

Problem Passages in Pauline Epistles — Galatians 3

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THE PROBLEM

The crux of the issue is connecting Gal 3:16 with Gal 3:29,

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The thought that many people have is that this verse indicates that anyone who is "in Christ," is now party to the Abrahamic Covenant. In other words, all believers (who are those 'in Christ'), whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, are given all the promises of the Abraham Covenant through their union with Christ, who is the seed.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MESSAGE OF GAL 3

I. Paul's Rebuke Of The Galatians. 3:1-4

- A. Paul's Rebuke Involves Straying From The Truth. 1
- B. Paul's Rebuke Is Based On The Reception Of The Spirit. 2
- C. Paul's Rebuke Shows A Continuity Between How The Galatians Began And How They Will Be Made Complete. 3
- D. Paul's Rebuke Shows That The Error Goes Against Their Experience Of Suffering. 4

II. Paul's Question. 3:5-6

- A. Did God Give You The Spirit And Work Miracles Among You By The Works Of The Law Or By Hearing Of Faith?
- B. Answer — Gen 15:6 — Faith Is The Answer.

III. Paul's Conclusion. 3:7-9

- A. Therefore — Is Indicating The Conclusion From V. 6.
- B. This Is Something They Already Known. 7
- C. The Connection To Abraham Includes Gentiles Based Upon The Abrahamic Covenant. 8
 1. The Personification Of Scripture — "The Scriptures Foreseeing."
 2. What Was Foreseen?
 3. What Did The Scriptures Foresee God Doing?
 4. What Was The Context Of This Good News?
- D. The Gentiles Are Blessed With Abraham In The Sense Of Justification From Faith. 9

IV. Paul's Explanation Why Works Don't Provide The Blessing Of Justification. 10-14

- A. If You Are Under The Law, You Are Also Under The Curse Of The Law. 10
- B. It Is Obvious And Scriptural That No One Is Justified By The Law. 11
- C. The Law (Works Of The Law) And Faith Don't Go Together. 12
- D. Freedom From The Law And Its Penalty. 13
- E. The Blessing From Abraham Is Through Faith Even For The Gentiles. 14

V. The Blessing Of Justification By Faith Is Connected To The Abrahamic Covenant And Therefore Not Conditioned Upon The Law. 15-18

- A. Paul Is Going To Speak Of The Normal Human Legal Instrument Of A Covenant To Prove His Point. 15
- B. The Parties Of The Abrahamic Covenant. 16
- C. The Law, Which Has No Part In The Abrahamic Covenant, Cannot Be Added In. 17
- D. The Blessing Of Justification By Grace Was Given Through God's Promise. 18

VI. The Question Of How Then The Law Fits In. 19-20

- A. What Is The Purpose Of The Law? 19
- B. The Law Was Mediated, The Promise Came Directly From God. 20

VII. The Question Of Whether The Law Is Contrary To The Promises. 21-25

- A. Does The Law Go Against The Promise? 21
- B. All Sin Therefore All Who Believe Can Have The Promise. 22
- C. The Jews Were Kept Under The Guard Of The Law Until Faith Came. 23
- D. The Law Pointed The Jew To The Messiah So That When He Arrived They Would Believe. 24
- E. Once Faith Came By The Messiah There Was No More Need For Law. 25

VIII. There Are Not Distinctions When It Come To Faith And The Blessing Of Justification. 26-29

- A. All, Jews And Gentiles, Are Sons Of God. 26
- B. The Picture Of Baptism Speaks Of Full Adulthood. 27
- C. There Are No Distinction With It Comes To Faith For Justification. 28
- D. Seed, Heirs, Possession...According To The Promise Of Justification By Faith. 29

CONCLUSION

So does this passage say that believing gentiles are now recipients of all the covenant blessings God promised to Abraham? No.

The promise spoken of here is very limited and is about justification by faith. Verse 6 is the controlling phrase.