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Galatians 3

Paul has made the transition from the personal section of his letter to the doctrinal at the end towards the end of the second chapter by focusing on the justification by faith in Jesus Christ apart from the law based on grace. Gal. 2:16-21

Paul now begins to reason with the Galatians doctrinally to reveal the folly and futility of depending on the law to be just before God.

He will use many contrast throughout the chapter.

1. Faith verses works.
2. Grace verses the Law.
3. Blessings verses the curse of the Law.
4. Promise verses the Law.
5. Jesus, “the seed” to redeem us rather than our own works.

3:1-5 The believers justification is by faith.

Paul begins by relating to their personal experience.

- 3:1** Paul rebukes them sharply.
- 1) Paul calls them foolish.
 - a) The word foolish “anoetos” refers to a person who can think but has failed to exercise the power of perception.

* We might use the term “empty-headed” for the lack of wisdom in a matter.

- 2) The word bewitched means a fascination by an evil eye, to influence a person.
 - a. Used only this time in the New Testament and without doubt fell into a gentile superstition and uses it to illustrate his point.
 - b. People are fascinated by many things and allured away from Christ to disobey the truth of the gospel.
 - c. The bible warns us in many ways.
 - 1) Satan is the god of this world. 2 Cor. 4:4
 - 2) Thoughts come against the knowledge of God. 2 Cor. 10:4-6
 - 3) Satan and angels of light can transform themselves into angels of light. 2 Cor. 11:14-15
 - 4) False teachers will spread damnable heresies and have great followings. 2 Pet. 2:1
 - 5) The latter times will have Seducing spirits teaching doctrines of devils. I Tim. 4:1

* The warning is clear, Let him who thinks he that stands, take heed lest he fall. 1Cor. 10:12
- 3) The sharp rebuke was due to the privilege of hearing and receiving the gospel.

- a) The word portrayed used of a public reading, like a placard or an announcement, much like a billboard would be seen by all.
- b) The gospel preached to them was Christ crucified continual result.
* Their denial of Christ crucified Him afresh to open shame. Heb. 6:6

3:2 The first rhetorical question.

- 1) Reveals that the reception of the Holy Spirit was by the hearing of faith. Rom. 10:17
- 2) That was the promise of Jesus to his disciples. Jn. 14-16; Acts 1:8
- 3) Paul tell the Ephesians that after hearing the word they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Eph. 1:13
- 4) You have the same occurrence of receiving the Holy Spirit throughout the book of Acts.
* Pentecost Acts 2, Samaria Acts 8, Cornelius Acts 10, Missionary journeys, Ephesus Acts 19.

3:3 The second rhetorical question.

- 1) Reveals that having begun in the Spirit, one can not be made perfect in the flesh?
- 2) The two are opposed and mutually exclusive.
 - a) Being confident... Phil. 1:6

- b) I know whom I have believed, persuaded that he is able to keep...(sanctification) 2Tim. 1:12

3:4 The third rhetorical question.

- 1) Reveals Paul's love for them to shake them out of this deceptive position of theirs.
- 2) The suffering and loss is not indicated, yet the answer again is obvious, NO!

3:5 The fourth rhetorical question.

- 1) The question is based on the conclusion that they had received the gospel and the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Does God Who supplies the Holy Spirit and does miracles among them, does he do it by the work of law?
* NO, but by the hearing of faith!
- 3) God bearing them witness with signs and wonders by Holy Spirit. Heb. 2:4

3:6 Paul places the Gentiles on equal standing with Abraham as the model of faith. Gen. 15:6

- 1) His faith was accounted to him for righteousness. Rom. 4:3
- 2) The Gentile Galatians were like Abraham, after his model of faith.

- 3) The word accounted is a business term, that means to put to one's account, to impute.

3:7 The conclusion of Paul is that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

- 1) Rabbinical writings said Abraham was often called “a bag of myrrh” for just as myrrh is the most excellent of spices, so Abraham was the chief of all righteous men.
- 2) Faith being the means to sonship and therefore called the father of many nations. Gen. 17:4; Rom. 4:17

3:8 The testimony of Scripture.

