

PROMISE MADE, PROMISE KEPT

Scripture: Galatians 3
(05-31-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

Paul opens this chapter aggressively, asking, "You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a spell on you?"(3:1-5). They had fallen under the bewitching, deceptive spell of the Judaizers. He reminds them that they received the Holy Spirit by trusting God, not by "working their heads off" to follow rules. By turning to a works message, they were discounting the saving and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Paul demonstrates that Abraham, who preceded Moses, was saved by faith and not self-effort (3:6-9). Paul states Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. If the law can't save us, why did God give it to us? Paul explains that the law acted as our *paidagogos*—a guardian or tutor (3:10-25). The law was designed to show us our absolute moral bankruptcy so that we would stop trusting ourselves and fly to the cross for mercy. The law is like a mirror. It cannot wash the dirt off your face, but it reveals exactly how dirty you are.

Paul points out that Abraham was set right with God simply because he trusted God's promises, long before the Law ever existed. Real "sons and daughters of Abraham" are those who live by faith. His real children are those who believe God and are therefore justified by faith and not the law. This inclusion of the Gentiles in God's plan of salvation was revealed in God's covenant with Abraham (3:26-29).

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. What could have caused the Galatians to "lose their spiritual senses" (bewitched) in regard to faith on Christ alone, and not by works (3:1)?
2. How does the example of Abraham support Paul's argument that salvation is by faith alone (3:6-9)? How is our faith in Christ a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham?
3. Since the law was not to take the place of the promise, what is the intended purpose of the law (3:24-25)?
4. What experience showed you that keeping rules was not the way to obtain and sustain by God's mercy?