

The Study of Galatians



The Defense of Justification by Faith
Galatians 3:1-29

- The Personal Argument
- The Scriptural Argument
- The Logical Argument

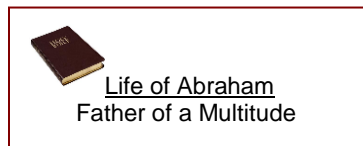
Key Verse: Galatians 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith.

INTRODUCTION: Paul continues his defense of the doctrine of justification by faith. In chapters 3 and 4 he presents six arguments, three in each chapter seeking to prove that salvation is by grace, through faith, apart from the works of the Law.

I. The Personal Argument: vv.1-5 Paul began with the Galatians' own personal experience with Christ. He appealed to the Galatians concerning the reality of their own salvation and challenged them to consider four rhetorical questions: How did you receive the Holy Spirit? How will you be sanctified? Did you suffer in vain? On what basis did God perform miracles?

II. The Scriptural Argument: vv.6-14 Abraham and the Gospel-To-Come. The Judaizers claimed to have the Old Testament on their side, especially looking to Moses as their teacher. But Paul went centuries farther back and said, Consider Abraham.

Click the following title and read the messages that relate to the Life of Abraham.



- Abraham: Impatient in his faith
- Abraham: Impetuous in his faith
- Abraham: Improved in his faith
- Abraham: Unconditional Covenant

Abraham stands out as a landmark in the spiritual history of the world. In himself, there was not much to make him worthy of such a distinction. Little is known of him until he was 70 years old.

- Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees, a great and populous city at the time.
- Abraham was a rough, simple, Bedouin-like sheep master.
- Abraham received a distinct revelation from God, we are not told how and when.
- Abraham gave up a certainty for an uncertainty; and he went out not knowing where he was going, but he was willing to surrender the seen for the unseen. **Hebrews 11:8-10**

1. On what basis was Abraham justified "*in right standing*" before God? He believed God, and it was "*credited to him*" for righteousness. v.6 and **Genesis 15:6** The gospel "*good news*" that Abraham believed was that God would bless him and make him a mighty nation. **Genesis 12:1-3**

- Abraham was taught the lesson of patience and learned to believe God while he waited.
- Abraham was subject to failures and his character like the sun had its spots.
- Abraham was saved by faith. Lit. believed "*inceptive aorist, a definite point in time*" vv.7-9

2. Contrary to what the Judaizers taught, the Law could not justify; it could only condemn.

- The Law demanded perfection and that a curse was attached to failure to keep any part of it. v.10 and **Deuteronomy 27:26**
- The breaking of only one command brought the person under the curse.



One broken link can affect the integrity of the whole chain.

- During the dispensation of Law, legal obedience was not the basis for a justified standing before God. v.11 and **Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38** *“the just shall live by faith”*
- Principle of the Law *“the man who does these things will live by them”* v.12 and **Leviticus 18:5**
- All who have broken the Law are under its curse. Christ has redeemed us, Lit. *“to buy out of slavery”* from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. v.13 and **Deuteronomy 21:23**
- Two purposes for Christ’s redemptive work: (1) that Gentiles might receive the blessing given to Abraham. (2) that all who believe (inceptive aorist) might receive the promise of the Spirit.

III. The Logical Argument: vv.15-29 Paul further explains the distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. The example of the Law and a Human Contract:

- When two people make a contract, it is illegal for a third party to step in and attempt to change it or cancel it. v.15
- God made a contract (covenant) with Abraham four hundred years before the Law of Moses was given.
- The Law of Moses could never cancel God’s original promise with Abraham and his seeds, which are many. v.16-18

Why did God give the Law? If the Law could not give the Holy Spirit (vv.1-5); that it could not bring justification (vv.6-9); that it could not alter the permanence of faith (vv.15-18); but it brought a curse to those who could not keep the Law (vv.10-12) What then was the purpose of the Law?

1. The Law was temporary and only for Israel. See lesson No.4 for the three aspects of the Law of Moses. God never gave the Law to the Gentiles, but to the Jews. Ceremonial Law is implied.

- The law was *“added”* because of transgressions. Once the Seed (Christ) came, the Law was superseded. v.19
- A mediator implies a covenant between two parties. The Law was established by two mediators, the *“angels”* representing God and *“Moses”* representing the people. v.20

2. The Law convicted people of sin, but never saved them from sin. God gave both the Law and promises, but for different purposes and there is no conflict between the two. vv.21-22

- The Law was not for the purpose of giving eternal life, but for the purpose of revealing sin.
- The Law shows us our need of grace; grace enables us to please God through faith.
- If God permitted salvation by keeping the law, then no one could be saved by grace.

3. The Law prepared the way for Christ. Paul uses two figures of speech concerning the affect of the Law: Prison and Schoolmaster. vv.23-25

- As to Prison: Before this faith came. Lit. *“before the advent of faith in Christ”* the Law kept men in prison, revealing their need for a Savior. v.23 and **Psalms 143:1-2**
- As to Schoolmaster: The Law was God’s schoolmaster (tutor) Lit. *“a guardian who taught minor children until they reached legal adulthood”* vv.24-25
- Justifying faith was operative in the Old Testament, but faith in the person and work of Christ did not come until He was revealed. Through faith in Christ we are joined to Him by Spirit baptism. vv.26-29 and **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**