

Galatians 3 (Part 2): 6-29 • Sons of Abraham by Faith

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Galatians chapter 3. We did the first 5 verses of this chapter last week so, I'm going to open up with prayer as we get started today.

Heavenly Father, use this time for the ministry of your Spirit, and by your grace, touch lives. We just thank you in Jesus' name, amen.

I think the apostle Paul would have really approved of one of the songs that Ken picked today, and that is 'Christ is enough for me,' right? That's what this letter is all about. I think if Paul would have walked into the churches of Galatia, he'd have been singing that song at the top of his lungs, getting that message across.

What he's doing in this part of Chapter 3 is continuing to argue for—I was going to say the stupidity, but that's too rough—the belief that the Galatians had foolishly taken on, that's probably the better word, of embracing the law as part of the process of what it means to be saved. Because Paul came and preached the gospel to them, and then after he left, some other people came in and began to tell them about the covenants that God had made with Israel. And this is very important because this latter part of Galatians chapter 3 is really all about covenants.

And so, getting into this, it dawned on me that not everybody maybe understands everything about those covenants. And if we just went on without giving a little backstory, some of you might be lost. If you're completely versed in the covenants, this is all review for you. But there were several covenants God made with Israel. The two that he is primarily dealing with in this part of Galatians chapter 3 is the Abrahamic covenant. I'll put that up on the screen for you.

And that's, we refer to it that, uh, oh, I guess first, we were going to define a covenant.

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is an agreement between two parties

A covenant is an agreement, that's pretty simple, isn't it? **Between two** or more **parties**. And by the way, that can obviously, businessmen can make covenants, husbands and wives make covenants when they come together and give their vows one to another. And covenants are obviously something God can make with man.

So the Abrahamic covenant is a covenant that we refer to by that name because it was made with Abraham.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:3

“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

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And it is essentially predicated upon the promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis where he said, I'm going to bless those who bless you, I'm going to curse those who curse you. I know I'm not reading it verbatim here, but essentially He, and this was the essence of the promise, He said, in you, Abraham, in other words, through your line, all nations of the earth will be blessed.

And, of course, we know that that ultimately comes to Christ because Abram's line moves into the Jewish race and ultimately to the Messiah. And it is through the Messiah that that prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment.

What people don't readily understand about the Abrahamic covenant is that this covenant was made in a very unique sort of way. Most covenants are, well, like in a marriage covenant when two people come together and get married, the guy says, I promise to love you and honor you and cherish you. And then the woman says, I promise to love you and honor you and cherish you. And they both, they say their peace, right? And they make a covenant, and that's the way we think of covenants.

But the Abrahamic covenant was unique in the sense that it was made with only one person stating his side of the covenant. The other person didn't get to enter into it at all. Back in Abraham's day, they had a very strange way of making covenants. They called it cutting a covenant. And I'll read it here for you. We'll

read it together in just a moment. But I want to just explain this to you because it's a little gruesome.

What they would do back in those days when they would make a covenant, any kind of a business covenant, is they would take animals, several of them, and they would kill them and cut them in two pieces. And they would lay the pieces on the ground, opposite one another, and then the two individuals who were entering into the covenant would walk between the pieces of the animals, and they would declare their side of the covenant.

In other words, I promise, da da da da da da da da. And then the next person would walk up and say, and walk between the pieces of animals and say, I promise to da da da da da da da, whatever the terms of the covenant were. The idea of the severed animals was, it was a big bloody gory mess, and it was their way of saying, may this and worse happen to me if I violate my end of the covenant, may I be like cut in pieces, sort of a thing.

I know, gruesome and weird. It's like, why can't you just sign and send it to the clerk of court, but that's the way they did things back then. But what we're going to see as we read through this section in Genesis that talks about that is we're going to see that Abraham never walked between the pieces of animals. He never declared his side of the covenant, and here's why: it was what we call a unilateral or an unconditional covenant, meaning it was not conditional on anything Abraham might do or say.

In other words, there's no way for Abraham to violate the covenant. It's all on God. And it's given to us in Genesis. I want to put it up on the screen. We're going to read about through about 4 different slides here. It goes like this:

Genesis 15:1-4 (ESV)

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have give me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."

