

Is God Your Boss or Your Father?

(Galatians 3:15-18)

The Gospel is a hill to die on. Christ actually went to a hill and died that we might experience the saving good news of His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul died for the gospel in a Roman prison.

For Martin Luther the gospel was a hill to die on. Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, in 1521, was ordered by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, to appear before the diet of the Holy Roman Empire at Worms and recant his views. Luther was asked to explain his views and Charles ordered him to recant. When he was asked to recant his writings about the Gospel or be excommunicated from the RCC which meant to have your soul forever lost, Luther responded,

"Unless I am convinced by proofs from Scriptures or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I can not and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

On that hill to die on, Paul is battling an opponent of the Gospel in Galatians. Galatians is Paul's Battle Epistle. He is at war with the false teachers of a works for salvation belief system called Judaism. The Judaizers taught a man centered works righteousness. Paul preached a Christ centered salvation by grace through faith not of works lest any man should boast.

Paul develops his defense of the Gospel in three divisions:

1. In Chapters 1-2, Paul gives his Personal Response and Defends his Apostleship.

2. In Chapters 3-4, Paul gives his Doctrinal Response and Defends Justification by Faith.

A. Argument From ***Experience*** (Galatians 3:1-5).

Like a prosecuting attorney, Paul grills the Galatians about their salvation experience. In rapid succession, Paul asks them, "Were you converted with I preached the gospel to you by keeping the commands or by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior?"

B. Argument From ***Scripture*** (Galatians 3:6-14).

With Six Quotes from the O.T. Paul supported his defense of salvation by grace with six Old Testament quotations and Abraham's conversion by believing the promise of God.

C. Argument From ***Logic*** (Galatians 3:15-29). The Judaizers responded to Paul's quote in regard to Abraham's justification by faith in Genesis 15:6 by logically inferring that salvation was by faith before the law was given by God. But since the Law salvation has been by keeping the Law. Paul responds by refuting the logic of the Judaizers. The Law could not undo the promise to Abraham because the Law was temporary and inferior to the eternal and unconditional promise given to Abraham.

D. Argument From ***History*** (Galatians 4:1-11).

E. Argument From ***The Heart*** (Galatians 4:12-20).

F. Argument From *Allegory* (Galatians 4:21-31).

3. In Chapters 5-6, Paul gives his Practical Response and Defends Sanctification by Faith.

The Judaizers presented God as a Boss for whom you work and earn you salvation. Your Job Description includes 613 Old Testament laws.

Paul presented God as a Father who loves you and gives you His unmerited righteousness.

Salvation is not a check you earn from your Boss who examines your time sheet and watches your work video. Salvation is a free inheritance from your Heavenly Father.

Paul contrasts God's true way of salvation by grace and the Judaizers' false way of works righteousness.

I. God's Promise of Salvation by Grace through Faith is Eternal and Superior (3:15-18).

A. Salvation by Grace is Binding (3:15).

1. Paul uses the human example of a human contract. If it is signed it is binding. If you purchase a car and sign on the dotted line it is non-negotiable.

2. The promise of salvation God made to Abraham is even more binding than a human contract because God's promise to Abraham was a divine covenant. Abraham did not make a deal with God. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15. After justifying Abraham by faith in Genesis 15:6, God cut a one sided, unilateral covenant with Abraham in 15:9-18. According to the Eastern culture of covenant making, God told Abraham to cut animals in two pieces and make a path by separating them. Abraham cut in two pieces a heifer, goat, ram, turtledove, and a pigeon. The normal process was for both parties to walk through the bloody path so both individuals would share the responsibilities. But God caused a deep sleep to fall on Abraham and only God passed through thus obligating only Himself in this unconditional covenant.

Salvation is not a business contract with God where I must keep my end of the bargain through my works. Salvation is God's sacred covenant with me that I accept by faith. God has obligated Himself to complete the covenant.

Paul put it this way: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of redemption" (Philippians 1:6).

