

Galatians – Freed to be Free

A study of the book of Galatians

Chapter 3 – Faith, Not Works

Galatians 3:1-14

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴ Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? ⁵ Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? ⁶ Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

1. Is Paul being insulting or direct in **v. 1**? Is Jesus being insulting or direct when he speaks similarly in **Luke 24:25**, “*How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*”?
2. The questions in **3:2-3** are the central questions of the book. What’s the answer to them?
 - What things do we do that we think God needs us to do and in doing so fall into the same pit as the Galatians?
 - Paul is hammering this point hard! Why must he? Why must Christians of every place and time hammer away on these questions too?
3. How was Abraham saved? What makes you one of the many sons and daughters of father Abraham? (Yes, it’s ok to sing the song to yourself!)
 - Were Gentiles not able to be saved before? What’s up with **v. 8**? Think about Naaman and Cornelius.

4. What's true of everyone who relies on observing the law? What is so clearly presented in Scripture, so clear to Paul, and hopefully is so clear to all of us all the time?
 - How do you live? (Think **Galatians 2:20**)

5. Why should we never allow ourselves to grow lax on the point of emphasis in **v. 14**?

Galatians 3:15-25

Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. ¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. ¹⁹ What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. ²⁰ A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one. ²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. ²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

6. What truth is being made about God's covenants is made in **vs. 15-18**? How do we receive the inheritance of God?

7. What is the purpose of the law in general? What is our relationship to the law now? What's it good for?
 - In respect to law and gospel, how does Christ function as mediator?
 - How can law and gospel, two contradictory teachings, actually be in perfect harmony with one another?

8. What is Paul saying in **vs. 23-25**? What's the point of being held prisoner to the law and then no longer being under its supervision?

Galatians 3:26-29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

9. Who is a child of God by faith? How did this happen?

10. Is **v. 28** hyperbole or New Testament reality? We've been talking much about how we must live the gospel or else we are in jeopardy of losing the gospel ourselves. How can we live **v. 28**?

11. No questions or qualifiers allowed, what is simply true for all who belong to Christ?