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offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”

Genesis 15:5-8 (ESV)

And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.: But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”

And it says that, “...he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars if you're able to number them.” (And) then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” (It's another way of saying uncountable. And he—look at this, look at this, very important) *And he believed the Lord, and he (God) counted it to him (Abraham) as righteousness. And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.: But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”* In other words, let's do a covenant.

Genesis 15:9-12 (ESV)

He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon.” And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half, And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.

(And) *He said to him, (this is very important), “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon.”* And Abraham knew exactly what God was wanting to do, they were going to cut a covenant. By the way, this is where we get our term 'to cut a deal.' Okay? It's after cutting a covenant from the Old Testament.

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Genesis 15:17-18 (ESV)

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates..."

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And he goes on and enumerates the rest of that covenant, alright. But this is the interesting thing about it. It's very unique, Abraham just sat there. It's strange, but it says that God put him into a deep sleep, yet he was aware of what was going on. In other words, the sleep was meant to keep him from moving, to keep him from getting up and actually passing between the animal pieces.

God didn't want Abraham to get up and participate in that part of the covenant because it was to be a unilateral or unconditional covenant. Meaning, only God, only God is responsible for keeping this covenant, and man, or Abraham and all of his descendants, could do nothing to violate it or to nullify it in any way. You get it?

Now, the reason I took so much time to talk to you about the Abrahamic covenant and the blessing, the promise, and the fact that Abraham was a man of faith who believed God, when God said something, Abraham just believed it. It's because Paul is going to use that understanding as he speaks to the Galatians.

Because you see, the Jewish legalists who are coming to Galatia were telling them, we are sons of Abraham, we are the Jews, you're not, you're Gentiles. If you guys want to be saved from your sin, you must first become a Jew. And in order to do that, you must adopt the covenants and the requirements that went along with those covenants in order to become a Jew.

And by the way, people became Jews in that sense, or they adopted Judaism for a long time. This had been going on for years and years. Even in the Old Testament, Gentiles became Jews, not in a DNA sort of sense, but by adopting Judaism. And they referred to those people as God-fearers, and it was a shortened term meaning God-fearing Gentile.

If you were a Gentile who wanted to adopt Judaism, in the Old Testament, you had to embrace the covenants that God had made with his people. Meaning, you had to submit to the rite of circumcision; that was the sign of the covenant that God had made with Abraham. And then you had to keep the Mosaic Law. And that's what it took for a Gentile to adopt the Jewishness of worshiping God and so forth.

Well, the Judaizers or the Jewish legalists who came to Galatia were continuing to demand that of Christians. And they were saying, oh, you want to be a Christian? You want to have your sins forgiven? Wonderful! Just remember something, Jesus was a Jew. He came to Jews. He died for Jews (that's what they believed), and if you want to embrace the forgiveness that he makes available on the cross, you must first become a Jew, then put your faith in Jesus. Again, becoming a Jew is all about adopting the covenants, right?

Now, the other covenant that, of course, we're referring to here largely is the Mosaic Covenant or referred to as the law.

The Mosaic Covenant (referred to as “The Law”)

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And that, of course, is the covenant that was made between God and the nation of Israel. And that covenant promised them blessing, safety, prosperity in return for obedience. The Mosaic Covenant was not a unilateral covenant. It was not an unconditional covenant. It was a conditional covenant, meaning that it was conditioned upon certain things.

Well, what certain things? Obedience, remember? God spoke the law from Mount Sinai, and the people of Israel, what did they say? We will obey. (Exodus 19:7-8) Probably the dumbest thing they ever said. But they agreed, they said, I'll put my life on the line; we're going to do this sort of thing. And of course, Moses even said, well, you can't. But that's another sermon. Anyway, but it's very important to remember that the Mosaic law is a conditional covenant. The Abrahamic covenant is an unconditional covenant.

Let's see what Paul is saying here, beginning in verse 6 of Galatians chapter 3. Look in your Bible, he says, “...just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?” ⁷ Know then that it is, those of faith who are

the sons of Abraham.” See, this is the point of what Paul's saying. These Judaizers are waltzing in there going, you guys must become sons of Abraham like we are sons of Abraham. But we're sons of Abraham by birth. You see, we're just into it by birth. We're born into it.