B. Salvation by Grace is Fulfilled in Christ (3:16).

1. Paul uses the plural "promises" because God made three promises to Abraham.

1) The first was a personal promise. God promised Abraham a great name which God kept.

2) The second was a national promise. God promised that Israel would occupy all the land of Israel which has not happen yet but will in the millennium.

3) The third was a universal promise. God promised that through Abraham's seed all nations would be blessed. This promise was universal and is being fulfilled today through Abraham's seed Jesus Christ when sinners receive Christ by grace through faith.

2. Paul draws a distinction between "seed" and "seeds."

Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is interpreting Genesis 22:18. "Seed" can be used in a plural or collective sense in reference to Israel or "seed" can be used in a singular sense. "Seed" is used in a collective way in Genesis 22:17 to refer to the nation of Israel. But in Genesis 22:18, according to Paul in Galatians 3:16, "Seed" is singular in meaning. Through God's seed, Christ, all nations can be blessed if they receive Him as Savior by grace through faith and not of works.

Paul uses "seed" in a collective sense in Galatians 3:26-29 also not to refer to Israel but all believers in the body of Christ. You can be God's collective seed, offspring, descendent, sons, in the body of Christ, only if you are related to God's single Seed, Jesus Christ.

C. Salvation by Grace is Repeated (3:17).

God repeated and reaffirmed the promise many times in the Old Testament. Because of this repetition, there is debate over the 430 years between the giving of this promise and the giving of the Law.

1. God gave the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12.

2. Then God reaffirmed the promise to Abraham's son Isaac in Genesis 26.

3. Finally, God reaffirmed the promise to Abraham's grandson, Jacob, in Genesis 46:1-5, which was 430 years before the Law was given. This promise was so important God kept repeating it so no one would miss it.

God repeats His really important messages. God's important attribute of holiness is often repeated: In Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8. Jesus prefaced His message of the necessity of the new birth with, "Verily, verily," or "Truly, truly, I say unto you, you must be born again." In the New Testament God continued repeating the message of salvation by grace through faith:

John 10:28 "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are you saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast."

D. Salvation by Grace is an Inheritance (3:18).

Salvation is an inheritance, a gift given by the Father. Salvation is not a paycheck earned by works from your employer. Have you seen the bumper sticker: "I'm spending my children's inheritance." God has not spent His children's inheritance. He has given us our inheritance which is salvation.

If salvation is by Law or works then it is no more by promise and is conditional. It is no longer an inheritance.

Here is the clincher for this section: God freely gave the promise to Abraham just as He freely gives us salvation.

On the last night of the VBS, Steve preached to the parents and families of the children here in the auditorium. I sat in the very back and watched and prayed. God used Steve's message. Three young men sat in front of me. When the invitation was given, one of those men raised his hand. He did not respond at the invitation but when the service was over I followed them outside and talked to them about their salvation. The 21 year old, Andrew, who raised his hand said he had been saved. One of the young men, 14 year old Alston said he was ready to be saved. I asked all of them to come to my study. I showed Alston how to be saved from Scripture. We read Romans 3:23 which says all of us have sinned. We then read Romans 6:23, which teaches that the wages of sin is death or eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire. The sinner earns eternal punishment. It is the wages God will give the sinner for sinning against Him. Romans 6:23 also says that the gift of God is eternal life. Eternal life cannot be earned because it is a gift which God purchased with the blood of his Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. The gift can be received or rejected but cannot be earned. Salvation is not paycheck we work for.

The way to receive the gift of salvation is found in Romans 10:9, 10: "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Alston received Christ.

Then I asked Andrew if that was the way he got saved and he said no. He had gone forward in a service to get saved and the preacher anointed his head with oil. The preacher made a cross on his forehead with the oil and told Andrew he was saved. Andrew said he had never heard the plan of salvation which I had just given to Alston. I asked Andrew if he wanted to be saved according to the Bible and he said yes. After we went over again how the Bible says to be saved, Andrew trusted Christ as his Savior.

Andrew did not earn his salvation by works as if working for a boss but freely received his salvation inheritance from his Father.