

TITLE: THE CLEAR BENEFITS OF CHRISTIANITY

TEXT: GALATIANS 3

INTRO: Gal 3 (& 4) are similar to the Hebrew letter, which sets out to prove that Christianity is better than Judaism. In Hebrews, the Christians were contemplating leaving Christianity for Judaism. The Galatians, however, were bringing parts of Judaism into Christianity (e.g., circumcision). Either way is wrong. Christianity *alone* is what justifies the sinner.

I. BLESSING VS CURSE (v. 1-14):

A. The blessings of faith (v. 1-9)

1. (v. 1-5) Galatians chastised – O foolish (unintelligent, unwise) Galatians! This is not how he would address them if they just didn't know any better but to follow the Judaizers. They had every reason to know better, as we can see by Paul's questions.
(v. 1) *Who bewitched* ('to fascinate by false representations' – Strong's) *you? Who caused you to not obey the truth* (2:14)? Here is the seriousness of their sin. Jesus was evidently set forth (described, written) before you as crucified. Paul has just said (in 2:21) that Jesus' death was useless if righteousness could have come by the law (as the Judaizers were teaching).
(v. 2-5) This obviously (and appropriately) makes Paul extremely upset! He says he wants to know 1 thing, then asks 5 questions! These questions are rhetorical; it ought to embarrass the Galatians to have to answer them!
 - a. Q1 – *Did you receive the Spirit out of works of law or out of hearing of faith?* By law or faith? See **2:16**.
 - b. Q2 – *Are you so foolish* (same word as in v.1)??!!
 - c. Q3 – *Having begun in Spirit, are ye now made perfect by flesh?* You started in Christianity (the faith of Christ– 2:16), which is good, but now do you think you're going to be perfected by listening to Judaizers and holding to law again?
 - d. Q4 – *Have you suffered so many things in vain?* If they obey the old law in any way, Christ's death is useless (2:21) & everything they've suffered is in vain. "Suffer" – to feel, be affected, experience a sensation, in a good or bad way; passion. So Paul may be using this in a good sense – have you experienced so many good things in Christ (faith, forgiveness of sins, gifts of the Spirit), all in vain?
 - e. Q5 – *He that ministers* (supplies) *the Spirit & works miracles among you, is it by works of law or hearing of faith?* Here is a great and obvious point: If spiritual gifts were a result of the old law, why are they just now showing up? Why the significance of Peter & the 11 speaking in tongues on the D.O.P.? These came by faith, not law! This is why these gifts were a sign of the new covenant and a confirmation of the word of the new covenant (**Mark 16:20**).
2. (v. 6-9) Galatians taught
(v. 6) "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" Here is a great verse (**Gen 15:6**), quoted several times in the NT, and misapplied all the time today. Paul's point is that this OT verse says Abraham was righteous, but not by the law (which was 430 yrs later – v.17). So his righteousness had to come from something else (faith/belief), apart from law. But this doesn't mean Abraham didn't have to obey. Paul says nothing in this verse about his obedience, but James does in **Jam 2:21-24** – "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works...?*"
(v. 7) They that are of **faith**, not law, are children of Abraham (since Abraham wasn't part of the law). So which is better??
(v. 8) In a sense the gospel was preached to Abraham, because it was based solely on faith, without law, at that time. Again, there is nothing in what Paul is saying that indicates that there is **no law** at all, only that justification doesn't come by it.

B. The curse of the law (v. 10-14)

1. (v. 10) If you hold to the old law, then you must continue in *all* the law. Cursed if you don't! (**Deut 27:26; Jam 2:10-11**).
2. (v. 11-12) "*The just* (righteous) *shall live by faith*" (**Hab 2:4**), not by the law. But you must *live* in the law -**Lev 18:5 (v.10)**.
3. (v. 13-14) Christ became the curse for us by hanging on the cross (**Deut 21:23**), so the blessing of Abraham might come.... An understood statement is that by Christ hanging on that tree the law ended. He ended the law (the curse) & brought faith.

II. STRENGTH VS WEAKNESSES (v. 15-25):

A. The strength of the covenant – permanence (v. 15-18)

1. (v. 15) Even a human covenant is binding. No one can disannul it, or add to it.
2. (v. 16-17) God's promises to Abraham & Christ are binding. Notice that in this context, 'promise' & 'covenant' are used interchangeably. What promise? That Christ would be a blessing to *all* nations. The law did *not/could not* disannul it!
3. (v. 18) The inheritance is through the promise, not the law.

B. The weakness of the law – temporary (v. 19-25)

1. (v. 19-20) Its duration – temporary, because of sin
 - a. (v. 19) What then was the purpose of the law? To deal w/transgressions; expose sin, encourage obedience, keep peace!
 - b. (v. 20) "Now a mediator supposes two parties, of which God is but one." I.e., the law was a mediation (to bring peace).
2. (v. 21-22) Its inability to give life. All are under sin (**Rom 3:23**), and therefore **condemned** (not justified) by the law.
3. (v. 23-25) Its purpose – to bring us to Christ - like a child's schoolmaster (more than just a teacher). But it was temporary!

III. CHILDREN BY FAITH (v. 26-29):

- A. (v. 26-27) *Children of God by faith* ("children" is in the context of "schoolmaster"-v.24). The evidence of this is your baptism! By being baptized into Christ, you "put on" (clothe yourself with) Christ. This is when you became a child of God (v. 26)!
- B. (v. 28) Here's his main point regarding the false distinctions (there is NO distinction, contrary to what Peter's actions said–**2:12**).
- C. (v. 29) If you are of Christ, then ye are of Abraham's seed. How? Because Christ is that seed (v. 16) and you were baptized into Him, clothing yourself with him. And if so, then you are heirs of the blessings (v. 9) according to the promise.

CONCLUSION: 1) You were under the curse of the law (v.10). **2)** Jesus redeemed you from that curse by becoming a curse for you (v. 13). But how? **3)** By becoming children of God through faith in Christ, & **4)** this happened **at baptism!** Now you're heirs, but only if you let go of the old law and commit to Christ. It's so sad that 2000 years later things haven't changed. Denominations still hold to the old law! They don't realize this is a rejection of Jesus. If it's not Christ's law, *all* of Christ's law, and *only* Christ's law, *it cannot save!*