

Truth of the Gospel

Galatians 2:15-21

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Literary Context

- Opening (1:1-5)
- **Body**
 - Problem (1:6-10)
 - Apostolic Defense (1:11-2:14)
 - Paul's Conversion, call, early ministry (1:11-24)
 - Paul's Acceptance by the Apostles (2:1-10)
 - Paul's Rebuke of Peter (2:11-14)
 - **Thesis / Solution (2:15-21)**
 - Arguments (3:1-5:12)
 - Implications (5:13-6:10)
- Closing (6:11-18)

Gospel Distortion
Gospel Reception

Gospel Definition
Gospel Defense
Gospel Obedience

Literary Function

- Transition
 - End of the Antiochian episode
 - Addressed to Peter?
 - To Peter in form, to Galatians in content
 - Vantage point: Jewish Christians (Paul and Peter?)
 - Background: Judaizers, circumcision party
- Central thesis
 - Justification by faith in Christ
 - Law-Gospel era
 - Life in union with Christ
- Interpretive key for Galatians
 - Gospel Defense – Wrapped up in salvation history
 - Gospel Obedience (previously: Implication)

Terminology

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no [flesh] will be justified.

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

servant me. 21 I
sinners works for if 16 yet 18 For
sin found to birth now endeavor tore Jesus Son believed person Jews live prove
that a Christ been crucified Certainly transgressor. 19 For know
order 15 We I died justified by longer justified God 17 But
law God. 20 I nullify faith and gave rebuild also died
lives in not Gentile righteousness were
life purpose grace loved law but

Structure: Gospel According to Galatians (vv. 2:15-21)

- **Thesis:** Justification through Faith in Christ (vv. 15-16) ordo salutis
- **Reason:** A New Era (vv. 17-19) ordo/historia salutis
- **Result:** Co-crucifixion & Indwelling Christ (v. 20) ordo salutis
- (Negative) **Summary:** Grace (v. 21)

Ordo Salutis (order of salvation)

- Outworking of salvation in a person's life:
 - Election
 - Calling
 - Justification
 - Sanctification
 - Glorification

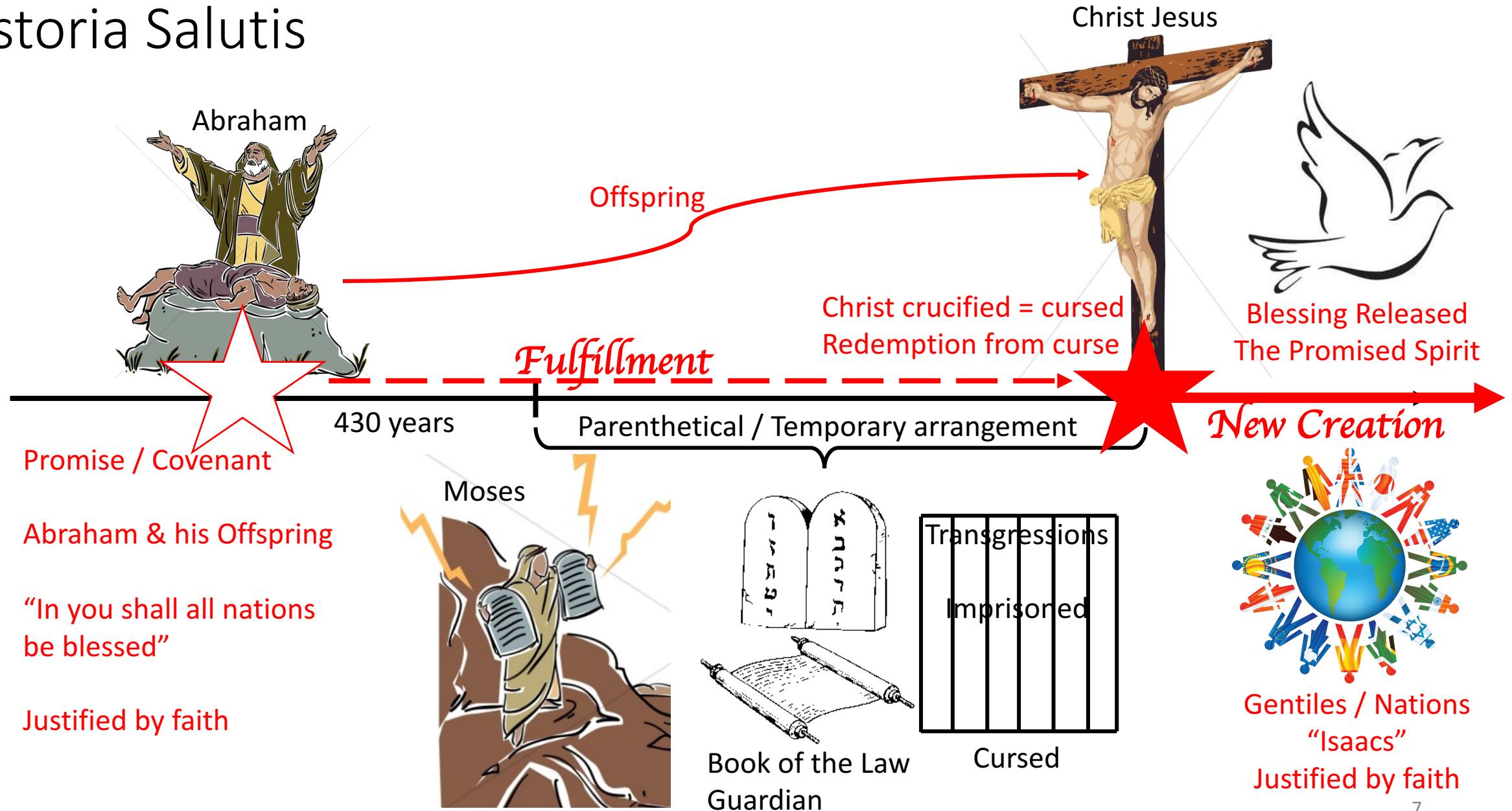
Golden Chain (Romans 8:29-30)

