

## Time Audit Chronicles: Justification by Faith, Not Works (Galatians 3:1-14)

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### Prologue: A Question of Faith

The Presswood family gathered in the living room, reading from **Galatians 3:1-14**. This passage, written by the apostle Paul, tackles one of the most profound truths of the gospel: salvation comes through **faith**, not works of the law. Ariel had been thinking about the difference between faith and works, wondering why Paul emphasized it so strongly. Alice, cuddling Mr. Fluffernutter, was imagining herself traveling to Galatia, watching Paul write his passionate letter.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, “Why was Paul so upset with the Galatians? It sounds like he’s frustrated with them.”

Ryan nodded, smiling gently. “That’s a great question, Ariel. Paul was upset because the Galatian believers, who had started their journey with Jesus through **faith**, were now being influenced by false teachers who said they needed to follow the **Jewish law**—like circumcision and dietary rules—to be fully accepted by God. Paul wanted to remind them that their salvation was not based on what they did, but on **faith in Jesus**. Let’s explore this passage to see why this teaching is so important.”

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### The Journey Begins: Paul’s Urgent Questions (*Galatians 3:1-5*)

The **Time Audit Machine** powered up, transporting the family to a bustling city in **Galatia**. The marketplace hummed with activity as Paul’s letter was being read aloud to a group of Christians gathered in a small home. The tension in the room was palpable as Paul’s stern words echoed:

**“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”** (Galatians 3:1).

Ariel looked up at Ryan, startled. “Paul sounds really upset here. Why does he call them foolish?”

Ryan explained, “Paul is frustrated because the Galatians knew the truth of the gospel. They had seen Jesus portrayed as crucified—meaning they had clearly understood that His death paid the price for their sins. But now, they were being ‘bewitched,’ or misled, into thinking they needed to **earn** their salvation by following the law.”

Ariel frowned. “So, they started with faith in Jesus, but now they’re trying to go back to doing things to earn God’s love?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Paul is reminding them that they received the **Holy Spirit** by **faith**, not by doing works of the law. He asks, ‘**Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**’ (Galatians 3:2). The Galatians’ own experience showed them that it was faith in Jesus that brought them into a relationship with God—not anything they did.”

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## **Abraham: The Example of Justification by Faith (*Galatians 3:6-9*)**

The scene shifted, and the family found themselves standing on a hillside in ancient **Canaan**, watching **Abraham** look up at the stars. Paul, in his letter, reminded the Galatians of Abraham's example:

**“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”** (Galatians 3:6-7).

Ryan pointed to Abraham, gazing at the night sky. “Paul uses Abraham to show the Galatians that **faith**, not works, has always been the basis of a relationship with God. God promised Abraham that he would become the father of many nations, and Abraham believed God's promise. It was that **belief**, not anything Abraham did, that made him righteous in God's eyes.”

Ariel watched as Abraham smiled, trusting God's promise even though he and Sarah were old and childless. “So, Abraham wasn't righteous because of his actions, but because he trusted God's promise?”

“That's right,” Ryan said. “And Paul is saying that everyone who has **faith in Jesus** is a child of Abraham—not just the Jews who follow the law. The promise God made to Abraham was always about **faith**, not works.”

Paul continued in his letter, saying, **“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”** (Galatians 3:8).

“So,” Ariel said thoughtfully, “the promise to Abraham wasn't just for his family—it was for everyone who believes in God's promise through Jesus.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “The blessing of Abraham—being made right with God—was always meant to come through **faith**, so that people from all nations could be included in God's family.”

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## **The Curse of the Law and the Redemption of Christ (*Galatians 3:10-14*)**

As Paul's letter continued, the family found themselves standing near Mount Sinai, where Moses had received the **Law**. Ariel noticed the weight of the scene as Paul explained that trying to rely on the law for salvation only brought a **curse**:

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”** (Galatians 3:10).

Ryan explained, “The law is **good** because it shows us God's standards, but it's impossible for anyone to keep it perfectly. The law reveals our sin, but it can't save us. That's why Paul says the law brings a **curse**—because no one can meet its demands on their own.”

Ariel looked concerned. “So, if no one can keep the law perfectly, does that mean everyone is cursed?”

Ryan smiled. “That’s the beauty of the gospel, Ariel. Jesus took the curse for us. Paul writes, ‘**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.**’ (Galatians 3:13).”

Alice, who had been quiet, spoke up. “Jesus took the curse on the cross?”

“That’s right, Alice,” Ryan said. “When Jesus died on the cross, He took the **punishment** we deserve for breaking God’s law. He became the curse so that we could be **free**. And because of Jesus, we can now receive the blessing of Abraham—the gift of **justification by faith**.”

Paul’s letter concluded this section with a powerful statement: “**That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**” (Galatians 3:14).

Ariel smiled. “So, it’s all about **faith** in Jesus—not what we do, but what He’s already done for us.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “That’s why Paul says, ‘**The just shall live by faith.**’ (Galatians 3:11). It’s not about earning our way to God—it’s about trusting in what Jesus has already done.”

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### **Takeaway: Living by Faith, Not Works**

Back in the garage, the family reflected on the power of Paul’s words. Ariel turned to Ryan, thoughtful. “Paul was really passionate about this, wasn’t he? He wanted the Galatians to understand that they didn’t need to earn God’s love or follow a bunch of rules to be accepted. They just needed to have **faith in Jesus**.”

Ryan nodded. “That’s exactly right, Ariel. Paul’s message is still true for us today. We don’t have to earn our way to God through **good works** or trying to be perfect. Jesus has already done everything for us. All we have to do is put our **faith** in Him, trusting that He has made us right with God.”

Ariel smiled. “It’s like Abraham—he wasn’t righteous because of what he did, but because he believed God. And we’re part of that same promise through Jesus.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The blessing of Abraham—justification by faith—is for everyone who believes in Jesus. It’s not about what we do; it’s about what He’s done. That’s the heart of the gospel.”

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### **Key Teaching: Faith in Jesus Brings Justification**

In **Galatians 3:1-14**, Paul reminds us that salvation comes through **faith**, not through works of the law. Using Abraham as an example, he shows that righteousness has always been about trusting in God’s promises, not earning God’s favor. The **curse of the law** is lifted because Jesus took it upon Himself on the cross, offering us freedom and justification. This passage calls us to live by faith, trusting that Jesus’ sacrifice is sufficient for our salvation and that our relationship with God is based on His **grace**, not our performance. **The just shall live by faith**—this is the foundation of the Christian life.