

**Introduction:** Last week Paul defended his apostleship by recalling for the Galatians **a disturbing act of Hypocrisy by Peter** and all the other believing Jews that followed him in that. Not caving to the social pressure put on them by this hard line Jewish faction, Paul had to **correct Peter and the other Jews** of this act of selective devotion—and social segregation.

**This story demonstrates Paul's authority** to instruct the Galatians as their apostle in the faith. His apostleship is on par with the 12 and Peter.

**This week I want to show you structurally what is going on in this book.** The case that Paul is making to the Galatians against an ethnocentric gospel, with legalistic ramifications—that case is a legal and formal argument.

The Greeks practiced essentially 3 species of ancient rhetoric:

1.) ***Epideictic rhetoric*** (for display only): Praise and Blame rhetoric. Richly ornamented rhetoric that seeks to publically shame an opponent—it is empty and vapid and involves no substantive arguments.

2.) ***Deliberative rhetoric***: Substantive and persuasive rhetoric for the *ekklesia* (Greek assembly). Designed to lead a group to a course of action in future deliberations and decisions.

3.) ***Forensic Rhetoric***: The rhetoric of attack and defense in a court of law. It's aim was to have a verdict rendered in its favor (defendant or plaintiff) and focused mainly on the cross examination of past events.

The book of Galatians is likely a blend of deliberative and forensic rhetoric: It is both a legal argument and a persuasive case for a future course of action.

**Here's the Structure and we'll note why it's important**

**I. *Exordium* (1:1-11):** The introduction or prologue stating the cause, the transgression, and the transition into the narrative section.

**II. *Narratio* (1:12-2:14):** A brief opening narration of what went down. The facts of the case with clarity, brevity and plausibility.

**III. *Probatio* (2:15-21):** Outline that summarize the legal content of the *Narratio*.

**IV. *Propositio* (3:1-4:31):** The thesis (proposition), the arguments and evidence—the most important piece of the entire case. The evidence showing a client to be innocent or guilty.

**V. *Exhortatio* (5:1–6:10):** Warning against a continuing course of action and the attendant blessings for a change of heart and a right verdict on the matter.

**Illus. I want you to imagine that you are in attendance** at one of the house churches in Galatia. In addition to fellowshiping throughout the week with other believers, you also attend a weekly gathering where all the house churches meet together in the central courtyard of a larger home—a benefactor. You share a meal together and that meal is punctuated by a symbolic part of the meal—communion. Afterwards, some talented Greek teens sing a classic Greek hymn, the church joins her and there is a message and discussion over the message.

But this time you've gotten word that Paul the apostle has an urgent speech to be read before the congregation. One of your elders, the leading *spokesman for your group, stands up to recite and read the letter with emotion and intensity.*

**Here's why we are making this point today** (you don't have to remember all that stuff)—here's the takeaway. Paul is using forensic structure—making a *legal argument against legalistic salvation.* Essentially he is playing their game. “So you have a new found affinity for the law. Well, I will give you a water tight “law” based argument as to why salvation through the “law” of Moses is a false gospel and you've been deceived.

**And your church service begins...**

Paul will now turn to three arguments in his *Propositio*—the evidence and argument portion of this letter. He will give them three lines of arguments against ethnocentric legalism—of righteousness apart from the law: 1.) Experiential, 2.) biblical, and 3.) analogical (we'll cover that next week).

**This week we are in the proposition. The core of Paul's argument against the Galatians' new found religion.**

So let's deal with the first set of arguments he uses here.

## 1. Arguments from Experience (3:1-5)

v. 1 *“you foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?”* Paul's passion has bubbled up. How foolish and how imprudent it is for the people of God who have received the Spirit of God as evidence of their inclusion in Christ—how reckless and unwise it is to have become under the spell of false teachers. *The word for bewitched here is the Greek term (baskaino) meaning “to cast the evil eye”* which was a Greek idiom for “to be cursed by the evil eye”. If some sorcerer put the evil eye on you—you were cursed.

Paul is saying, “You were free from the curse of the law in Dt. 30. Because God made Jesus a curse—his spotless lamb took the full brunt of God's justice on that tree—but by embracing the marks of Judaism in addition to Jesus—you've welcomed the curse of the law back into your lives.

