

Detour Through Galatians – Part 3

Before continuing a quick journey through Galatians, let us look at coming attractions. In December there are some schedule adjustments to be made. The December 14 lesson will be pre-recorded. My plan is to outline the benefits Christians have over Old Testament believers. Following that on December 21 my plan is to give the Christmas messages based upon a reading of Luke's account of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. Some time in January my plan is to present a study of the differences between Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology.

We are dispensationalists. We see a difference between the Old Testament believers and the New Testament believers. We are in the Church. Covenant Theologians say the Church is all believers for all time. According to one Covenant theologian, *“The definition that seems preferable to me is this: the church is the community of all true believers for all time.”*¹

This definition leads the covenant theologians to see the Church as including all Old Testament believers. Dispensationalism sees the Church starting in Acts chapter 2. This leads some to believe that Christians replace Jews in God's plan. Dispensationalism is based upon three “sine qua non” axioms.

¹ Grudem, W.A. (2020). *SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, SECOND EDITION : an introduction to biblical doctrine*. 2nd ed. S.L.: Zondervan. 1047

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These were written about by Charles Ryrie.

1. “A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church distinct.²
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation.
3. The purpose of God in the world is the glory of God.”

While my remarks here are abbreviated, I intend to look at this in more detail next year.

Now, I will start reading the rest of Galatians with a few comments. This detour has resulted in a month-long journey through various topics. Now it is time to finish this detour and head back to Romans.

Galatians 3:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

Galatians 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

² Charles Caldwell Ryrie (2007). *Dispensationalism*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. 30, 46-48

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Herman pointed to this as the problem of the Church. Too often churches today tell people they must perform good deeds. What is often missing is the emphasis of “doing” in the power of the Holy Spirit. The result is that people are performing in the power of the “flesh” or sin nature.

Galatians 3:4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

Galatians 3:5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Galatians 3:6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

For Paul, Abraham was the paradigm of faith. So here he quotes from Genesis. Remember, the apostles quoted from Scripture which is the Old Testament. It is the basis for the New Testament.

Galatians 3:7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.”

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Galatians 3:9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”

Galatians 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.”

Another quote from the Old Testament, this one from Habakkuk, one of the “minor” prophets.

Galatians 3:12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.”

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

Galatians 3:14 in order that in (or by means of) Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Here is the source of Paul’s claim in Galatians

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Galatians 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

Galatians 3:17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

Galatians 3:18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having

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been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Galatians 3:20 Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

Galatians 3:21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

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In Christ. We share the “sonship” of Jesus by being in Christ through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.

Descendants. This is the word for “seed,” DNA. How is it possible that we are the descendants of Abraham? Because of positional truth. Because Jesus Christ is “the” seed of Abraham and we are in Jesus Christ, then logically we are descendants of Abraham.

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,

Here Paul is referring to the way children are heirs of their parents but do not inherit while they are being taught and prepared for the future.

Galatians 4:2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

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Galatians 4:3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

Galatians 4:5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Christians today have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the option of being filled with the Holy Spirit. These were never available to the Old Testament believer. Yes they had access to the “endowment” of the Holy Spirit in limited cases. But it was not universal and it could be lost.

Galatians 4:7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

Galatians 4:9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and

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worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

Galatians 4:10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

Galatians 4:11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

Galatians 4:12 I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong;

Galatians 4:13 but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;

Galatians 4:14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself.

Galatians 4:15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

Galatians 4:16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

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Galatians 4:17 They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.

Galatians 4:18 But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

Galatians 4:19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—

Christ is formed in you. Paul is talking about the believer's maturity. That is our goal: faith dependence on God the Holy Spirit and growing in grace by learning Bible information (i.e. Bible answers).

Galatians 4:20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

Galatians 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.

Galatians 4:23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.

Esau was born because Abraham and Sarah didn't believe God initially. They decided to solve the heir problem on their own according to the

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“flesh” or sin nature. Eventually Abraham applied faith to his situation and waited patiently for God to act.

Galatians 4:24 This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.

Galatians 4:25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

Galatians 4:27 For it is written, “Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more numerous are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband.”

Now Paul quotes from Isaiah, a major prophet.

Galatians 4:28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Galatians 4:29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

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Galatians 4:30 But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.”

Galatians 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5:2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

For the Jew, circumcision was supposed to be a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. However, it was reiterated in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 12:2-3). Jews focused on the Mosaic Law requirement rather than the Abrahamic covenant.

Galatians 5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

Galatians 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

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Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

Galatians 5:7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

Galatians 5:8 This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

Galatians 5:10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.

Galatians 5:11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.

Galatians 5:12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into

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an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Galatians 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Here is the Christian life: walk by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Romans chapter 7 gets into Paul’s frustration at attempting to live the Christian life by the flesh. He learned that living the Christian life is only possible by trusting the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Galatians 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

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Galatians 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

Galatians 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Here is the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.