

<p>Galatians 3:6–14 (ESV)</p> <p>⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?</p> <p>⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.</p> <p>¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.</p>	<p>Galatians 3:6–14 (Jacob’s rendering)</p> <p>⁶Consider Abraham, “He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.” ⁷Therefore, you know that the ones “from faith”, these are the sons of Abraham.</p> <p>⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles “from faith,” preached the gospel in advance to Abraham, “In you will all the nations of the earth be blessed. ⁹Therefore, the ones “from faith” are blessed with faithful Abraham. ¹⁰For, as many as are “from the works of the law” are under a curse. For, it is written, “Cursed are all who do not remain in all the things written in the book of the law, to do them.”</p> <p>¹¹Now, that “in the law” no one is justified before God is evident because “the righteous will live “from faith.” ¹²And the law is not “from faith,” but “the one doing these things will live in them.” ¹³Christ has purchased us out from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us, because it is written, “Cursed are all those who hang upon a tree.” ¹⁴This was in order that to the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham could come in Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through the same faith.</p>
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- I. **Summary: God promised to bring about redemption from sin and death and to rescue the Gentiles through Abraham's seed. That is the promise Abraham believed, and v.6-14 describes how that happened.**
- II. **The curse of Babel, the blessing of Abraham, and the promise of the Gospel**
 - a. Genesis 1-11 is the account of humanity’s descent into sin, and the incident at the Tower of Babel is closely intertwined with the rest of the story. Being all one language and one people, they came together with the objective of building a city and a tower:
 - i. To make a name for themselves
 - ii. To keep from being dispersed over all the earth
 - b. God’s curse confounds their language and spreads them over the earth. Out of that judgment, the next thing we see is the call to Abraham, where God promises him:
 - i. To make his name great
 - ii. To make a great nation of him
 - iii. To bless all the families of the earth through him
 - iv. “The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham is ultimately a recovery of the divine goal for creation and humans, that is, the establishment of God's Kingdom and divine rule over this world through this redeemed human society.” (Gentry and Wellum)
 - c. Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, these promises to Abraham and his seed are developed and form the backdrop for everything that happens from that point forward.

- i. We see partial historical fulfillments that provide shadows and pictures of a greater future fulfillment, but the New Testament makes clear that they did not receive what was promised but trusted for that future day.
- ii. Hebrews 11: 13 *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth....39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect*
- d. The NT makes clear, and Paul is especially explicit in Galatians 3, that it is through the work of Christ as proclaimed in the Gospel that the promises of Abraham are to be realized. The burden of this Chapter is for Paul to explain how this works and integrate it with the story he's been telling, in contrast to the one that has been promoted by the false teachers.
 - i. They were teaching that God had promised Abraham a single family through whom the blessing would come, so Gentiles needed to become Jews and keep Torah in order to be a part of Abraham's seed and thus inherit the blessing.
 - ii. In contrast, Paul teaches that the blessing flows through Israel, to the nations, and that the single family envisioned is a new humanity consisting of redeemed Jews and Gentiles, and not fleshly Israel under Torah.

III. (v.6-7) The true sons of Abraham are identified by faith

- a. Verses 6-7 are not drawing a conclusion of an argument as much as taking an agreed upon premise and building it into the foundation of his overall argument.
- b. At this stage of the argument, it makes the most sense to see this statement as referring to Jews – those who everyone identifies as Sons of Abraham, and refining that definition with the (unobjectionable) classification that the true sons of Abraham are those who follow in his footsteps of faith.
- c. It's best to understand the "know then" as an indicative rather than an imperative, since he's establishing premises of an argument. "You know that those "of faith," these are sons of Abraham." In other words, he is not redefining Abrahamic sonship, but establishing that the validity of that sonship is based on faith. So, sons of Abraham are identified as such, not by Torah, but by faith.
- d. The Gentiles will ultimately be folded into the seed of Abraham, as we'll see later in the chapter (v.29). The way he does it there, makes it clear that they need not be folded in here. Although a redefinition of the offspring of Abraham may be implicit in his argument, and we can see it as the case retrospectively, for the Galatian or Jewish reader it would not necessarily follow that he's including Gentiles here.

IV. (v.8-10) The Gentiles, as Gentiles, will be blessed "in Abraham" and this also is from faith

- a. When you look for the gospel in the OT, where do you look? Some places immediately come to mind:
 - i. Psalm 22
 - ii. Isaiah 53
 - iii. Genesis 3:15
 - iv. Jeremiah 31
- b. One place that Paul sees the gospel is in Genesis 12 – the promise that "in you will all the nations of the earth be blessed" is for Paul a predictive gospel message. This sermon that the **Scripture preached indicated that the Gentiles would be delivered from sin and declared righteous by faith. Why?**
 - i. The way Paul reasons here, it must necessarily be so.
 - 1. V. 1-5 – The Gentiles (Galatians) have already received the Spirit and did so "from faith"
 - 2. V. 6-7 – Abraham's righteousness was secured by faith, and only those Jews who follow in his footsteps can be considered "sons of Abraham"