It's like that belief that you can be born a Christian. You can't be born a Christian. You have to be born again a Christian. There's no, God doesn't have any grandchildren, every individual has to make a purposeful decision to make Christ Lord.

But the Jews believed that they were, of course, sons of Abraham by birth and according to their DNA, that was true. But Paul comes back here and he says, wait a minute, Abraham was a man who believed God, and God credited that belief as righteousness. Are you with me? He says, therefore, his conclusion is, all who believe or accept by faith are already children of Abraham. Right?

So, he's going to go on now and he's going to enlarge on that. In fact, he goes on in verse 8, it says, *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”* (Then, here's his conclusion once again, then) *⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”*

It's not—so he's saying, you guys are looking for a special blessing by keeping the law, that's not how blessing comes. It comes by faith, by believing. Right? Does that sound too simple? Because it did to them. It sounded too simple to the Galatians, really just believe. And they were being convinced, no, you got to work for it.

But this argument goes against everything that the Bible teaches. So, here's the deal, we know that the Jewish legalists were wrong. We know that because Paul's writing a letter and basically saying, they're wrong. They're not giving you the real gospel. The real gospel is the one I brought to you. But where did the legalists go astray? Well, once again, it comes down, first of all, to some assumptions.

First of all, the assumption is that God made the law, meaning the Mosaic Covenant, binding on the church like it was binding upon Israel. He did not. God made the Covenant of Moses with Israel not the church. Therefore, to take elements of that covenant and bring them into the church and say, you must do this, is fundamentally wrong. Okay? Whether it's food laws or Sabbath keeping or whatever it is, it's just, it's just not, it's just not part of the covenant.

Not only that, but what they forgot, or where they erred, was in believing their own scriptures because God told them in their own scriptures that He was going to come with another covenant. And what did He say about that? And by the way, the covenant He's talking about now is the new covenant, that's the one we're in. Do you know that's the only name the Bible ever gives to it? It calls it the new covenant that's what we call it.

What does the Bible say about it? Well, first of all, it was prophesied way back during the time of Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Jeremiah lived during the times of the kings. Let me put this on the screen for you.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 (ESV)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, NOT LIKE THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.”

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD (we know who's talking here, and I put a lot of things here in caps, so they'd stand out to you), when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (look at this), NOT LIKE THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...” And now he tells us which covenant this is replacing. It's the one that He made when He took them out of—by the hand and led them out of Egypt. That was the Mosaic Covenant, right? Because it was Moses who led them out. He says why, He says, *“... (that was the) covenant that they broke, though I was (a husband) their husband declares, the LORD.”*

Two very pivotal statements made in this passage that I've already highlighted for you. It's a new covenant, and second of all, it's not like the old covenant. You see, this is one of the things the Jewish legalists—they missed it. They missed it in their own scripture. God was going to make a new covenant, and it wasn't going to be like the Old Covenant. It's going to be different, very different. But yet, they continue to try to amalgamate the two. No, we got to bring circumcision and belief in Jesus together. But that's trying to take an Old Covenant that is conditional with a New Covenant that is unconditional, right? And try to put them together.

So, when was the New Covenant actually inaugurated? When did it start? Well, we know the answer to that question. It's recorded for us in Luke chapter 22.

Luke 22:20 (NIV84)

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

In the same way, after the supper, (Jesus) he took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

We know exactly when the new covenant was inaugurated, during the last supper, when Jesus brought forth the elements of the bread and the cup to say to them, this bread represents my body, this cup represents my blood. And that is how the covenant will be, the covenant promises will be achieved for you through my body and through my blood.

And yet it is so amazing to me that Christian groups get the exact same thing wrong that these Judaizers got wrong back in Paul's day. And that is, that you cannot merge these two covenants, the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant. You cannot put them together.

Every time a Christian asks me, why don't we keep the Sabbath like God commanded us to do? I know that I'm dealing with the same confusion that the Jewish legalists had. They had that same confusion. And I know that I'm still dealing with it today when somebody asks that question. God never commanded the church to keep the law, that was a covenant He made with Israel, right?

