

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Lecture 19, Galatians

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in New Testament History and Literature lecture 19 on the book of Galatians. Dr. Dave Mathewson.

All right, let's get started.

Let's open with prayer. And then I think we left off in Galatians last time we were together. So, we'll actually work through that book.

You'll notice that we're getting towards the point where we have another exam coming up. That will, it looks like that will be a week from today on Monday, so next Monday. This Thursday night there is another optional but extra credit review session.

I will give you more details as far as the time and the location by the next class period, hopefully before then. I'll email you as soon as I get it all figured out. But plan on this Thursday night a review session for extra credit.

And then again, a week from today will be exam number two.

All right, let's open with prayer, and then we'll finish looking at Galatians.

Father, thank you for the break and a chance to get rested up and caught up. And Lord, I pray that we will have found energy to make it through the rest of the semester. And I pray now that as we focus on just a small portion of your revelation you'll give us wisdom to think about it critically, to think about it historically, but to think about it in terms of how you continue to speak through this particular book to your people today. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

All right, the book of Galatians we said was written most likely to a group of churches in the southern part of the province, the Roman province of Galatia, which would place it in the midst of a cluster of churches that Paul would have visited on one of his missionary journeys that took him through southern Asia Minor or to modern-day Turkey. We also suggested that the problem that Paul was confronting was a group that scholars have labeled Judaizers, that is a group of probably Jewish Christians that were claiming that Gentiles needed to submit to the law of Moses, that is for males that meant being circumcised, for everyone that meant keeping the Sabbath laws, keeping the food laws, especially those laws that marked one off as a member of the true people of God, of Israel. And so, Paul was facing a group of Jewish Christians who then were teaching or had infiltrated the church in Galatia and were

telling the Gentile Christians that their faith in Jesus was not enough, but they also had to add observance of the Old Testament law.

So, the book of Galatians then will be Paul's attempt to persuade the readers not to follow that course of action and instead to persuade them to trust solely in Jesus Christ. Now Paul is not going to suggest therefore that they don't need to rely on the law so it really doesn't matter how they live or what they do, but Paul is going to argue that the law of Moses should not and does not need to play a role in the lives of these Gentile Christians and we'll see why he says that and what that entails. I think we also ended by, whoops, by looking at this.

I said in Galatians, Paul sets up a contrast throughout the entire book, a contrast that I've represented by these two circles. These two circles can represent, in a sense, these two circles could represent the contrast between, this would represent the message of the kingdom that God, that Jesus offered in the Gospels, that men and women could already enter the kingdom and participate in it, even if not yet fully and in a complete manner. This would represent life under the control of or within the sphere of this present world that is characterized and dominated by sin and death and a term that Paul uses, the flesh, which doesn't so much refer to my physical flesh, but refers to me as susceptible to sin as in my weakness and under the influence of this present evil age.

Paul also will place the law in this category, not because he thinks it's sinful or bad, but simply because it does not have the ability ultimately to overcome this situation. But then Paul constructs another sphere or another realm of power or control or influence that he says is characterized by life and righteousness and by God's Holy Spirit, a realm in which we experience the blessings of salvation in Christ. So, Paul sees humanity and life as being able to be divided into these two conceptual type spheres.

Again, one sphere characterized by life and death would be my life under the influence of this present evil age, of this present world, and a different sphere of influence that is determined by who I am in Christ and characterized by life and righteousness and having the Holy Spirit. Now, one other thing, and this contrast will run all the way through Galatians. One other thing to say about Galatians is when we read it, there has been a lot of interest in what kind of letter Galatians really is.

There's also been a lot of interest in reading Galatians in light of first-century Greco-Roman speeches or Greco-Roman types of philosophical speeches. For example, we actually have a number of rhetorical speeches is the word I was looking for. We actually have a number of handbooks that seem to discuss appropriate ways of constructing the rhetorical type of speeches from Aristotle and on into the first century that describe the appropriate way of arguing a certain point.

So, rhetoricians, in order to persuade someone or argue their point, would construct speeches according to certain patterns. Some scholars are convinced that Galatians was actually not just meant to be a written letter, but actually conforms to a typical first-century rhetorical speech. You can certainly see the validity in that.