- 1) The plan of God was to justify the Gentiles by faith from the beginning.
- 2) The proclamation was given to Abraham, the gospel.
- 3) The text is found in Genesis. Gen. 12:3
* In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed, in the future!
- 4) Where did God preach the gospel to Abraham?
* There are two possible places that we might look at!
 - a) At the time of Melchizedek meeting Abraham, as he returned from recovering the spoil and captives of Sodom and Gomorra. Gen. 14

- b) At the time of Abraham offering up Isaac? Gen. 22
* Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad. Jn. 8:56

3:9 Those of faith are blessed with Abraham.

- 1) Faith is the means for sonship.
- 2) Faith blesses individuals as it did Abraham. Rom. 4:1-4

3:10-14 The Law did not justify man but condemned man.

3:10 Paul is quoting the law. Deut. 27:26

- 1) This was the last of the twelve curses.
- 2) The standard was perfection.
- 3) The offense in one point made man guilty of all the law. Ja. 2:10
- 4) The law was the ministration of death and condemnation. 2 Cor. 3:7,9
* The doer is justified, not hearer. Rom. 2:13

3:11 The standard of God has always been faith.

- 1) Paul is quoting Habakkuk who was to believe God for Israel’s restoration thought he could not see it. Hab. 2:4
 - a) Linskie the Greek scholar says that it should read literally, “from faith”.

- b) The indication is the future, “shall”.
- 2) Faith is acting on the revelation of God in obedience.
- 3) Three times this verse is quoted in the New Testament.
 - a. In Romans, the just, is emphasized. Rom. 1:17
 - b. In Galatians, the shall live, is emphasized. Gal. 3:11
 - c. In Hebrews, by faith, is emphasized. Heb. 10:38

3:12 Faith and law are incompatible.

- 1) He is quoting Leviticus. Lev. 18:5
- 2) He show clearly that law is based on doing.

3:13 Christ was condemned for us.

- 1) He quotes again the law. Deut. 21:23
 - * All of which are from the LXX.
- 2) The Jews were under the law of Moses.
- 3) The Gentiles were under the law of conscience and creation, written in their hearts. Rom. 1:20; 2:14-16
- 4) Jesus was made sin for us. 2Cor. 5:21
 - * The preaching of the cross is foolishness to some. 1Cor 1:18
- 5) The word redeemed “exagorazo” means to buy out of the slave market. Gal. 4:5
 - * Is. 53:6; 1Pet. 1:18; 2:24

3:14 The purposed plan and reason is given.

- 1) That the blessing of Abraham might come to Gentiles through Christ Jesus.
- 2) That they might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Is. 32:15; 44:3, Joel 2:28; Acts 2; 8; 10; 19

3:15-18 The justification was by promise to Abraham.

3:15 Paul uses the illustration of a last will and testament or contract.

- 1) He states that once written out, no one can add to it nor annul it, calling them brethren. Gal. 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18
 - * Though we understand that provisions can be made for that.
- 2) The word covenant has the idea of contract in the Greek.
- 3) God made a covenant with Abraham which has the idea of cutting.
 - * The Hebrew word is “beriyth” in the sense of cutting.
- 4) Abraham cut the animals in two but God alone walked in the middle of them to establish the covenant by a burning lamp passing in the midst. Gen. 15:8-17
- 5) The covenant of circumcision was the seal of the covenant, not the covenant. Gen. 17:10; Rom. 4:1-4, 11

- 6) The will and testament of the New covenant is an unconditional covenant of grace. Heb. 9:15-21

3:16 The promise is seed explained.

- 1) The promise was to Abraham and his seed.
- 2) The seed “sperma” is declared to be singular not plural.
- 3) The seed is identified as Christ. Gen. 3:15;12:3; Is. 7:14; Jn. 1:1, 14
- 4) The believer is born again of God by Jesus Christ.
 - a) Not of corruptible seed.. 1Pet. 1:23
 - b) Not of blood, nor of the will or the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Jn. 1:13

3:17 Paul makes application to his principle of not adding nor annulling.

- 1) The law came 430 years later after the promise. Ex. 12:40
- 2) The law therefore could not add nor annul what God had promised to Abraham.
 - a) There was 2500 years from Adam to Moses and there was no law
 - b) There was 1500 years from Moses to Jesus which there was law.

