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By Dan Maines

Galatians 3

Galatians 3:1

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

† Paul begins sharply, rebuking their foolishness for being deceived.

† The crucifixion was proclaimed clearly, leaving no excuse for confusion.

† Tertullian (Against Marcion 5.3) saw Paul's language as

exposing the spiritual deception of Judaizers.

Galatians 3:2-3

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

† The Spirit was received by faith, not Law.

† To return to the Law after receiving the Spirit is regression, not progress.

† Philo (On the Migration of Abraham 89) emphasized faith over ritual, aligning with Paul's reasoning.

Galatians 3:4-5

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

† Their suffering and miracles confirmed the Spirit's work by faith.

† The Spirit's power could not come from the Law.

† Origen (On Romans 4.8.5) affirmed the Spirit's presence proved justification by faith.

Galatians 3:6-7

Just as Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Therefore, recognize that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

† Abraham is the model of faith, credited as righteous before the Law.

† True sons of Abraham are those of faith, not merely physical descent.

† Josephus (Antiquities 1.7.1) also highlighted Abraham's trust

in God's promises.

Galatians 3:8-9

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

† The gospel was foreshadowed in God's promise to Abraham.

† Blessing through Abraham pointed to Gentile inclusion by faith.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 3.6.1) linked this promise to Christ's fulfillment.

Galatians 3:10-11

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." Now, that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for, "the righteous one will live by faith."

† The Law brings curse, since failure at any point condemns.

† Habakkuk 2:4 proves justification is by faith, not Law.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QpHab) interpreted Habakkuk 2:4 as applying to the faithful remnant, which Paul shows fulfilled in Christ.

Galatians 3:12-13

However, the Law is not of faith, on the contrary, "The person who performs them will live by them." 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."

† The Law operates by doing, not faith.

† Christ bore the curse to redeem His people from the Law's condemnation.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 111) saw the cross as

Christ bearing the curse of the Law.

Galatians 3:14

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.

† Christ fulfilled the Abrahamic promise, extending blessing to Gentiles.

† The Spirit is the promised inheritance by faith.

Galatians 3:15-16

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. 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.

† Covenants once confirmed are binding, showing God's faithfulness.

† The seed promise was singular, fulfilled in Christ.

† Augustine (City of God 16.23) affirmed Christ as the seed of Abraham.

Galatians 3:17-18

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. 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.

† The Law cannot annul God's prior promise.

† Promise takes precedence over Law.

† Josephus (Antiquities 2.15.2) recorded Israel's timeline, aligning with Paul's mention of 430 years.

Galatians 3:19-20

Why the Law then? It was added on account of the violations, until the Seed would come to whom the promise had been made. It was ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator. Now a mediator is not for one party only, but God is only one.

- † The Law was temporary, exposing sin until Christ came.
- † The Law was mediated, but the promise was direct from God.
- † Philo (On the Decalogue 9) described the Law as delivered through angelic mediation.

Galatians 3:21-22

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

- † The Law is not contrary, but it cannot give life.
- † Its purpose was to confine under sin until faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:23-24

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being confined for the faith that was destined to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our guardian to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

- † The Law functioned as a guardian, pointing to Christ.
- † Once faith arrived, the Law's role ended.
- † Origen (On Romans 4.9.1) affirmed the Law as tutor, temporary until Christ.

Galatians 3:25-26

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. For you are all sons and daughters of God through

faith in Christ Jesus.

- † Faith in Christ frees from the Law's guardianship.
- † Believers are children of God by faith, not works.

Galatians 3:27-28

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

- † Baptism unites all into Christ, erasing divisions.
- † Oneness in Christ fulfills the covenant promise.
- † Ignatius (Letter to the Magnesians 10) emphasized unity in Christ above all distinctions.

Galatians 3:29

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

- † Believers in Christ are Abraham's true heirs.
- † In Christ, the covenant promise is fulfilled.

How it applies to us today

- † Galatians 3 shows justification is by faith, not Law.
- † The Law was temporary, fulfilled in Christ.
- † All believers are united in Christ as heirs of Abraham.
- † In the fulfilled kingdom, the promise has come, and we live as sons of God clothed with Christ.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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