

## Exegetical Notes – Galatians 3:1-14

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### Galatians 3:1-14

#### Verses 1-5

***<sup>1</sup> You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? <sup>5</sup> So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?***

- The Galatians had been convinced (“bewitched,” put under a spell) by teachers other than Paul. These teachers had convinced them that as Christians they must practice the Laws of Judaism, including the dietary laws and the practice of circumcision. In chapters 1 & 2, Paul took pains to show that the law cannot bring people to saving faith in Jesus Christ. But the Galatians rejected the idea that we are saved by God’s grace through faith and added the works of the law to this equation. They had been convinced that one is saved by God’s grace through faith, but that to be saved one must also keep the Jewish laws.
- Jesus was crucified to pay the price for our transgressions. For centuries before His crucifixion, the Law had existed. But no one could be justified before God by the law because justification required that people keep the whole law. One small transgression of the law destroyed perfection. If you broke the law in one thing you were guilty of breaking the law in its entirety. By the law, no one could be saved. After keeping the law perfectly, Jesus took the sin of the world upon himself. By so doing, he paid the price demanded by sin, death. He paid the debt.
- At the beginning of their walk in Jesus, the Galatians understood that they were saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus’ sacrifice. They knew that

they could not be saved through works. But now, they have returned to a works-based salvation. They now believe that they must believe in Jesus and keep the Jewish law, which they cannot do.

- Paul wanted to know how this happened.

#### Verses 6-9

**<sup>6</sup> So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”**

**<sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” <sup>9</sup> So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.**

- Paul used Abraham as proof of his teaching. Abraham lived before Moses was given the law. He could not be justified by the law as he did not have the law.
- But he believed in and trusted God. And he was justified before God, by his faith in God alone (see Genesis 11:27 and following).
- Abraham is a picture of how things would be in Christ. And Abraham was justified by his faith in God, so Gentiles would come to God through faith. Thus, ALL nations are blessed by Abraham. He showed us the way to God. It is through faith in God alone. Salvation comes by God’s grace. It is received by trusting God. We are not justified by our works.

#### Verses 10-14

**<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” <sup>11</sup> Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” <sup>12</sup> The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” <sup>14</sup> He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.**

- Those who trust the law to save them are under a curse. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to prove his point. One cannot be justified by the law unless he keeps ALL of the law without any mistakes. He who breaks the law one

time in one point has broken the law and cannot be justified by the law. Said person will die because he has broken the law.

- Christ took the penalty for breaking the law upon himself (see Deuteronomy 21:23). He bore our curse.
- In so doing, Christ shows us that we are not justified by any good work. We are saved by God's grace through faith.

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