If Paul is trying to persuade his readers to not adopt the course of action proposed by the Judaizers but to adopt the course of action that Paul is proposing, you can see where rhetorical speech might be just the ticket, just the thing he'd want to use to persuade his readers. Within these so-called handbooks that we have available from Aristotle on and records of how these rhetorical speeches were often constructed, especially in the courtroom where someone would construct a defense, a speech of defense on behalf of someone. Again, there were appropriate schemes and movements within the speech.

And here's an example of how this has been applied to Galatians. The first five verses of Galatians chapter one begin just very similar to Paul's other letters like an epistle would begin. However, some have thought that the rest of Galatians actually developed like these first-century rhetorical speeches in the Greco-Roman world.

So, for example, most speeches would begin with an exhortium that was kind of a statement of the case and a statement of the issue or problem. And some have identified chapter one, six through 11 as equivalent to the exhortium in a first century Greco-Roman speech. And of course, the assumption is that Paul would have either been trained in this in Greco-Roman rhetoric as part of his education, or he would have been aware of Greco-Roman speech patterns.

So, an exhortium, a narratio, the second feature that you often found in some rhetorical speeches was the narratio that would narrate or set out the main thesis and the main facts of the case. And some have identified that with the rest of chapter one and into chapter two. This would be, again, just kind of a statement and rehearsing of the facts that are relevant to the case.

And then would come the propositio, which, there we go, is a summary of the points of agreement in the case, and primarily the thesis that is going to be argued. So, the propositio. Then the probatio, what is known as the probatio, where you would simply start listing and marshalling all the supports and proofs for your position.

So again, if you're arguing in a court of law why somebody is innocent or guilty, you would then rehearse all the proofs and arguments as to why they're guilty or why they should be vindicated. And finally, the exhortatio. In some speeches, especially those speeches that were meant not so much to argue for a past guilty or innocent verdict, but some speeches were meant to try to persuade readers to take a certain course of action in the future.

Those kinds of speeches would often have an exhortatio, which were the exhortations or commands to persuade or convince the readers of the course of action they should take in the future. And so the rest of Chapter 5 through the bulk of Chapter 6 for Galatians has often been seen as the exhortatio, equivalent to the exhortatio of a Greco-Roman speech. And then Paul ends his letter like he does most of the typical first-century letters.

So, what you have, some would claim, is a rhetorical speech bracketed by the typical intro and conclusion to an epistle. So, it's really a letter that contains a written account of an oral rhetorical speech that Paul perhaps could have or would have given orally if he had been there to convince his readers. So, the assumption is he's simply drawing on a common rhetorical speech pattern that he and his readers would have been familiar with in order to persuade them, again, not to follow the course of these Judaizers, but to follow the course that Paul is recommending.

And that is that faith in Jesus Christ, apart from obeying the Mosaic law and submitting to the Mosaic law, is sufficient for their justification and their salvation. Again, my feeling is that probably Paul did not utilize Greco-Roman speech patterns for his entire letter. Now, I think Paul probably did draw on first-century rhetorical ways of persuading.

I mean, when he was convinced he had a message from God, he would use anything to persuade his readers and convince them that that was the case. But when you look at Galatians carefully, the only formal markers that you have, remember when I put up that picture of the cartoon, the Peanuts cartoon, and I asked you how you knew what this was, and you identified the boxes, the sequence of boxes, the speech bubbles, those kinds of things, the kind of exaggerated characters that resembled human forms that really did not look realistically like a human, those kinds of things tipped you off that this was a cartoon. When you look at Galatians to figure out what clues we find that would tell us what kind of literature this is, the only things you find are that Paul is simply writing a typical first-century letter.

So personally, although this is very popular and common, I personally doubt this scheme, and I'm not convinced Paul was following the typical first-century rhetorical speech patterns. Instead, he was simply following the typical way of writing a first-century letter. So I don't think we should, that Paul is trying to follow this exhortium, narratio, and propositio, but instead he follows a typical letter, an introduction, he skips the thanksgiving because he's so upset at the Corinthians, then the body of the letter, the exhortations, the commands that Paul usually gives in all his letters, and then a typical first-century letter closing.