Historia Salutis (salvation history)

- Outworking of salvation in world history:
 - Abrahamic Promise
 - Mosaic Law
 - Christ's Coming

Galatians 3-4; Sweep of Scripture

Historia Salutis



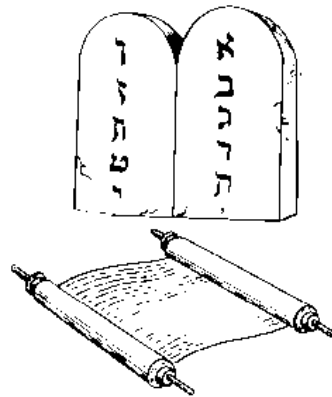
Promise / Covenant

Abraham & his Offspring

"In you shall all nations be blessed"

Justified by faith

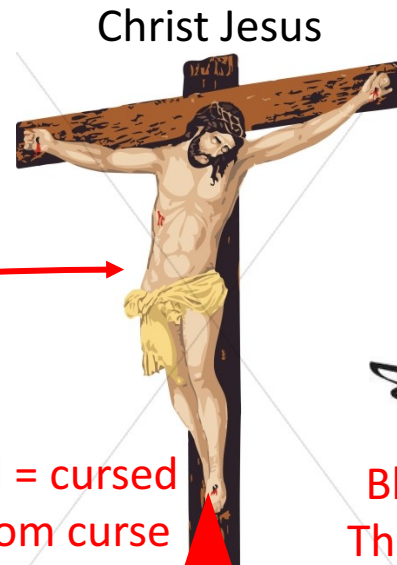
Moses



Book of the Law
Guardian



Transgressions
Imprisoned
Cursed



Christ Jesus

Christ crucified = cursed
Redemption from curse



Blessing Released
The Promised Spirit

New Creation



Gentiles / Nations
"Isaacs"
Justified by faith

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- **Result:** Co-crucifixion & Indwelling Christ (v. 20) *ordo salutis*
- (Negative) **Summary:** Grace (v. 21)

Thesis: Justification By Faith in Christ (vv. 15-16)

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile “sinners”;

¹⁶ yet we know that:

[THESIS] a person is not **justified** by **works of the law** but through faith [of] Jesus Christ,

[RESPONSE] so we also have believed [into] Christ Jesus,

[INTENTION] in order to be **justified** by faith [of] Christ and not by **works of the law**,

[REASON] because by **works of the law** no [flesh] will be **justified**.

Thesis: Justification By Faith in Christ (vv. 15-16)

- Works of the Law

- 1) Legalism
- 2) Identity markers (NPP)
- 3) All works prescribed by Mosaic Law [Law = “Book of the Law”] ✓

- Faith of Jesus Christ

- 1) Faithfulness of Jesus Christ
- 2) Faith in Jesus Christ ✓
- 3) Faith of Christ/Gospel Era

- Believed *Unto* Christ

- Beyond cognitive. Involving both trust and commitment.

- Justified

- Declared righteous, legal or forensic sense before the Divine Judge

Thesis: Justification By Faith in Christ (vv. 15-16)

- An overlooked point:
 - Jews included among Gentiles “sinners” as truly sinners.
- Complementary to:
 - Gentiles included among the saints (Eph. 2:11,13,19; Gal. 3:8)

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Reason: A New Era (vv. 17-19)

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be **justified** in Christ,
we too were found to be **sinners**,
is Christ then a servant of **sin**?

Certainly not!