**But before your very eyes,** Jesus was portrayed as crucified—cursed by sin—taking our sins.

Now he goes into a series of **interrogatio**—which in forensic rhetoric—this is what you do to your witness on the stand. You interrogate him.

v. 2 *“So let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit of God by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish that after having begun in the Spirit you are now trying to be completed in the flesh?...5:Does he who supplies you with the Spirit and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?”*

**vv.2-3 are in the past tense.** *Did you receive the Spirit and did God work miracles in your midst—because I made you Torah compliant? Or because I preached the message of salvation by grace?*

**vv. 5 are in the present tense.** *Does God richly supply you with his Spirit and continue to do miracles in your midst because you are now Torah compliant or because you believed the message given to you.*

- **They have experienced the Spirit directly—experientially.** In all these passages, Paul makes it clear—*believers have had an immediate, direct experience of God whereby the Spirit has caused us to cry out Abba—Father! The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and we received the Spirit, being taught the Gospel by the Spirit.*
- **That experience is in response to the Gospel.** But this spiritual work doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens in response to the message of the Gospel of Jesus which is fully sufficient, hasn't been corrupted through the ages, and isn't in need of restoration, completion, and can't be improved upon.

**Let me put some skin on that by way of illustration.**

**Illus. Mohammed Hassan's** evangelism of Arab refugees. One family in particular, an Iraqi family, has been having dreams about Jesus. And in the dreams Jesus would say to them, "I am not just a prophet. I am the Messiah—God's Son."

Then they meet Muhammed. And in tears and joy—this young apostle of the faith shares them the life changing story of how he was converted from Islam to the LDS religion because of his interest in prophecy. Then he was converted from LDS to the Historic Christian Faith. Now he's sharing the message of love with families who are having these night visions, these dreams about Jesus—Muslims whose hearts are being awoken to the truth of the Gospel—when they hear the good news of the historic Christian faith the same Gospel that Paul preached to the Galatians so long ago—they are saved! Hallelujah.

God is the one who drew you in by his Spirit and taught you the truth as it was proclaimed by me.

***v. 5 Does God richly supply you with his Spirit?***

"richly supply" is the Greek word from which we get "chorus"—and it refers to a rich benefactor who richly and amply supplies the Greek orchestra and the choral singers—all their costumes, the music, the instruments—everything they need to make that drama unfolding on the stage to sing.

The Holy Spirit is the score of a life in grace. The message of grace and the cross is the sheet music for the drama of the Christian life.

And when the Galatians reject the gospel of grace—without it—their life won't sing.

And you've rejected that and have returned back to the dead, lifeless arrangement of legalism?

It's a religious play without the score. Dull. Lifeless. Nothing more than the form of godliness but denying the Gospel's very power—the power of grace, the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

**He first reminds them of their actual experience. They have already received the life-changing message of grace—the cross—and repentance.**

## 2. Arguments from Scripture (3:6-14).

Paul now turns his attention from arguments of personal experience to evidence and arguments from the Hebrew Bible. Broken into two: Abraham and the Law.

### Abraham takes the stand. Abraham is exhibit A.

So let's look quickly at Abraham's importance in Scripture. And his significance to Paul's argument regarding Jesus.

**In rabbinic literature, Abraham** is always portrayed: 1.) As having *merited* God's favor by passing various tests, and 2.) *completing* his faith with the covenant of works (circumcision). *This is precisely what Paul means to refute.* Appealing to primary texts (Gen. 15, 17, 18ff.)—Paul means to show them that the covenant of grace was set into motion by God's election and Abraham's faith. And nothing else. Contrary to the rabbis and now these "Christian Judaizers"—Abraham is not the basis for a rabbinic meritocracy—but he is instead the archetype of faith. Receiving the promise and the covenant through obedient trust in God.