So again, I'm a little skeptical of this, but many, especially with Galatians, many would see Paul as following a typical first-century type of rhetorical speech. Again, whether Paul was trained in that or whether he just would have been made aware of

that in his travels throughout Asia Minor, there are different suggestions as to why he might do that. But again, I don't think Paul's doing anything other than writing a typical first-century letter, and I don't think he intended this, nor would his first readers have read it this way.

Now, when you read Galatians chapter one and two, when you look at the very beginning of the book, after his introduction, his typical epistolary introduction where he identifies himself and his readers, what's going on in the first two chapters? Because Paul, although I doubt that we should talk about this as a narratio, Paul does tell us much about his early life in Judaism at the end of chapter one and into chapter two. And the question is, why does Paul do this? Paul talks a lot about his life as a Jew before conversion, and we've already looked at this text briefly in relationship to Paul's conversion, where I challenge the assumption that we often think of Paul as someone who is becoming less and less satisfied with the law and becoming more and more disillusioned and feeling more and more guilty because he couldn't obey it. One of the texts that calls that into question is Galatians, because in Galatians one and two, Paul was completely happy with his life in Judaism.

And again, he was so intense and bent on preserving his ancestral religion that he was even, it says, he even was persecuting the church and putting Christians to death out of zeal for the law and for Judaism. Paul was a kind of a Pharisee of the zealot type if you remember the different Jewish movements that we talked about earlier on in this semester. So, Paul talks a lot about his life in Judaism and relates his conversion in chapters one and two of Galatians.

And the question is, why does Paul do that? Why does he spend nearly two chapters rehearsing the fact that he was a good Jew and a devout Jew and he kept the law and he did this and that, but then Jesus Christ confronted him on the road to Damascus and Paul was converted to Christianity and called and appointed at that time to be an apostle to the Gentiles as well. Why does Paul have to relate all that? Because remember what he's doing is he's concerned that some of these Gentile readers in Galatia, the southern part of the province of Galatia, in some of these cities that he's planted churches in, according to Acts, he's concerned now that some of them are being led astray by these Judaizers that are saying that now you have to submit to the Mosaic law as well. Why then does Paul rehearse something of his life story very briefly, his life as a Jew and his conversion? Well, there's a couple things going on, but first of all, before we look at to ask why he did that in your notes, I've also raised the question of what's going on in the first four verses of chapter one. Because actually, in the first four verses of chapter one, before Paul ever gets into the letter, he's still in the epistolary introduction.

Before he ever gets into the heart of his letter, I'm convinced he's in actuality setting up his readers already getting them on his side and trying to win his case. Because he

starts by saying, that Paul, an apostle, was sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities. Now, that's interesting.

Paul doesn't talk like that explicitly. In some of his other letters in the introduction like this, he doesn't claim that he was only appointed by Jesus Christ, that his gospel doesn't come by any other human authority. So, what's he saying? We'll return to that in a moment.

He says, I'm an apostle not by human commission nor from human authorities but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead. And all the members of the family who are with me to the churches of Galatia. That would be the southern province of Galatia and some of the cities that Paul visited during his missionary journeys.

And he goes on and says, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, now listen to this, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age according to the will of God the Father. Now, what Paul has done is two things. Number one, the first part is the key to understanding chapters one and two where Paul says, I'm an apostle not by any human authority or by any human delegation, but by solely by the choice or commissioning of Jesus Christ.

That'll be important, we'll see in just a moment, to understand what's going on in chapters one and two. But then Paul goes on and says, Jesus Christ has rescued you from the present evil age. Now, why does he say that? Why is that important? If I can go back to this, if this circle represents the present evil age, notice if I'm correct that Paul has put the law within that, then by reminding his readers, you have already been rescued from the present evil age.

And notice the reference to the resurrection. It's through the resurrection of Christ that you have been delivered from the present evil age and this age has been inaugurated that Jesus calls it the kingdom in the gospels. Now, you belong to a new sphere with life, righteousness, and the Holy Spirit, but you've been rescued from the present evil age where later in Galatians, Paul is going to put the law in here.

So, what has Paul done? Already, he's beginning to build his case and get his readers aside. If they have already been delivered from the present evil age, like Paul says in chapter one, verse four, then the law must no longer have authority over them. It must no longer play a role in their lives.

Because again, later on in chapter three, Paul will put the law in this category. Again, not because the law is evil. Far from it.

