

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH Galatians 3:1-29

### Introduction

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Galatian believers to correct the false teachings of the Judaizers. They said salvation and sanctification were achieved by faith in Christ plus keeping the Law of Moses. To handle this problem Paul began with a defense of his apostolic authority (Gal 1-2). Then he dealt with the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ without the Law of Moses (Gal 3-4). Finally, he concluded with the deportment expected of true believers (Gal 5-6).

Paul examined justification by faith from five perspectives in chapters 3 and 4. He showed why justification must be by faith in God's grace alone and not by the works of the Law. The Old Testament taught this as well as the New Testament. Judaizers were teaching false doctrine from a misinterpretation of Scripture like many religious groups do today. He will set forth three of his arguments in chapter 3.

### Aim of the Lesson

It is to examine the doctrine of justification by faith alone and prove its trustworthiness.

**Outline of the Lesson** (Use the Study Notes to develop the lesson outline as the Spirit leads you.)

#### A. Examination of the Galatians' Faith (3:1-5)

Paul asks 5 questions to help turn these believers from the Law back to the Gospel of grace.

- 1 Who bewitched you so that you took your eyes off of Jesus Christ, who was crucified?
- 2 Did you receive the Spirit (get saved) by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?
- 3 Having been saved by the Spirit, are you made perfect by the flesh?
- 4 Have all the things you suffered as a Christian now been in vain?
- 5 Did God give the Spirit to do miracles among them by the Law or by hearing with faith?

**Faith without works produces salvation; faith plus works brings condemnation.**

#### B. Exposition of God's Word (3:6-14)

Paul used six Old Testament Scriptures to show that salvation is by faith, not by the Law.

1. Gen 15:6 – Abraham believed God for righteousness (3:6-7).
2. Gen 12:3 (18:18) – All nations shall be blessed (with salvation) in Abraham (3:8-9).
3. Dt 27:26 – Everyone is cursed who does not keep the whole Law (3:10).
4. Hab 2:4 – The just shall live by faith (3:11).
5. Lev 18:5 – He who practices the Law shall live by the Law (3:12). The Law is not of faith.
6. Dt 21:22-23 – Everyone who hangs on a tree is cursed (3:13). Christ took our curse.

**The blessing of God comes by faith; the curse of God comes by not keeping the whole Law.**

#### C. Explanation of God's Promise (3:15-29)

Paul deals with three aspects of salvation.

- 1 Gal 3:15-18 – The Promise of God was superior to His Law given to Moses.

To whom was the Promise given? (3:16) To Abraham and to Christ, his Seed

What did the Promise include? (Gen 12, 13, 15, 17, 22) Land, salvation (blessing), king (eternal)

- 2 Gal 3:19-24 – The purpose of God's Law exposed and controlled sin until Christ came

How is the purpose of the Law different than that of the Promise? Law exposed the true nature of sin and condemned it. It brought death. Promise revealed the grace of God by justifying sinners. It brought life.

- 3 Gal 3:25-29 – The position of a person who has faith in God is described in three ways:

He has become a son of God, having put on Christ – Gal 3:25-27

He has become unified with all believers, being made one in Christ – Gal 3:28

He has become an heir with Christ according to God's Promise – Gal 3:29

(To be continued in Galatians 4)

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IS JUST WHAT WE NEED

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### Further notes on Galatians 3

**3:19 – What purpose does the Law serve?** 6 purposes of the Law are given in Galatians 3.

1. The Law shows that sin is a transgression of God's holiness (3:19).
2. The Law was a temporary means of dealing with sin until Christ would come and provide the way to remove it (3:19).
3. The Law needed a mediator between God and Israel, but the promise was directly from God (3:19).
4. The Law shut up a man in a prison so that faith in Christ was his only means of escape (3:23).
5. The Law was a child-guardian that seeks to bring sinners to Christ to be justified (3:24).
6. The Law is no longer needed after faith in Christ has fulfilled its demands (3:25).

**3:20 – How is Paul answering the question about the purpose of the Law in this verse?**

A mediator is a person used to resolve a problem between two parties. He weighs the evidence of the case with impartiality and makes his decision. Moses, as the representative of the Law, was such a mediator between Israel and God in the Old Testament. The Law was impartial and impersonal and it justified God and condemned Israel (along with all mankind).

God is one and needs no mediator. He does not need the Law to resolve a problem. He can make a Promise to solve a problem without referring to any law. When He personally made His promise to Abraham, there was no law that He needed to obey in order to fulfill that Promise. Therefore, the Law cannot be against the Promise of God (3:21). The Law has no effect on God's Promise.