

Galatians 3:1-14

INTERPRETATION

Paul is slowly moving through his proposal, his argument really, of justification by faith, not the law. At this point, Paul has proposed this idea of justification... again, as he appears to have presented the idea while he was personally in Galatia. Now Paul is starting to confirm this idea of justification by being extremely blunt and bringing out various Old Testament Scriptures and weaving them into the passage (which did not happen this frequent in any other letter except Romans). Therefore, Paul opens by calling out the Galatians, but also is questioning who fooled them. Paul does not necessarily know who exactly "bewitched" the Galatians, but the question seems to be implying who could you think is more believable than Christ who is speaking through me (Paul). So, Paul reverts back to the basics, how did you receive the Spirit, through the works of the law or faith. Did you receive the Spirit, only to try to become perfect through the law, through your own flesh and works? Paul is just digging in to the Galatians, questioning their faith and their misguided faith, and rightfully so. But those first two questions weren't enough. In verse 5, Paul goes on to ask essentially the same question again, only he ties it back to Christ. Did God through the Spirit do miracles among you by the works of the Law or by faith? Now, Paul means that God did miracles through the Spirit through Paul. Paul was the one performing miracles in Galatia. ((We, having the Gospels, know the answer. Christ criticized the Pharisees for overextending the law. Often, maybe even always, when Christ performed miracles it was because of the faith of the person, not just to show off His power.)) Now Paul starts to hit the Galatians and the Judaizers hard. He brings up the Old Testament, to combat the Judaizers, and uses it to confirm the idea of justification through Christ. So, Paul starts with Abraham, the Father of Israel, of Judaism... "Abraham *believed* God and it was credited as righteousness (Gen. 15:6)." Which means that if Abraham believed, which means to have a firm conviction, i.e. faith, than those who are sons of Abraham must have faith just as he did. Which, Paul is saying, the Judaizers don't have. They just have the law. Now, in vs. 8, it says the Scripture foresaw... how does the Scripture see anything, it's a thing? Basically, it is saying that God gave the words to the writers of the Old Testament that foresaw the Gentiles justification. The OT writers didn't necessarily know the Gentiles would be justified, however, God did and working through the writers He formed the OT, which foresaw the Gentiles justification. Therefore, when it says in Genesis 12:3 that ALL the nations will be *blessed* through Abraham, ALL the nations will be blessed. That is good news, that God used Abraham to bless the whole world, that we might believe as Abraham did and have life. Therefore, the logical conclusion in Paul's mind is that those who have faith, the Christian faith, are blessed through Abraham and with Abraham, as fellow believers. ((It's like if A=B and A=C, then B=C. A=vs. 6 - Abraham believed God; B=those who have faith are sons of Abraham; C=God's blessing for Abraham's belief)) Paul moves on to call those following the law cursed, because no one can follow the law perfectly, which Paul would certainly know as a former devoted Pharisee. Considering the curse, there is no way that the law can justify anyone, that, Paul says, is evident. For God told the prophet Habakkuk that the righteous shall live by faith, not works, and not the law. So, Paul moves to prove that those who follow the law cannot also follow the faith. Once again, Paul throws an "OT dagger" at them by quoting that whatever you practice is whatever you live. You cannot practice the law and live by faith. Either you practice faith and live by it or you practice the law and live by it. (to quote Jesus, no one can serve two masters, you can't serve the law and the faith) So, how are those justified by faith not cursed any longer? Paul states that it is through Christ's redemption, through his taking of the curse by dying on the tree... the final OT quote, that cursed is everyone who hands on a tree. Which, Christ was able to take in order to bring the blessing of Abraham, which fulfills God's promise to Abraham that ALL people will be blessed through Abraham, because now the Gentiles can receive the promise of the Spirit by faith, not the law!

The law was created, more or less, to restrain evil. God laid out exactly what He considered evil for the Jews, for the world really, and Christ came and fulfilled the law, the restraint of evil, by defeating evil through His death and resurrection. The law also brought a semblance of justice and peace. God wasn't ready to send His Son, so He gave the law, which was more of a band-aid until Christ came to completely take away our sin, our "disease".

ROMANS 4:9-25 - nearly identical to Gal. 3:6-14 only expanded on more and doesn't include the curse part.

APPLICATION

I have always found that the easiest way to find application is to look at the Lessons 4 Life. Can you apply any of those to your life personally? If so, it has no become a good application point.

I need to publically portray Christ as crucified... and resurrected! (vs. 1)

I need to live with purpose... just live with purpose (vs. 4) (wanted to add more to it, but it was like, there is no purpose in doing that because you could add so many reasons why you need to live with purpose... just do it

I need to stop thinking that I can do everything. I need to constantly remember that it is through Christ's strength that I do anything. (vs. 3)

I am what I practice (vs. 12) (applicable to all areas of life... I am a student because I practice studying, I practice learning/going to school; I am a runner because I practice running; I am a guitar player because I practice guitar; I am a Christian who lives by faith because I practice the Christian faith; I am NOT a volleyball player because I do not practice volleyball; I am not an atheist because I do not practice atheism; etc.

FAITH is not first what you do, it is what you believe. What you do will flow from what you believe.

-Ted Dekker "The Slumber of Christianity" (pg. 199)