So, let's get back to this idea that the Gentiles must be children of Abraham in order to be saved. The Jewish legalists believe that again, you must first be a child of Abraham through the covenants and then you can come to Christ.

I want you to listen to Paul's response again in verse 6, we're just going to look at it again here: *"just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?* ⁷ *Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.*

⁸ *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations (meaning all the nations of the earth) be blessed."* Then here's Paul's conclusion: ⁹ *...those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.* Alright.

So, what happens to those who are not of faith but who insist on being of law? In other words, what happens to those people who say, no! We got to keep rules. We got to do this. We got to do that. What happens to them?

Look at verse 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.”*” And Paul is quoting Deuteronomy chapter 27 here, here's his conclusion, he already said the law pronounces a curse, if you want to live under the law, you are living under a curse. What's the conclusion?

Verse 11, he says, “*Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law...*” This is, you guys, this is the conclusion of a Pharisee who has been set free from pharisaical thinking. This is a man who had devoted his life, every ounce of his existence to law-keeping, believing that it was his righteous standing before God.

And now this very same man, who has had his eyes opened by the gospel of Jesus Christ, says that all who rely on works of the law are under a curse and no one is justified, verse 11, before God by the law, why? because: “*The righteous shall live by faith.*” Here's another verse they missed. It's actually, he's quoting Habakkuk here.

Habakkuk says the righteous will live by faith. That's in the Old Testament. That was given during the time of the law. God said, the righteous will live by faith. Right? It's just really interesting that the Jews missed so many verses related to real, true, righteous standing.

Look at verse 12, he makes another point here. He says, “*But the law is not of faith...*” In other words, what he's saying here is, if I give you rules and regulations, I'm asking you just to believe. I'm asking you to do them.

When I was raising our, when Sue and I were raising our kids when they were little, when children are little, they're under the law of your home, right? And it's very similar to the Jews being under the law, during their time, before grace appeared. But, we don't raise children in a home that goes, yeah, whatever you want to do, just do it. No! We give them rules and laws, right? I don't ask my kids to just believe. I ask my kids to do.

Do you understand that law means doing? Okay? Law means doing, that's why Paul says here in verse 12, “*...the law is not of faith...*” Right? He says, “*...rather (its) “The one who does them shall live by them.”*” Meaning the law is all about doing. The law is based on, you must do and do and do and do. Right?

So, what's he saying here? The law and faith are incompatible. They're not necessarily contrary, but they're incompatible. That means you can't take faith,

believe in Jesus, and throw some law in there because one is about doing and one is about believing. And you can't take believing and doing and put them together and make a recipe out of it for salvation. But that's what the Jewish legalists were telling them they had to do. That's what we've had many other groups tell people they have to do in order to be saved and so forth.

Skip down to verse 13, remember what we said about the law earlier, that the law pronounces a curse? He says in verse 13 that, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law* (how did he do that?) *by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”*” This is one of the most beautiful verses, I think, in the Bible.

Every single one of us had a curse pronounced over us because of the law because that's all the law can do. The law was never meant to impart life, which he's going to say in just a moment here. The law was never meant to impart life. The law was only meant to show you how sinful you really are, right? But it can't change you. It can't give you life. And so he says, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law* (pronounced upon us) *by becoming a curse for us.*”

Verse 14, here's the result: “...*so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham* (there it is) *might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*” The blessing of Abraham, the blessing of Abraham. What's he talking about here about the blessing of Abraham?

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. That's the blessing that now Abraham extends as an example to all people who say, I believe God, I believe what He said, I believe what Jesus did for me on the cross was for me. I believe it. And that is credited to you as righteousness, right? Because we are imputed the righteousness of Christ when we believe.

Paul gives another example, look at verse 15: “*To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant* (he said), *no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.*” And his point there is that the Mosaic covenant, which came after the Abrahamic covenant, did not nullify the first covenant, which was an unconditional covenant of promise.

He says, verse 16, “... *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,”* (he says) *who is Christ.*” And he says, “¹⁷ *This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward* (meaning after the Abrahamic covenant), *does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make*

the promise void. ¹⁸ *For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.”*

All right, I know this can get a little bit deep here. He's basically just saying, God gave, made his promise to Abraham, then came the law. But he said the law doesn't nullify the promise that he made to Abraham. It doesn't nullify it.

