

Galatians 3 New Living Translation (NLT)

The Law and Faith in Christ

3 Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. ²Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. ³How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? ⁴Have you experienced^[a] so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

⁵I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

⁶In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."^[b] ⁷The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

⁸What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you."^[c] ⁹So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

¹⁰But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."^[d] ¹¹So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."^[e] ¹²This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life."^[f]

¹³But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."^[g] ¹⁴Through

Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised^h Holy Spirit through faith.

The Law and God's Promise

¹⁵Dear brothers and sisters,^g here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. ¹⁶God gave the promises to Abraham and his child.^h And notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children,^h" as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—and that, of course, means Christ. ¹⁷This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.

¹⁹Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. ²⁰Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham.

²¹Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises?^h Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. ²²But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

God's Children through Faith

²³Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

²⁴Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. ²⁵And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

²⁶For you are all children^[m] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.^[n] ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Gentile,^[o] slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children^[p] of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Galatians 3 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

Justification through Faith

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you,^[a] before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed^[b] as crucified? ²I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?^[c] ³Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? ⁴Did you experience^[d] so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing? ⁵So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard— ⁶just like Abraham who **believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness?**^[e]

⁷You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons.⁸ Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, **All the nations^[f] will be blessed through you.**^[g] ⁹Consequently those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.^[h]

Law and Promise

¹⁰For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, **Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed.**^[i] ¹¹Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because **the righteous will live by faith.**^[j] ¹²But the law is not based on faith; instead, **the one who does these things will live by them.**^[k] ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, **Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.**^[l] ¹⁴The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.

¹⁵Brothers and sisters, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will.^[m] ¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though

referring to many, but referring to one, **and to your seed,**^[n] who is Christ. ¹⁷My point is this: The law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God^[o] and thus cancel the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise; but God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise.

The Purpose of the Law

¹⁹Why then was the law given? It was added for the sake of transgressions^[p] until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was put into effect through angels by means of a mediator. ²⁰Now a mediator is not just for one person alone, but God is one. ²¹Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if the law had been granted with the ability to give life, then righteousness would certainly be on the basis of the law. ²²But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin's power,^[q] so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe.²³ Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. ²⁴The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. ²⁵But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Sons and Heirs

²⁷For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. ²⁸There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3 New King James Version (NKJV)

Justification by Faith

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you ^[a]that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed ^[b]among you as crucified? ²This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ⁴Have you suffered so ^[c]many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

⁵Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— ⁶just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” ⁷Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” ⁹So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

The Law Brings a Curse

¹⁰For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” ¹¹But that no one is ^[d]justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” ¹²Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

¹³Christ has 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”), ¹⁴that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Changeless Promise

¹⁵Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. ¹⁶Now 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. ¹⁷And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God ⁱⁿ Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Purpose of the Law

¹⁹What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only*, but God is one.

²¹*Is* the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²²But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, ⁱⁿkept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our ⁱⁿtutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Sons and Heirs

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise

Galatians 3 English Standard Version (ESV)

By Faith, or by Works of the Law?

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ²Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^[a] the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer^[b] so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

⁷Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify^[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

¹⁰For 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.” ¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”^[d]¹²But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³Christ 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”— ¹⁴so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit^[e] through faith.

The Law and the Promise

¹⁵To give a human example, brothers:^[f] even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶Now 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. ¹⁷This 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. ¹⁸For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

¹⁹Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

²¹Is 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. ²²But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave^[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Faith Brings Righteousness

3 O you foolish *and* thoughtless *and* superficial Galatians, who has bewitched you [that you would act like this], to whom—right before your very eyes—Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified [in the gospel message]? ² This is all I want to ask of you: did you receive the [Holy] Spirit as the result of obeying [the requirements of] the Law, or was it the result of hearing [the message of salvation *and*] with faith [believing it]? ³ Are you so foolish *and* senseless? Having begun [your new life by faith] with the Spirit, are you now being perfected *and* reaching spiritual maturity by the flesh [that is, by your own works and efforts to keep the Law]? ⁴ Have you suffered so many things *and* experienced so much all for nothing—if indeed it was all for nothing? ⁵ So then, does He who supplies you with His [marvelous Holy] Spirit and works miracles among you, do it as a result of the works of the Law [which you perform], or because you [believe confidently in the message which you] heard with faith?