Options:

- 1) Jewish Christians are sinners like the Gentiles [**ordo salutis**]
 - Pre-conversion status, actually sinners
 - Best explains “found to be” and what precedes
- 2) Jewish Christians are accused of being sinners for not keeping the law [**historia salutis**]
 - Post-conversion status, Judaizers’ accusation of being sinners
 - Best explains what follows

Reason: A New Era (vv. 17-19)

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be **justified** in Christ,
we too were found to be **sinners**,
is Christ then a servant of **sin**?

Certainly not!

¹⁸ For if I [*reconstruct*] what I [*abolished*], I prove myself to be a **transgressor**.

¹⁹ For through the **law** I died to the **law**, so that I might **live** to God.

Options:

- 1) Jewish Christians are sinners like the Gentiles [**ordo salutis**]
- 2) Jewish Christians are accused of being sinners for not keeping the law [**historia salutis**] ✓

Reason: A New Era (vv. 17-19)

¹⁹ For through the **law** I died to the **law**, so that I might live to God.

- “through the Law” – unique usage
 - Historia Salutis explanation in Galatians 3
- “died to the law” – similar to Romans 7:1-3
 - Marriage annulled if spouse dead
 - How? Co-crucifixion (next verse)
- Die-Live combination elsewhere – Romans 6:11
 - So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
- Gentile Problem: Sin ————— **Real Problem: Flesh, Unbelief**
- Jewish Problem: Law

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Result: Co-crucifixion and Indwelling Christ (v. 20)

A ¹⁹ For through the **law** I died to the **law**,

B so that I might live to God.

A ²⁰ I have been *co-crucified* [*in/with*] Christ.

A It is no longer I who live,

B but Christ who lives in me.

B And [*what*] I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the **Son of God**,
 who loved me and gave himself for me.

Result: Co-crucifixion and Indwelling Christ (v. 20)

A ²⁰ I have been *co-crucified* [*in*] Christ.

A It is no longer I who live,

B but Christ who lives in me.

B And [*what*] I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the **Son of God**,
who loved me and gave himself for me.

- What it does not mean: My person is suppressed.
- Paul: Dead / alive; Jesus and John: “born again”
- A: Union with Christ in his death; B: Union with Christ in his resurrection
- A: The old self has died; B: the new self has come to life (Regeneration)
- A: Saved by faith B: Live by faith (Justification/Sanctification)
- Paul’s prayer in Eph 3:17: “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”
- Living unto God, not to law; not just avoiding sin, but doing God’s will
- “gave himself over” – “handed himself over” – Judas “betrayed” – tradition (that which is handed over)

Negative Summary (v. 21)

[RESPONSE] ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God,
[REASON] for if **righteousness** were through the **law**,
[ANTITHESIS] then Christ died for no purpose.

- “It is bad enough that we are wicked sinners and transgressors of the commandment of God, and to refuse the grace of God and the remission of sins offered unto us by Christ, is the worst sin of all, the sin of sins.” – Martin Luther (Galatians)

Application: Justification through Faith

- In Christ Alone
 - Cross of Christ is necessary and sufficient
 - Not that the gospel is not good enough to believe but it is too good to believe.
- Contra-religion
 - Even the church slipped into religion!
 - Gospel accepted -> Gospel assumed -> Gospel confused -> Gospel lost (Mack Stiles)
 - Religion is a form of sin: self-justification
- Contra-flesh
 - Religion cashes on the flesh, gospel clashes with the flesh
 - We must keep preaching this to ourselves, to one another, to our children

Application: Costly Grace

- “Simul justus et peccator” – Martin Luther
 - Simultaneously justified and sinful.
 - While true, is open to a different kind of abuse – cheap grace
- “Only he who believes is obedient and only he who is obedient believes.” – Bonhoffer
 - Justification calls us to obedience – gospel obedience
 - Contra-lawlessness
- Justification and Sanctification are both in Christ and tied together
 - Distinct but inseparable
 - Tree-fruit analogy of Jesus [root/fruit]
- Our flesh hates being at the center of biblical tension → legalism / lawlessness.

Application: Love of God

- “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”
 - Barth famously summarized his whole theology by this line
 - The Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me
- “When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within”
 - Upward I look and see him there who made an end of all my sin.
- Give yourself over to God for he has given himself over to you.
 - Radical faithfulness
 - Not just avoiding sin, but joyfully living unto him

Application: It is Well With My Soul!

- Overflowing Gratitude
- Proper Confidence
- Humility – “Who am I that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name”
- Joyful Perseverance

Application: Ministry Obedience

- Say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.” (Col. 4:17)
- We all have been entrusted a ministry.
 - A missionary is a disciple.
 - A disciple is a missionary.
 - Distinct yet inseparable.
- It is possible to not fulfill it!
 - Fear, anxiety (3rd kind of soil)
 - Lack of grasp of the gospel
 - Joylessness, ingratitude, pride

Bibliography

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