### His case is summarized...

- **Abraham's faith is the beginning/watershed moment of God's redemptive plan.** Gal. 3:6 (Gen. 15:6) "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." First occurrence of a covenant made where the faith of the individual is credited to his spiritual account as "right standing before God."
- **Abraham's faith makes him the father of all who believe.** Gal. 3:7 "Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham." Not replacing Israel with the Church—but Jesus himself is the new Israel. And all in Christ are Christ's—God's children.
- **Abraham's "gospel" is the first missionary text of the Bible:** Gal. 3:8 "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." (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). God called one man (Abraham) to bring forth one nation (Israel) who would bring forth one man (the Messiah)—who would bring forth a new people—the people of God (both Jew and Gentile in Christ).
- **Abraham's faith is the model for all future believers.** Gal. 3:9 "So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." What did he believe? God's promise to do that which he could not see—that which seemed impossible. *Abraham then is the exemplar, the archetype and model of all those future children of faith—those who will put their trust in God's unique Son who is the son of Abraham—fulfilling the covenants to God's people.*

Summary: The inheritance of salvation and resurrection from the dead—inheriting God's new world—heaven on earth—is not dependent on our fastidious compliance with the Mosaic Law (beginning with the marks of Jewish identity: circumcision, kosher, and Sabbath observance).

Instead it is based on a relationship with God through faith—which is an obedient trust in his promise to bless and save the world through Abraham’s heir.

**Now Paul turns to his second line of biblical evidence—namely the Law. In this *probatio*—Paul puts now the Judaizers’ trust in the law on trial.**

**The Law is Cross-examined (3:10-14).**

**In the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. most Jews believed they were still in a state of exile.** Yes they had returned to their land. Yes they had re-occupied their historic city Jerusalem. But they were waiting. Because in their view God had not yet delivered to them the everlasting Kingdom under the rule of his Messiah—the King. And so long as they were oppressed by a foreign nation—they were still in a state of functional exile. Relational estrangement.

**Moreover, they were paranoid regarding the one symbol that Moses prophesied** would be the symbol of their estrangement. This symbol was a stigma—right out of the Torah of Moses. A curse—a Jewish man hanging in execution on a tree.

- **The Curse of the Law: Exile and Estrangement:** Dt. 27:26 “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things written in the book of the law to do them.”

Everyone who embraces the law system embraces the inherent curse of the law. If you can’t obey it all—then you are unrighteous. And to date, only one man has been able to live up to it—Christ. Moses tells them in **Chapter 30 THAT THEY WILL BE CURSED, AND THEY WILL GO OFF INTO EXILE—BEING RELATIONALLY ESTRANGED WITH GOD.**

- **The Curse of the Tree: Defilement and Ruin:** Dt. 21:22-23 “If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree, <sup>23</sup> the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung is **cursed** in the sight of God. In this way, **you will prevent the defilement** of the land the Lord your God is giving you as your special possession.”

The Roman cross was the symbol of their cursed state as a people. **Defilement. Desecration. Sacrilege. And they lived under the curse of estrangement from God and the symbol of exile was a tree—a high cross.** Which symbolized God’s judgment on them—that his displeasure with their disobedience hadn’t ended.

Paul’s message to them was “It has happened. It is a reality! God has sent his one and only Son—to take the curse of sin and estrangement upon himself—to once and in finality do away with sin to restore God’s people...

**Abraham is the exemplar**—the prototype of the man of faith. Called out of the nations, the father of the blessed nation Israel, the people who would bring forth God’s Messiah/King—who would bring the nations into one family. One family of God.

Galatians, don’t you don’t you doubt for one second that you are members of this family.

But I see that now you been scammed and what’s worse than that—you’ve been bewitched—cursed by the evil eye. Embracing the very situation that was cursed for so long. The very situation

**Communion: Worship team and our usher team to come forward...**

So here’s what communion is all about

- We’ve encountered the Holy Spirit in faith—God’s transforming, empowering presence. Because we’ve believed we’ve been marked—not by Torah or the works of the Law—we’ve been marked in him with the Seal of the Spirit—a deposit guaranteeing the inheritance that is in store for all those who believe.
- We’ve experienced the newness of life by the Spirit because Jesus and no other, has fulfilled the Law, brought it to its intended completion by dying on a cross ending our exile and estrangement from God.
- He has become the very curse on the tree—and taken upon his lashed body the stigma and disgrace of crucifixion. Ending our exile. Ending the hostility between man and God by taking the full brunt of God’s justice. By taking on himself the wrath for sin.

**Pass communion: Worship...**

**When we take the bread we embrace the body of the Messiah—broken on that tree. The body who has done away with the curse of the law. Let’s eat together.**

**When we take this cup—we proclaim the life of the Spirit of God—through the blood shed to end the curse of the law.**

**Final Communion Instructions:**

**Final song and declaration.**