Paul claims, no, the law is good. It expresses God's will. But the law as part of the Mosaic covenant, the binding law, the binding covenant of Moses, Paul is convinced, does not have the power, ultimately, to overcome sin and death.

And therefore, he places it under this, not because it's equal to these three and it's bad or evil. I want you to understand that. But it just, ultimately does not have the power to overcome this and to produce this.

So, Paul says, you've been delivered from the evil, the present evil age in chapter one, verse four. And later on, he'll put the law in this category. Therefore, if Paul can get them to agree with that in chapter one, verse four, then he should be able to get them to agree that the law no longer is a binding authority over their lives.

Now, we still have to ask the question, what role does the law play? Does Paul give it any role at all in the lives of Christians? And I'm convinced it does. But as far as this binding legislation as part of the Mosaic covenant, Paul is convinced that that is no longer in force. So already in chapter one, verses one through four, Paul is setting his readers up to accept what he's going to say later on.

But what's going on in chapters one and two with this rehearsal of his life within Judaism? Oops, sorry, we looked at that already. Galatians one and two. In chapter one, verses 13 and 14, Paul discusses his life before his conversion to Christianity.

This is where he describes himself like this. He says you have heard, you Galatian readers, you have heard no doubt of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and destroying it.

I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. So those two verses are kind of a summary of Paul's life in Judaism. And we'll come back and ask, why does he have to tell them that? The second thing though, is that in verses 15 through 17 then, Paul relates his conversion.

So, he says, however, when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might proclaim him, Jesus, among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any other human being. Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once to Arabia, and afterward I returned to Damascus. So, Paul makes it a point to tell us that at his conversion, he did not immediately go to Jerusalem.

Then the rest of chapter 1 and chapter 2 relate the events that took place right after Paul's conversion. Again, a summary of the main events that took place after Paul's conversion, in my opinion, including the Jerusalem Council that we read about back in Acts. Acts chapter 15.

Now the question is, what is Paul doing by giving this sketch of his life in Judaism and his conversion, and then a brief account of some of the things he did right after his conversion? It seems to me that what Paul is doing is this. This goes back to that first statement in chapter 1. Paul, an apostle, not by human decision, nor by human will, but by commission from the Lord Jesus Christ. Most likely, what had happened is that some of the Judaizers were actually calling into question Paul's apostolic credentials, and saying either that this guy isn't a true apostle, he's simply a self-appointed apostle or something like that, or if he is an apostle, he's kind of a renegade, he's actually not in line with the true Jerusalem apostles.

These important pillar figures like Peter, James, and John, these prominent apostles. Paul is a deviant, he's kind of a renegade, and he's really departed from the true gospel that the apostles, Peter, James, and John are teaching. So, now Paul must respond to that.

And what he's doing is demonstrating a couple of things. Number one, by giving us an account of before, during, and after his conversion, Paul is demonstrating that at no point did he ever receive his gospel from a mere human being. In fact, that's why he says, I didn't even have, after my conversion, I didn't even go to Jerusalem immediately.

So how could I have received this gospel from human beings? Or how could I have received this gospel and then distorted it? No, he says, I received it directly from Jesus Christ. On the way to Damascus, according to Acts, Acts chapter 9, God knocked him down on the road to Damascus when Paul was converted. Paul says that's when I received my gospel.

So, by rehearsing, and he says, there was nothing to prepare me for this gospel. I was a zealous Jew. I was actually trying to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.

So, there was nothing before, during, or after that prepared Paul for the gospel. It could only have come as a result of a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. That's how Paul is arguing.

However, Paul is arguing, Paul's kind of walking a tightrope, because he has to do two things in Galatians. Remember, he's addressing his Gentile readers that some Judaizers have come in. They're calling Paul's apostleship into question.

He's saying, he's not a true apostle. This gospel he preaches is just a perversion. So don't believe him.

And then trying to persuade Gentile Christians to submit to the law of Moses. Now, in response to that, Paul has to do two things in Galatians 1 and 2. He has to walk a

tightrope, because, on the one hand, he has to demonstrate, as I just said, he has to demonstrate that his gospel did not depend on any other human authority. That this is not something he received from someone else.

