiritual freedom

— Here, Paul shows that the Law was a disciplinarian for Israel throughout the OT dispensation. However, the need for that kind of assistance ended when Christ came.

- "...before faith came" - means before the advent of faith in Jesus Christ

— Justifying faith was operative in the OT, but faith in the person and work of Christ did not come until He was revealed

— Before that, Israel was under the protective custody of the Law, God thus shielding His people from the evil heathen rites surrounding them

- "...we" - Israel (Jews)

24 Therefore the Law has become our **guardian** to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

24 And so the Law was our guardian until the Messiah came, so that we might be justified by faith.

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

- "...guardian" - *paidagōgos*, in 1st century Greco-Roman culture, a *paidagōgos* was a tutor (typically of young boys), hired by the parents. They were harsh disciplinarians who were placed over disobedient children until the child reached the age of maturity.

— For example, a child had an inheritance coming. The *paidagōgos* would control the money until the child reached a certain age. A *paidagōgos* also controlled the learning,

ensuring that the child learned certain things in order to be successful in life.

— They supervised and tutored the maturity of young children. When that child reached the age of maturity, the *paidagōgos* was no longer necessary. The child, at that point an adult, could do as they pleased without fearing the harsh disciplinarian.

— Paul's point by way of analogy is that how a *paidagōgos* brings a child to maturity is analogized to the relationship between Law and faith. God used the Mosaic Law as a *paidagōgos* to bring the children of Israel to maturity, by using it to point out their flaws, to illustrate the fact that they couldn't keep it, and to point us to Jesus Christ.

— The Law gives us an incentive to trust in Jesus Christ, much like a *paidagōgos* brought a child to maturity. Once we have reached the point of maturity (with the coming of Jesus Christ), we no longer need a *paidagōgos* because it has done its job in leading us to maturity and thus is no longer necessary.

- Why would someone who has reached the point of maturity and freedom go back under the tutelage of the *paidagōgos*? This is Paul's point: a person who has reached maturity would not forsake their freedom to go back under the harsh discipline of the *paidagōgos*, but this was exactly what these Judaizers were doing to the Galatians.

— Paul is asking via statement, Why are you going back under the *paidagōgos* when you've already reached the age of maturity?

25 But now that **faith has come**, we are no longer under a **guardian**.

25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

25 But now that faith has come about, we are no longer under a guardian.

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

- "...faith has come" - we have reached maturity; you have graduated, *paidagōgos* is no longer necessary

- "...guardian" - *paidagōgos*, a tutor or schoolmaster (see note on v24)

- After a child has come to the age of maturity (generally 14-17 years old), Paul analogizes this to the Greco-Roman "coming of age" ceremony, the *Toga Virilis*. It is in essence the Roman version of the Jewish *bar-mitzvah*.

— This was a special ceremony where both manhood and full Roman citizenship and its privileges and responsibilities were bestowed upon a teenager (typically 14-17 years old)

— The *paidagōgos* was never designed to be permanent. There would be a change in the relationship between the *paidagōgos* and the child once the child became mature. Once the child reached maturity, the *paidagōgos* was no longer necessary.

- This, Paul explains, is what happened when you came to Christ...when you came to Christ, the Law was no longer necessary because it had done its job by bringing you to Christ. Through the Law, God revealed to you your need for a Savior/Messiah, and now that

you've accepted Jesus Christ, you have the full privileges and responsibilities of adulthood and there is no longer a need for a *paidagōgos*.

— Why would you need the Law to point out my constant violations of God's revealed will when all of my sins in Christ have been paid for, past, present, and future?

— No one who has been reared by a *paidagōgos* would, after the *Toga Virilis* ceremony, go back under the tutelage and discipline of the *paidagōgos* again. This is what the Judaizers are telling the Galatians to do.

— Paul is imploring the Galatians to recognize this fact and not revert backward and put themselves back under the *paidagōgos*. With the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, we now have all the resources we need to overcome our sin nature without following a bunch of rules and regulations.

### **Recap: Why the Law?**

"But why then did God even give the Law?" his objectors would argue. Paul gave three answers:

1. The Law was Temporary and Only for Israel (3:19-20)
  - God never gave the Law to the Gentiles. The moral law was already written in the Gentiles' hearts (Rom 2:14-15; Acts 15:24). But the ceremonial Law (including the Sabbath Laws) was never given to the Gentiles. The Law was "added" and was not a replacement for the Abrahamic promises. Once the Seed (Christ) came, the Law was superseded. "But the Law was given with such glory!" the Judaizers would reply. "How can you say it was only temporary?" Paul is ready with an answer: the Law was given by angelic mediators, but God spoke personally to Abraham. God is one—and the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham depended on Him alone.
2. The Law Convicted Us of Sin but Never Saved Us from Sin (3:21-22)
  - If there were a law that saved sinners, then God would have spared His Son and used that law instead of the cross. The Law is not contrary to God's promises; by revealing sin, the Law forces the sinner to trust God's promises. The Law shows us our need of grace; grace enables us to please God through faith. The Law places all under sin, which means that all can be saved by grace. If God permitted even one sinner to be saved by the Law, then no man could be saved by grace. All must be saved the same way.
3. The Law Prepared the Way for Christ (3:23-29)