Now, some of you who are thinking through this thing might be thinking, well, now wait a minute, then came the new covenant. Well, maybe the new covenant doesn't nullify the Mosaic covenant. I mean, didn't, didn't Paul just say when a new covenant is made, it can't be added to or nullified? After it's been made, you can't nullify it.

So, what about that? What about that? Maybe then, I'm playing the devil's advocate here, maybe the Mosaic covenant didn't get nullified either when Jesus made a new covenant. And you're absolutely right, it didn't get nullified. It got fulfilled, that's the point. Jesus said, I haven't come to take anything away from the law. I've come to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17) Right?

In his life, in his death, burial, and resurrection, he fulfilled the law. And so in that sense, through faith, and this is the argument of Paul later, we keep the law. Right? Because Jesus fulfilled it for us. He did something we could never do. We couldn't fulfill the law. He did, perfectly.

And then, and then He, and then He fulfilled it in the sense of bringing it to fruition all of the sacrifices that happened in the Old Testament, they found their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. Right? That's why they were sacrificing in the Old Testament. Pointing them to the sacrifice that was to come in Christ. So, that answers the question.

See, this would naturally bring up a question. If he's talking about all these, saying that the Abrahamic Covenant wasn't ever superseded by the Mosaic Covenant, then people might ask the question, well, then why did he even come up with the Mosaic Covenant in the first place? I mean, why go to all the trouble? Wasn't that a lot of trouble to go to? If it sounds to you, like, here, like it isn't really necessary. Why even go through all the law and all that stuff?

Look what he says in verse 19, that's the anticipation of the question that he's getting here: *“Why then the law? (your NIV says, “what then was the purpose of the law? Here’s his response) It was added because of transgressions (or sins), until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made (meaning*

Christ), *and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary* (in other words through then that intermediary is Moses).”

But Paul says the law was given because of transgressions. It was given because of sin to reveal the depth of sin. It was meant to be a law that they understood could not be perfectly kept. Do you get that? God didn't just give them the law. You know what else he gave them? He gave them the sacrificial system. Why? Because He wanted to show them they couldn't keep the law perfectly. They would require forgiveness.

And that forgiveness would come through a substitution who must die and shed his blood for them. That was the purpose of the sacrificial system. Every time they sacrificed an animal, it was a reminder, somebody's got to stand in. Somebody has to stand in for me, right? Somebody has to be my substitute. right. That was the whole purpose.

Look at verse 20, he says, “*Now an intermediary* (meaning that’s the role Moses played) *implies more than one* (or more than one party involved in the covenant, then he goes on to say), *but God is one.*” And that means that he's referring back between the covenant and the covenant with Abraham was a one-sided covenant that He was solely responsible for.

Verse 21: “(Is then the law or excuse me) *is the law then contrary to the promises of God?...*” No, it is not contrary to it. It's just inconsistent in the sense that the law was never meant to impart life. That's the thing that Paul's saying here to the Galatians that you and I have to remember. And the reason we have to remember it is if we do remember it, nobody is ever going to take us captive into legalism.

The law, if you don't remember anything else I said, remember this: The law was never intended to impart life. You see, when you know that, nobody can come and throw the law on top of you and say, you got to do this. Because you can come back and say, the Bible says the law was never intended to impart life. That's what Paul's saying here.

As he goes on, look at, look at the rest of verse 21: “*...if a law had been given that could give (or impart) life (he says), then righteousness would indeed be by the law.*” Right? But obviously, that's not the case.

What he says in verse 22 is, “*But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*” How are we imprisoned under sin? By our understanding of the law.

The law imprisoned us in the understanding that I'm a sinner and there's nothing I can do about it. I have to rely on God's forgiveness and grace, alright.

He says in verse 23, *“Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith (could be or) would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian (or under the guardianship of the law), ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, (through what? Through DNA? Covenant keeping? No! He says) through faith.”* And that is the point and this is what Paul is saying here to these Galatians.