It's not something he devised himself. It came from a direct revelation of Jesus Christ. So, he has to argue that he is independent from anybody else.

On the other hand, Paul also has to be careful to demonstrate that his gospel is not at odds with the Jerusalem apostles, that they did accept it and endorse it. So, do you see how careful he has to be? On the one hand, he has to demonstrate his independence, that this gospel came to him independent of any human authority. It came to him from Jesus Christ.

However, he still has to show his dependence, not dependence, but the fact that his gospel was accepted and recognized and affirmed by the Jerusalem apostles. So, he has to walk, steer a course, between showing his independence of, but also his dependence on, the Jerusalem apostles. So that his readers will be convinced that this gospel that Paul preached to them, when he came, according to Acts, when he visited these cities, established a church, this gospel that Paul preaches, that one can be saved, one can be justified, solely by grace, apart from submitting, and faith in Jesus Christ, apart from submitting to the law of Moses, that gospel is not some perversion or some deviant gospel that Paul has made up or perverted.

It is nothing less than the gospel that he has received from Jesus Christ, and he says, by the way, that these important apostles, Peter, James, and John, they accepted and affirmed and agreed that this was a valid gospel. Therefore, why do his readers need to give in to these Judaizers? There's no need to call into question this gospel that they have already received through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from submitting to the law of Moses. Now, in thinking of that question, why was Paul convinced? And here, what we're going to talk about next, just very briefly, you'll recognize the overlap with the book of Romans, and that is, Paul is convinced.

This is one of the books where Paul comes out and makes the bold statement that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the law. And you'll find that in chapter 2, starting with verse 16. He says, yet we know, this is Galatians 2.16, yet we know that a person is justified not by works of the law.

And by the way, when Paul uses the word law, whether it's just law or works of the law, most of the time in his letters he means the law of Moses. So, he says, we're justified not by the works of the law of Moses, not by adherence to and being bound to the law of Moses, but through faith in Jesus Christ. And there's actually a long debate over that phrase, faith in Jesus Christ, exactly what that means, that I'm not going to go into, but I'm convinced this is the way to take it, faith in Jesus Christ.

So, one is not justified, one is not vindicated or declared righteous before God based on obedience to the law of Moses, but solely based on faith in Jesus Christ, is Paul's argument. Now again, the question is, why is that the case? What did Paul think of the law? Why was he convinced that justification could not come by works of the law? We saw with Romans that traditionally, and traditionally it was Martin Luther that proposed that by works of the law, Paul meant by legalism, by legalistically trying to do enough good works that one could earn God's favor. And that's what Paul was reacting against.

So, Paul's saying, we know that we're not justified by trying to earn God's favor by doing enough good works that God will somehow be pleased with us, but instead, we're justified by giving that up and simply trusting in Jesus Christ. That's how Martin Luther understood it. He took the works of the law as legalistically trying to do good works to earn God's favor and his blessing and to secure and earn salvation.

And that's what Paul speaks out against. However, we saw that more recently, an approach called the new perspective or the new look, I've called it in your textbook. So again, Paul has undergone an extreme makeover, so to speak, the way we understand and read Paul and his approach to the law has changed.

We saw that people like Sanders and James Dunn, and if any of you are familiar with the writing of N.T. Wright, you've seen some of N.T. Wright's, W-R-I-G-H-T, N.T. Wright's writing, is they would suggest that Paul was not arguing against legalism, but nationalism or exclusivism. That is, works of the law is kind of a code for living life as a Jew. So, what was wrong, what Paul was reacting against, is the Judaizers were not promoting legalism, trying to earn God's favor, they were too closely restricting salvation to living life as a Jew.

They were narrowing, that to belong to the people of God meant that ethnically one had to identify with the Jews by submitting to the law of Moses to demonstrate that. And what Paul is trying to do is say, no, no, no, salvation is not just the property of Jews, it now belongs to anyone through faith in Jesus Christ. So, the new look suggests the main issue is who are the true people of God? Is it only those who identify with Israel and with the Jews via the law, or can Gentiles become God's people simply by faith and without living life as a Jew? And that's what Paul wants to argue, yes, Gentiles without having to live life under Judaism can be God's people as well.