3. V. 8-10 – Gentiles, as demonstrated in the promise to Abraham, are justified (as Gentiles) from faith, being blessed along with faithful Abraham.
 - a. The blessing to the nations is secured by Abraham’s faith at work in his faithful obedience in Genesis 22.
 - b. The promise is that the Gentiles as Gentiles will receive blessing
 - c. This must, by definition, be apart from the law
 - i. They cannot remain Gentiles and abide by all things written in the law – submitting to the law would therefore incur the curse of the law.
 - ii. Even Jews who have come fully under the law, have incurred the curse of the law.
 1. Deut 27-30
 2. Ezek 20
 3. Jer. 11
 - d. The flow of the argument is:
 - i. The promise to Abraham was that the Gentiles would be blessed in him
 - ii. Therefore, the Gentiles “of faith” will be blessed with faithful Abraham
 - iii. Because those who would be “under law” put themselves under a curse
- ii. The promise is that the Gentiles will be blessed “in Abraham” but implicit is the fact that they are distinct from Abraham’s circumcised seed, and hence, distinct from Torah. The vision of the scriptures and the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, which is also a reversal of the curse of Babel, requires a uniting of the nations (Jew and Gentile) into one body. That there should be one is implicit in the oneness of God (cf. Rom. 3:29-30; Gal. 3:20), but that it should be a unity of diversity is implicit in the Trinitarian nature of God. Gentiles qua gentiles must be brought in to the fold, not come under the yoke of Torah. This will occur with the coming of “faith” (in the eschatological sense – that is, Christ).

V. Far from _____, the law actually serves as a _____ to the fulfillment of the promises

- a. Circumcision and Torah marked out Israel as priestly people, distinct from the nations, but charged with bringing blessing to the nations. At the same time, the law hedged in Israel and formed a barrier between her and the Gentiles, keeping her bound under an oath of curse and thus functioning as a roadblock to the fulfillment of the vision of one united people under the Messiah. (cf. Eph 2:14)
- b. **Israel’s vocation**, as it were, is well summed up in Romans 2:17ff (cf. also 1 Peter 2:9):
 - i. and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—
- c. **Israel’s reality**, however, was one of continual failure to live up to that vocation, and instead come under the covenant curses.
 - i. (Rom 2:24) For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”
 - ii. The law, far from bringing life, brought death instead:
 1. cf. Romans 7:7-13 - What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed

me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

- d. **Righteousness (justification) never has come as a result of Torah, but has always been from faith.** Prior to the coming of Christ, it was seen in an anticipatory trust in the coming of God to establish his rule, and subsequently it is seen in an acknowledgement and participation in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
 - i. As Paul makes clear in Gal 2:16 and Romans 3:20 by his quoting of Psalm 143:2, the fact of no one being righteous before God by the law should be a well-known fact.
 - ii. In fact, some have argued that verse 11 should be rendered, “Now, because in the law no one will be justified before God, it is evident that “the righteous will live by faith.”
- e. **The quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 highlights the eschatological nature of faith:**
 - i. **Judgement has come upon the nation** by the hands of wicked men
 - ii. **The prophet bemoans the wickedness of his people and the ineffectiveness of Torah**, but he also laments the idea of an even more wicked people coming to execute the judgment.
 - iii. **The Lord’s response is – wait for it** – the vindication will come, and the righteous (“my righteous”) will live by their faithfulness
 - iv. The life of the age to come (which is what’s in view in Hab 2:4) comes through faith in God’s promise. The law is not of faith, in the sense of it never being the source of hope. The contrast in v. 12 is not between believing and doing, but between faith and Torah:

The righteous one	from faith	will live
The one doing	these things(Torah)	will live in/by them
 - v. On the messianic interpretation of hab. 2:4 passage
 - vi. Ezekiel 20:18-20 and Neh. 9:29 as development of “The one doing these things shall live” to be a statement of failure.
- f. The sacrificial system itself testified to the fact that even those who were “under law” would not attain to righteousness without the coming redemption which is anticipated by their faith.
- g.

VI. The roadblock is removed in Christ

- a. Christ, Paul says, “redeemed us from the curse of the law” by becoming a curse, quoting Deut 21 in support
 - i. The identity of us and we
 - ii. Deut. 21:22-23 speaks of not leaving a convicted and executed criminal out exposed over night lest the land be cursed, because the one hung on the tree is cursed. This passages immediately follows the description of the rebellious son who is to be put to death.
 - iii. Jesus died under the charge of apostasy from Torah in order to liberate his people from Torah.
 - iv. Christ's death under the law and subsequent verdict of righteous manifest in the resurrection (apart from the law) serve to free those united to him from the law, and bring the blessing of Abraham to both Jew and Gentile by faith. The Jew must pass through curse and death in order to be raised to life outside of the curse of the law. Because Christ has died to the law and now lives apart from the law, the Gentiles can be united to him as Gentiles and share in the blessing without incurring the curse.

VII. Paul’s story, then, goes like this: Abraham was chosen to be the conduit of blessing to the Gentiles. Abraham believed Yahweh’s promise and so was reckoned righteous, God’s covenant partner and future heir of the blessing. Israel, the Abrahamic people, was given the Torah, and Torah worked a curse. Unless that curse could be removed, the Gentiles would never receive the blessing of Abraham. Unless Israel could be repaired, the

nations could not receive the delivering verdict of justification, could not be delivered from the reign of sin and death and flesh that undermined all striving for justice. Israel could not remove the curse on her own because in her fleshliness she only created more occasions for cursing. The deliverance promised to the nations was accomplished because God sent the seed of Abraham, the true Israelite, to be a curse-bearing substitute for his people, to become the cursed Son that Israel was, so that the curse could be killed, buried and removed. Once that curse is removed, Israel is renewed; the removal of the curse implies a resurrection from the curse of death. Israel is delivered, receives the blessing of the Spirit, and from Israel that blessing flows to the nations. That is the justification of Israel by the faithful Messiah.