3:18 Paul summarizes the promise.

- 1) If the inheritance is of the law, then it can not be of promise.
- 2) God gave it to Abraham by promise therefore it is his inheritance.
 - a) The word gave “kecharistai” is based on the word for grace. Rom. 8:32; Phil. 1:29
* To show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent.
 - b) The gift given was by generosity without any strings attached, past completed with present results.
* As many as received him, to them gave he the authority... Jn. 1:12
 - c) The guarantee “arrabon” of our inheritance till the purchased possession is the Holy Spirit. Eph. 1:14

3:19-25 The purpose of the law.

3:19 The purpose is declared.

- 1) It was added because of transgression, to reveal man’s sin and show him his inability to keep it as a sinner, one who misses the mark. Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:14, 18
- 2) It was given for a temporary time, till the Seed “Christ” should come.
 - a) "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not

come to destroy but to fulfill. Matt 5:17

- b) He was the end of the law. Rom.10:4
- 3) It was to reveal the inferiority of the law due to having two mediators. Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2

3:20 The function of a mediator is declared.

- 1) A mediator is for two not one.
- 2) God being One need no mediator for He became the God-Man in Jesus!

3:21 Paul deals with the obvious question, “Is the law against the promises of God?”

- 1) Once again the answer is no!
- 2) The law was never given to impart righteousness, if it had then righteousness would of come by the law.

3:22 The problem was not the law in itself but man.

- 1) All are under sin, all have sinned, there is none righteous, no, not one. Rom. 3:10, 23
* The soul that sins, it shall die! Ezk. 18:14
- 2) What the law could not do due to the weakness of sinful flesh, God did by sending His only Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh. Rom. 8:3

- 3) Therefore the promise is given by faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Jn. 1:12
 - a) All are guilty before God. Rom. 1-3
 - b) All are able to be justified in Christ, who believe. Rom. 4-5

3:23 The intervening time from Moses to Christ.

- 1) All were kept under guard by the law, referring to being confined like a military guard unable to escape for 1500 years.
- 2) The guard was for protection till the promise should come, Christ.
* The word is used to be a watcher in advance, to mount a guard as a sentinel and translated “garrison” in Corinthians. 2Cor. 11:32

3:24-25 The law was tutor.

- 1) The word tutor “paidagogos” was a servant to tend to the child, to care for his supervision and to take him to school and return, so as not to get into trouble and bad company, he did not teach him.
* This was from age 6-16 years. 1Cor. 4:15
- 2) The law was like that tutor to accompany man to Christ, Who the law spoke of!

- 3) The fact that faith has come, tells us that man is no longer under the law, for the promise has arrived.
* Salvation history is fulfilled in Christ!
- 4) Paul declares man to be “under” many things in this epistle.
- a) Under the law. Gal. 3:23; 4:4; 5, 21; 5:18
 - b) Under sin. Gal. 3:22
 - c) Under a pedagogue. Gal. 3:24, 25
 - d) Under a guardians and stewards. Gal. 4:2
 - e) Under the elements of the world. Gal. 4:3

3:26-29 The result of faith is sons and heir of God.

3:26 No one is excluded from Christ.

- 1) All are sons of God through faith through Christ Jesus. Jn. 1:12
- 2) All who reject faith through Christ are not sons of God.

3:27 The identification with Christ.

- 1) Those water baptized had confessed Christ in faith according to the promise.
- 2) Baptism in and of itself does not save, it is only a public confession of what already has happened in the heart by faith. 1Pet. 3:19-21; Eph. 4:1-6; Tit. 3:5

- 3) To put on Christ refers to depend on the work of the Spirit to work in and through the person on a daily basis.

3.28 All have the same standing before God.

- 1) There is no racial favor, Jew or Gentile.
- 2) There is no social favor, slave nor free.
- 3) There is no gender favor, male or female.
- 4) For all are one in Jesus Christ.

* Jew, gentile and the church of God. I Cor. 10:32

3.29 The result of faith.

- 1) If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed.
- 2) If you are Christ's, then you are heirs according to the promise.