- "Before the faith we now know came, the law shut men up, revealing their need for a Savior." The Law was God's "schoolmaster" (tutor) for the Jews in their national infancy. The Greek and Roman tutor used to guard and teach the minor children until they reached legal adulthood, after which the children were on their own. The Law kept the Jews "in line," so to speak, until Christ came and the full revelation of the Gospel was given to Jews and Gentiles.

#### (E) The Privileges of adulthood (3:26-29)

Paul now compounds his former arguments against going back under the Mosaic Law by giving four privileges that every believer receives the moment they place their faith in Christ. His argument is: why would you forsake these majestic privileges and put yourself back under a cruel *paidagōgos* and a system designed to not give you any privileges but rather to show your need for the privileges? This is the reaction Paul hopes to receive from these Galatians by articulating these four privileges.

##### (a) Sons of God (3:26)

26 For you are all **sons and daughters** of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

26 For all of you are God's children through faith in the Messiah Jesus.

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

- "...sons" - the son was an heir to the entire estate (1 Peter 1:4)

— How does a person become a son, thus an heir or inheritor of all the promised future blessings from God? Only through faith in Christ (John 1:12; Rom 8:14-17).

— We become heirs to all of our future blessings; all of these blessings are currently in our account

— Notice the "sonship" only comes through "faith in Christ Jesus." God does not have any grandchildren (Cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5)

The change in person from the first to the second "you" indicates that Paul turned from looking at Israel as a nation to address the Galatian believers personally. Under the dispensation of the Law, v24, the Law was a disciplining pedagogue, and those under its supervision were regarded as children. However, now that Christ had come, the Galatian believers were adult sons through faith and were no longer under a Jewish slave-guardian. Why should they seek to revert to their inferior status?

##### (b) Baptism into Christ (3:27)

27 For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have **clothed yourselves** with Christ.

27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

27 Indeed, all of you who were baptized into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah.

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

- "...baptized into Christ" - does not refer to water baptism, but the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which identifies us with the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom 6:3-5)

— Baptism simply means "identification"; at the point of personal faith in Christ, we are "identified" into the transaction that Christ accomplished in his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension

- We "were" baptized into Christ; the implication is that it happened automatically, which it did, at the point of faith. We didn't have to go out and get baptized, as if it was something we accomplished (contrary to water baptism). It is something that God did to us at the point of faith.

- "...clothed yourselves" - an illustration of what Spirit baptism does: it "clothes" us with Christ. All of my being as now been identified with the transaction of the cross.

— Consequently the power of the sin nature, which kept me in a state of bondage before I came to Christ, has been broken. I now have the power to say No to my sin nature.

(c) One with other Christians (3:28)

28 There is neither **Jew nor Greek**, there is neither **slave nor free**, there is neither **male nor female**; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus**.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

28 Because all of you are one in the Messiah Jesus, a person is no longer a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a male or a female.

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.

- The third privilege that Paul articulates is the fact that all Christians are unified as one body, without societal distinctions or discrimination

— Since all believers are now sons of God (v26), and all believers have been baptized/identified into Christ (v27), we come to the realization that no Christian is better than another (v28) or has achieved any greater status than any other Christian, on the following basis:

- "...Jew nor Greek" - on the basis of race/ethnicity or nationality
- "...slave nor free" - on the basis of socio-economic status
- "...male nor female" - on the basis of gender

— Paul uses these categories because these were the clear divisions in Greco-Roman society. And what Paul is saying is that these divisions (or others) that society has

artificially set up, come crashing down when a person comes to Christ. These divisions are left behind at the front door of the church (Cf. Eph 2:14).

— Society has always and will continue to discriminate against other people based on these, and many other, categories. But Christians have no basis whatsoever to discriminate among ourselves based on these categories (Cf. James 2:1-4).

— Jesus is our example. When He spoke with the woman at the well (John 4), He transgressed every cultural barrier that was in place at that time: ethnic barriers (Jews didn't associate with or even speak with Samaritans); moral barriers (John 4:18); gender barriers (women were one step above cattle in the first century, yet Jesus treated this woman with the utmost love and respect).

