

Warning to Deconversion of Faith in Jesus (Part 2)

Galatians 3:10-29 / August 20, 2022

Modern Day Deconversion: Leaving the Gospel

In 2015, The Pew Research Center reported that for every individual who becomes a Christian four leave.¹ Think about that for a minute. All other surveys say similar things. But perhaps the most concerning statistic comes from the Pinetops Foundation who, in 2018, claimed that over the next thirty years Christian affiliation in the U.S. will decline by one million per year. Which means that between 30 and 42 million young people raised in Christian families and who call themselves Christians will say they are not by 2050. They summarize the situation with the following ominous words. “While it is hard to find clear data, as far as we can tell, this is the single largest generational loss of souls in history who were nominally raised in the church and no longer call themselves followers of Jesus.”² (Deconversion: The All-Or-Nothing Fallacy. John Marriot. June 20, 2021. <https://christianscholars.com/guest-post-deconversion-the-all-or-nothing-fallacy/>)

Warning Over “Deconversion” in the book of Galatians

Deconversion: Leaving the Gospel

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-9, ESV)

Conversion: Believing the Gospel

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:15-16, ESV)

Deconversion: Leaving the Gospel

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? (Galatians 3:1-2, ESV)

ARGUMENTS FOR NOT DECONVERTING

1. Arguments from Personal Experience 3:1-5
2. Arguments from Abraham 3:6-9
3. Arguments from the Law 3:10-14
4. Arguments from Old Testament History 3:15-22

3. ARGUMENT FROM THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS: THE LAW BRINGS JUDGEMENT (3:10-14)

1. The Law Brings Judgment (3:10)

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.”*

Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people of the LORD your God. You shall therefore obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today.”

“‘Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’ (Deuteronomy 27:9-10,26, ESV)

2. The Law Does Not Produce Faith (3:11)

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for *“The righteous shall live by faith.”*

And the LORD answered me:

“Write the vision; / make it plain on tablets, / so he may run who reads it. / For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. / If it seems slow, wait for it; / it will surely come; it will not delay. / “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, / but the righteous shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:2-4, ESV)

3. The Law Requires Complete Obedience (3:12)

But the law is not of faith, rather *“The one who does them shall live by them.”*

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God. You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God. **You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.** (Leviticus 18:1-5, ESV)

The Law Does Not Justify

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:12-16, ESV)

4. The Law Was Fulfilled by Christ to Bring the Blessing of Abraham by Faith 3:13-14

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”*—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

“And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 21:22-23, ESV)

4. ARGUMENTS FROM OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY 3:15-22

1. Abraham: God gave the Promise to Abraham, not the Law 3:15-18

- **A Human Will is Unchangeable by Someone Else**

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made **covenant**, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

- **Likewise, God Made a Will—a Promise—beginning with Abraham until the coming of Jesus.**

Now the **promises** were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.

- **Since this promise came before the law, the law did not negate it.**

This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (Romans 4:16-25, ESV)

2. **Moses: God gave the Law to Moses, not the Promise** **3:19-22**

- **Yet the Law was given to show the need for the Promise,**

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:19-20, ESV)

- **And the Law was given through Mediators—Angels and Moses—while the Promise was given directly by God.**

it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God.

The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples,** for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. 8 All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. 9 And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.” (Exodus 19:1-9, ESV)

- **Yet the Law does not replace the Promise since the Law cannot Justify—only the Promise can.**

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. (Romans 4:13-15, ESV)