⁶ Just as Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS, [as conformity to God's will and purpose—so it is with you also]. ⁷ So understand that it is the people who live by faith [with confidence in the power and goodness of God] who are [the true] sons of ^[a] Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the good news [of the Savior] to Abraham in advance [with this promise], *saying*, "IN YOU SHALL ALL THE NATIONS BE BLESSED." ⁹ So then those who are people of faith [whether Jew or Gentile] are blessed *and* favored by God [and declared free of the guilt of sin and its penalty, and placed in right standing with Him] along with Abraham, the believer.

¹⁰ For all who depend on the Law [seeking justification and salvation by obedience to the Law and the observance of rituals] are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED (condemned to destruction) IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, SO AS TO PRACTICE

THEM.” ¹¹Now it is clear that no one is justified [that is, declared free of the guilt of sin and its penalty, and placed in right standing] before God by the Law, for “THE RIGHTEOUS (the just, the upright) SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” ¹²But the Law does not rest on *or* require faith [it has nothing to do with faith], but [instead, the Law] says, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM [the things prescribed by the Law] SHALL LIVE BY THEM [instead of faith].” ¹³Christ purchased our freedom *and* redeemed us from the curse of the Law *and* its condemnation by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS [crucified] ON A TREE (cross)” — ¹⁴in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might also come to the Gentiles, so that we would all receive [the realization of] the promise of the [Holy] Spirit through faith.

Intent of the Law

¹⁵Brothers and sisters, I speak in terms of human relations: even though a last will and testament is just a human covenant, yet when it has been signed *and* made legally binding, no one sets it aside or adds to it [modifying it in some way]. ¹⁶Now the promises [in the covenants] were decreed to Abraham and to his seed. God does not say, “And to seeds (descendants, heirs),” as if [referring] to many [persons], but as to one, “And to your Seed,” who is [none other than] Christ. ¹⁷This is what I mean: the Law, which came into existence four hundred and thirty years later [after the covenant concerning the coming Messiah], does not *and* cannot invalidate the covenant previously established by God, so as to abolish the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance [of what was promised] is based on [observing] the Law [as these false teachers claim], it is no longer based on a promise; however, God granted it to Abraham [as a gift] by virtue of His promise.

¹⁹Why, then, the Law [what was its purpose]? It was added [after the promise to Abraham, to reveal to people their guilt] because of transgressions [that is, to make people conscious of the sinfulness of sin], and [the Law] was ordained through angels *and* delivered to Israel by the hand of a mediator [Moses, the mediator between God and Israel, to be in effect] until the Seed

would come to whom the promise had been made. ²⁰Now the mediator or go-between [in a transaction] is not [needed] for just one *party*; whereas God is *only* one [and was the only One giving the promise to Abraham, but the Law was a contract between two, God and Israel; its validity depended on both]. ²¹Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a *system of law* had been given which could impart life, then righteousness (right standing with God) would actually have been based on law. ²²But the Scripture has imprisoned ^{bi}everyone [everything—the entire world] under sin, so that [the inheritance, the blessing of salvation] which was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe [in Him and acknowledge Him as God's precious Son].

²³Now before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, [perpetually] imprisoned [in preparation] for the faith that was destined to be revealed, ²⁴with the result that the Law has become our tutor *and* our disciplinarian *to guide us* to Christ, so that we may be ^{ci}justified [that is, declared free of the guilt of sin and its penalty, and placed in right standing with God] by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under [the control and authority of] a tutor *and* disciplinarian. ²⁶For you [who are born-again have been reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified and] are all children of God [set apart for His purpose with full rights and privileges] through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ [into a spiritual union with the Christ, the Anointed] have clothed yourselves with Christ [that is, you have taken on His characteristics and values]. ²⁸There is [now no distinction in regard to salvation] neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you [who believe] are all one in Christ Jesus [no one can claim a spiritual superiority]. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ [if you are in Him], then you are Abraham's descendants, and [spiritual] heirs according to [God's] promise.