

Warning to Deconversion of Faith in Jesus

Galatians 3:1-14 / August 13, 2022

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. (Galatians 2:19-21, ESV)

1. ARGUMENT FROM YOUR CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE: SIX RHETORICAL QUESTIONS (3:1-5)

1. First Rhetorical Question 3:1

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

Witnesses of the Crucifixion

Simon: As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

Roman Soldiers: And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Two Thieves: Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.... And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Jewish Crowds: And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Jewish Leaders: So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" (Matt 27:32-44, ESV)

Centurion: When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Three Women: There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. (Matthew 27:54-56, ESV)

Mary/John: When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:26-27, ESV)

Joseph: When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.

Governor Pilate: He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

2. Second Rhetorical Question 3:2

Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit by Faith

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' **If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?** When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:15-18, ESV)

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.** (Romans 10:14-17, ESV)

3. Third Rhetorical Question 3:3a

Are you so foolish?

Jesus and the Foolish

House Built on the Sand: And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:26-27, ESV)

Five Virgins without Oil: Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, (Matthew 25:1-3, ESV)

Two on the Emmaus Road: And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27, ESV)

4. Fourth Rhetorical Question 3:3b

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

Perfection by the Spirit, not the Law

Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:27-31, ESV)

5. Fifth Rhetorical Question 3:4

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

Suffering for the Cross

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. **But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!** (Galatians 5:7-12, ESV)

6. Sixth Rhetorical Question 3:5

Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—

The Miracles of the Spirit

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

- “‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
- that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
- and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, / and your young men shall see visions, / and your old men shall dream dreams;
- even on my male servants and female servants / in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
- And I will show wonders in the heavens above / and signs on the earth below, / blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
- the sun shall be turned to darkness / and the moon to blood, / before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
- And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:14-21, ESV)

2. ARGUMENT FROM ABRAHAM: BLESSINGS UPON HIS FAITH (3:6-9)

1. The Faith of Abraham Produced His Righteousness 3:6

just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

Abraham Believes God

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”

- And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”
- And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.”
- Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

And **he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.** (Genesis 15:1-5, ESV)

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”** Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, (Romans 4:1-5, ESV)

2. Faith Brings One into the Family of Abraham 3:7

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

Sons of Abraham

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face.

And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and

1. you shall be the father of a **multitude of nations.**
2. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for
3. I have made you the father of a **multitude of nations.**
4. I will make you **exceedingly fruitful**, and
5. I will make you into **nations**, and kings shall come from you. And
6. I will establish my covenant between me and you and **your offspring** after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to **your offspring** after you. And
7. I will give to you and to **your offspring** after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:1-14, ESV)

3. The Gospel Comes Through the Faith of Abraham 3:8

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.”

Blessing Upon Abraham and His Offspring

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3, ESV)

4. Faith Is Needed for Abraham’s Blessing 3:9

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Spiritual Blessings of Abraham Through Christ

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

1. even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
 2. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 3. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight
 4. making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
 5. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
 6. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- (Ephesians 1:3-14, ESV)