He's saying, these guys are coming in and telling you, you got to just, you got to embrace the covenants and be a Jew. You're already sons of God. You're already children of Abraham. But not by DNA, not by joining the Old Testament covenants and submitting to circumcision, and the keeping of the Mosaic Law. No! By faith, by believing, Jesus died for you. You're already sons of God.

Crazy thing about the Jews is, God gave them the law to show them that they couldn't live up to it. And the crazy thing about the Jews is they actually convinced themselves they could keep the law. They convinced themselves that they could be righteous on their own merit. That's what the Pharisees lived to declare, we are the righteous of God, they would say.

Paul, I want to remind you, had been a Pharisee. But now he understood very differently. And that's why he wrote these last three verses of the chapter. Let's read these, verse 27: *“For as many of you as were baptized (or immersed) into Christ have put on Christ.”* What's the result of that? He says, there is no Jew or Greek anymore. These guys were telling you got to be Jews, there is no Jew anymore, he says, in Christ. He is not saying biologically there's no Jew, of course there is, you can take a DNA test and you can prove that you're a Jew.

It's not what he's saying, he's saying in Jesus there is no Jew or Greek. In fact, he says slaves are free, all those other distinctions of humanity and worldliness, they're gone. Even to the point of male and female is no longer even applicable in Christ because men and women receive Jesus and salvation exactly the same. There's no difference between men and women, as it relates to coming to Christ, being saved by Christ. All the distinctions that society wants to put out there and say, these things are, there's a wall between these things. No, Christ has broken down the walls, even between Jew and Gentile

Look what he says in verse 29, this is the last statement of the chapter, “*And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.*” Listen, you’re already Abraham’s offspring, okay. These guys are telling you, you got to do all these things to become a Jew. You are sons of Abraham by faith, actually Jew and Gentile that doesn’t even exist in Christ, but you’re already sons of Abraham in the sense that by faith. You have followed that example.

Back when Sue and I were living in Washington, up in the Seattle area, we lived in this enormous apartment complex that was practically a town unto itself. But there was a lovely gentleman who was about in his early 80s back then, that was some 30 years, 33, 34 years ago. Wow, could it really be? Lovely man by the name of Philip Littman, he was a Jew. And I was going to college at the time, and I was doing a lot of Old Testament studies, and so I was really fascinated by the history of the Jews, the things of the Jews, Hebrew scriptures, and so forth.

And so Philip and I engaged in many, many conversations about Jews and Judaism and Biblical history and stuff like that, and I would take him to the store and we’d talk and I would even tell him, I’d say, hey, Phil, buddy, Jesus is the Messiah, I’m telling you. And he was just as forceful, he’d say, no, it can’t be, it’s impossible. I’d say, well, he’s coming back, man. And he even took me to synagogue one time, which was a trip. I actually went to the synagogue in Seattle, and I didn’t understand a word of what they were saying, because it was all in Hebrew.

But it was fun. Just, I mean, I could understand, I knew the pronunciation of a few Greek words just from college, and I knew some of the things they were saying just from that. Fascinating. And one time we were sitting parked right in front of the entrance to his apartment and we were just chatting like we always did about things of the Bible and God’s Word. And he paused for just a moment and then he looked over to me, this precious 80 some year old man, and he said, you’re a better Jew than most Jews I know.

And I wondered, I wondered for a while about what he said, but I think, I think he got a glimpse of something that he really didn’t understand. And that is that by faith, I was, I am a son of Abraham. I don’t think he understood what that meant because he knew that I didn’t share that DNA. He knew that from a biological standpoint, I was not a Jew. But he saw something in me, and I think he would have seen it in any Christian that, that told a truth that went beyond biology and DNA evidence. You understand what I mean? He understood that in Christ, somehow, someway, that I was very much a brother Jew in that sense of the term, and a son of Abraham.

And I don't know how Phil died understanding. I lost connection with him after a while, and then he passed away a few years later. And I don't know, I don't know where, what conclusions Philip Littman came to. I pray that he opened his heart to Jesus, but one way or another, he saw something that I think even Christians sometimes refuse, not refuse, fail to see, that is, we are, we are sons and daughters of Abraham by faith. Amen?