- "...for you are all one in Christ Jesus" - notice the all-inclusive verbiage here, as well as the use of "all" in v26,27

— Notice that it says we are all one in "Christ Jesus"; we are not all one in "the Church." God has called men and women to play different roles in the church

— There is a unity in essence in the body of Christ, but that does not mean there is a oneness/unity in role. There is a oneness ontologically (in terms of value), but there is a difference in terms of function or role (Cf. 1 Tim 2:12; Eph 5:22-24).

— We see the same thing within the Trinity: the Son is just as much deity as the Father is, and the Holy Spirit is just as much deity as the Son. But the Son of God submitted Himself to a role when He came to earth. He submitted Himself to the authority of the Father, yet He never gave up once iota of His deity. So within the Trinity, there is a oneness in ontology but a difference in function or role.

No one is spiritually superior over another. A believing Jew is not more privileged before God than a believing Gentile (Cf. Col 3:11). A believing slave does not rank higher than a believing free person; a believing man is not superior to a believing woman. Paul cut across these distinctions and stated that they do not exist in the body of Christ so far as spiritual privilege and position are concerned. Elsewhere, while affirming the co-equality of man and woman in Christ, Paul did nonetheless make it clear that there is a headship of the man over the woman (Cf. 1 Cor 11:3), and that there are distinctions in the area of spiritual service (Cf. 1 Tim 2:8-15).

#### (d) Children of Abraham (3:29)

29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to **promise**.

29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

29 And if you belong to the Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants indeed, and heirs according to the promise.

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

- The fourth and final privilege that Paul articulates in this passage is the fact that all Christians, including Gentiles, become descendants of Abraham

- Once a person trusts in Christ, they become descendants (or "seed" or "children") of Abraham

- This verse is not saying that we all of a sudden become physical descendants of Abraham, but rather refers to believers as "spiritual" descendants of Abraham. In the same way, Jesus referred to the Pharisees as the "spiritual" descendants of Satan (John 8:44). It's in this same sense that we are called descendants of Abraham here.

- Paul already covered this topic of believers as children of Abraham back in v7, in reference to his quote of Gen 15:6 (Cf. v6)

- What he is saying is that we today are justified in the exact same way that Abraham was justified (Cf. Gen 15:16; Rom 4:17-25). In essence, Abraham is our prototype for salvation.

- Paul's point is that faith gave Abraham benefits, and the most important benefit was righteousness. And this righteousness is not something we can get by ourselves, and we can't get it from the Law (through works). It only comes to us by faith in Christ.

- "...promise" - *epangelia*, singular, referring to one promise

- Replacement theologians look at this verse and say, See, Christians have become Abraham's descendants, so the church has taken over the OT promises given to Israel.

- However, "promise" in this verse is singular, referring to one promise; God gave Israel three promises through the Abrahamic Covenant: Land, Seed, and Blessing. These promises are amplified by subsequent covenants that God made with Israel, the Land, Davidic, and New covenants, respectively.

- If the church had taken over Israel's place, "promise" in this verse would not be singular, it would be plural because it is not focusing on everything that God promised to Israel.

- He's focusing on one promise that we share with Abraham: imputed righteousness, which is attainable only by faith alone.

- In addition, saying "Abraham's descendants" is not the same thing as saying "Israel." To be a Jew, to be part of "Israel" you cannot just be a son of Abraham. You must be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Unless your lineage comes through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you are not a Jew. Simply being a son of Abraham is not enough, because Ishmael was a son of Abraham.

- Failure to distinguish these groups and the promises given to each has resulted in theological and eschatological confusion. For example, amillennialists conclude that Gentile believers inherit the promises of the believing Remnant within Israel, thus eliminating any future for Israel as a nation.

— Maturing Christians need to be able to rightly divide the Word of Truth; we need to be able to decipher these details in the text so that we don't begin to learn then teach non-biblical doctrine or ideas

- The point of the verse is that we are children of Abraham, meaning we are saved just like Abraham was, through faith alone. Paul is not building an entire theology here about how the church has taken over Israel's promises.

As Paul previously stated, Christ is the Seed of Abraham (v16,19). Therefore, being in Christ makes a believer a part of that seed and an heir of the promise to Abraham. Any discussion of the seed of Abraham must first take into account his *natural seed*, the descendants of Jacob in the 12 tribes. Within this natural seed there is a believing remnant of Jews who will one day inherit the Abrahamic promises directed specifically to them (Cf. Rom 9:6,8). But there is also the *spiritual seed* of Abraham who are not Jews. These are the Gentiles who believe and become Abraham's spiritual seed. They inherit the promise of justification by faith as Paul explained earlier (Cf. Gal 3:6-9).