

Abraham's Offspring- Galatians 3 (Part 2)

Introduction:

At this point in our study, the apostle Paul has expressed his disappointment at the abandonment of some saints among the churches in Galatia. He has defined his role and message. He has not backed down for a moment - to pull someone back to obeying the Law of Moses is to pull one back to slavery when they had been liberated by Christ. To nullify the grace of God is to make Jesus' death pointless.

Paul goes on to explain the relationship of the Law and faith, justification and God's Promise to identify the true offspring of Abraham.

Vs. 15-20 The Covenant

- Take note of how Paul focuses on God's *promises*.
- The "offspring" reference can be found in several passages (Gen. 12:1-3,7; 13:15; 15:2-4,13; 17:7-9,19; 21:12; 22:17-18).
 - The Hebrew word *zera* is a collective noun. It can refer to one or many (such as 3:29, which refers to many, not one). Same principle in Romans 9:6-8. Point? The promise wasn't given to every child but to the one God chose (Isaac, not Ishmael. Jacob, not Esau. Ultimately, Christ).
- 430 years follows the LXX and agrees with the genealogy. This would span the time from God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12) to God's covenant with Israel (Exodus 20). Genesis 15:13 seems to round it to 400 years (and Stephen uses this number in Acts 7:6), but Exodus 12:40-41 uses 430.
- The promise of God's blessing didn't come through the Law but through His promise to Abraham. It predated the Law, and the Law does not void the promise.
- 2 Cor. 3:7-11. The Law was against them in one way (Col. 2:14). It was good in another way (Romans 7:7). But, it could not save. It gives a standard and then condemns you when you fail to meet it. However, it was meant to show mankind what sin was and practically teach them how they needed help because they failed to act holy.
- Mediator - Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2; Deut. 33:1-4. Perhaps not Moses, but Jesus (older commentaries also share this view). Second Temple texts such as Jubilees 1:27-29 speak of God dictating the Law to the Angel who delivers it to Moses. Deut. 9:9-10. This would help understand the phrase and meaning, "but God is one," which is the most difficult passage in this book.
 - Exodus 31:18 And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.
 - Exodus 24:12 The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."
 - Exodus 32:15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written.

- Exodus 32:16 The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.
- Deuteronomy 4:13 And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.
- Deuteronomy 5:22 "These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.
- Deuteronomy 9:10 And the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words that the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.
- Deuteronomy 9:11 And at the end of forty days and forty nights the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.
- Point? Paul is not downplaying the importance of the Law. If Jesus was the mediator, it shows the significance of the Law.

Vs. 21-29 Abraham's Offspring

- It's not that the Law is in opposition to the promise. If Law could give life, it could have gotten the job done. However, it ended up condemning Israel.
- From ESV Archaeology Study Bible: Gal. 3:24 guardian. The Greek word *paidagōgos* refers to a slave who accompanied a freeborn boy whenever he went outside the home. The slave was a personal attendant to the boy, keeping him out of trouble and exercising some disciplinary authority over his charge. Often strong bonds of affection developed between boys and their guardians.
- We are sons of God through faith.
- "FOR" is important and ties to baptism. So, baptism is of faith. It's how we come to be in Christ and put Him on.
- From ESV Archaeology Study Bible: Gal. 3:28 This verse summarizes the unity of the gospel, which joined Christians across the major divisions of first-century life. The Jews divided the peoples of the world theologically into two categories: Jews, who are God's people, and Gentiles, who are not. The Romans divided the world politically into citizens and noncitizens. The Greeks divided the world linguistically into Greeks and barbarians (i.e., non-Greek speakers). The Roman world's primary economic division was between slave and free; its fundamental social division was between men and women.

From ESV Archaeology Study Bible

- Gal. 3:13 tree. Paul quotes here from the Septuagint (Deut. 21:23). The Greek word for "tree" could refer to a pole on which a body was suspended; here Paul applies it to the cross. Many ancient Jewish writers (including Philo, Josephus, and many rabbis) also connected the curse in Deut. 21:22–23 with crucifixion.