Now the same question arises in Galatians then, is what then has Paul so upset? What is he arguing against? What is his issue with the law? Why does he say that no one can be justified by the works of the law? Is it because of legalism, because we can't earn God's favor, or is it because of exclusivism and nationalism, that it's truly restrictive, it restricts salvation too much, and it restricts belonging to God's people too much to being a Jew and living life under Judaism. It seems to me, again maybe

I'm just one to ride the fence too much, but it seems to me that there's really no reason to draw such a sharp distinction between these two approaches. On the one hand, I think Martin Luther was close to the truth when he suggested that Paul did think that part of the problem was in submitting to the law of Moses, one was then relying on one's ability to keep the law.

And one was relying on one's ability to identify with Judaism and one's ability to keep the law perfectly. So, in chapter 3 and verse 10, the text that I've mentioned here, so again, why can no one be justified by keeping the law? In chapter 3 verse 10, Paul says, For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law, that is the law of Moses. So, he is saying, I think Martin Luther did have a point, that Paul is saying, if you want to be justified based on the law, it demands perfect observance.

But Paul says, the law, though, said that cursed is anyone who does not abide by it or obey everything written in it. And the problem is, therefore, since the readers cannot do so, no one can keep the law to the extent necessary to earn God's favor. And that was one of Martin Luther's points.

And I think that's reflected in Paul's statement. Everyone who wants to pursue justification by law is to realize that you're cursed if you don't keep it completely. And I think the assumption is, that because of human sinfulness, no one can do so.

So that was Martin Luther, and I think that's still a valid reading of what Paul is saying. So that's one of the reasons. Again, there may be more than one.

I'm going to suggest there is. But one of the reasons Paul thought that the law could not be justified is because no one could keep it perfectly. The law carried with it a curse for failure to keep it, to obey it in its entirety.

However, Paul is also convinced, and this is where the new look or the new perspective is important, Paul is also convinced that the law was only meant to function temporarily until the coming of Jesus Christ. And by law, I don't just mean the list of rules and regulations. I mean the law as belonging to the entire Mosaic Covenant.

The entire covenant that God made with Israel under Moses. That whole period, along with the law, was only meant to be temporary, according to Paul, until the coming of Christ. So, for those two reasons, Paul says, tells his readers, and basically pleads with them, why would you want to submit to the law of Moses? Because no one can keep it perfectly.

There's a curse for anyone who does not live, abide in it. And second, the law was only meant to be temporary until Christ came. Now that Christ has come, the primary function of the law as part of the Mosaic Covenant has ceased.

It's passed away. So why do the readers want to give in to these Judaizers and submit to the law of Moses? Now please hear me. Paul's not saying, therefore, we're free from any law.

Some people have misread Galatians to mean, therefore, I'm free in Christ to do whatever I want. That's not Paul's point. What he's saying is, they are free from the Mosaic legislation, as a binding body of commands and rules as part of the covenant God made with Moses.

That has now been eclipsed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the new covenant that they now experience through him. Now, in chapters 3 and 4, this second point leads me to the next observation in your notes, and that is the importance of chapters 3 and 4. In chapters 3 and 4, I don't remember if I have a... I do have a slide on this. In chapters 3 and 4, Paul is going to mount a series of arguments.

I'm still not convinced this is the probatio of a Greco-Roman speech, but nonetheless, Paul is trying to argue and persuade his readers by marshaling a series of evidence or arguments. And one of them, the first one, is found in chapters 3, 1 through 5. And here, Paul argues from the experience of the Galatians. He's telling the Galatians... Again, remember, the Galatians are being tempted to submit to the law of Moses.

The Judaizers have told them that their faith in Christ, though necessary, must be supplemented by submitting to the law of Moses. And now Paul wants to argue against that. In chapter 3, verses 1 through 5, notice how he begins, Not a good way to get them on your side, but again, remember, Paul is very shocked and upset and exasperated at the Galatians' response.

He says, Who has bewitched you? It was before your very eyes that Christ Jesus was publicly exhibited as crucified. The only thing I want to learn from you is this. And now Paul's going to ask them some questions to get them to draw the appropriate conclusions and to argue his case.

Here's the first question. Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Now let me ask you, why does Paul appeal to the Spirit? Here I take it to mean the Holy Spirit. If your English translations have Spirit capitalized, that's probably correct.

Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit. But what does this have to do with his argument? What does this have to do with proving that the Galatians don't need to submit to the law of Moses? He says I want to ask you one thing. Did you receive the Holy Spirit

by observing the law, doing the works of the law, or by believing what you heard, that is, trusting in Jesus Christ and the gospel that Paul preached? Why does Paul say that? How does that help his case? Again, he's arguing from their experience and saying, Did you receive the Holy Spirit by observing the law or by believing in the message that I preached to you, the gospel-centered around faith in Jesus Christ? Why does Paul raise this question? I mean, what's that going to do? In other words, why does he invoke the Spirit? They're receiving the Holy Spirit, which probably reflects some of the things we saw in Acts, like Acts chapter 2, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on believers.

Why does Paul appeal to the Spirit? I mean, that seems kind of strange, kind of subjective, did you receive the Spirit? Is he saying, did you get these warm, fuzzy feelings when you were saved and that's proof that you're God's people so you don't need to keep the law? Why is he appealing to the Holy Spirit? What did we say was the background? In the New Testament, especially in Paul, we find Paul talking about the Holy Spirit. What's the background for that? Where does he get that idea of the fact that we now have the Holy Spirit? Where did Paul get that? Very good. From Jesus, who talked about sending and pouring out the Holy Spirit.

And we could even push back further and say Jesus got it from the Old Testament. If you remember, the Old Testament prophets promised a time when God would establish a new covenant that, and again, it was based on the new covenant that we become God's people. The fact that we're God's children and God's people is based on the promise of a new covenant.

So, when Jesus talked about the fact that he would pour out his Spirit and he would send his Spirit in Acts, and you read about that in John, that goes back to the Old Testament. Jesus is basically promising to establish the new covenant. So now what's Paul saying? He's asking them, basically, did you receive the new covenant Holy Spirit as proof that you are God's people, by keeping the law or not? And the assumption is, he's assuming the believers did receive the Holy Spirit, probably along the same lines as Acts chapter 2. And maybe Paul's assuming that speaking in tongues and some of these other miraculous things were proof of that.

But again, Paul's arguing, again if I can paraphrase, he's saying, did you receive the Holy Spirit as proof, according to the Old Testament promise of a new covenant, the Holy Spirit would be proof that they were God's people. Now he's saying, on what basis did you receive the Holy Spirit? On what basis did you receive this new covenant Spirit that proves you are truly God's people? Did you receive it by obeying the law, or did you receive it simply by believing? And of course, the answer is, well we received it when Paul preached the gospel and when we believed in it. So, Paul's conclusion would be, then why do you think you need to add the law? You already have the sign that you are God's people, that is the new covenant Holy Spirit, promised in Ezekiel and Jeremiah and the Old Testament, and that we saw poured

out in Acts 2. So, they already have the true sign that they are God's new covenant people, why do they need to add the Old Testament law? So that's his first argument, his argument from experience.

In fact, just to read the other questions, he says, Are you so foolish, having started in the Spirit, are you now going to end with the flesh? Did you experience so much for nothing, if it was really nothing? So again, Paul appeals to their experience. The fact that they have experienced and received the new covenant Holy Spirit, promised in the Old Testament, is a sign that they were truly God's people, if they received that, and they did, based solely on faith, then what can the Old Testament law add to that? They already possess the true sign that the new age has been inaugurated, the kingdom has been inaugurated, and the new covenant, and that they are God's people. The second thing Paul argues for is Paul argues from the Old Testament, in chapter 3. And the way Paul does this is Paul argues historically, to show that the law of Moses only played a temporary role.

In other words, Paul basically is going to argue like this, he's going to say, the promises made to Abraham. If you go back, what Paul does is, that he basically understands all the promises of salvation as linked to Abraham. Remember what God promised Abraham back in Genesis 12? He said, I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

So, basically, salvation, or justification, to use some of the language Paul uses, receiving the Holy Spirit, those are all tied to Abraham. And the question, the question is, how do we receive the promises made to Abraham? Now, most, in the first century, these Judaizers would have said, well, it's through the Mosaic law. It's by observing the law of Moses, that one receives the promises of Abraham.

Of a great nation, of blessings, of salvation, justification, receiving the Holy Spirit, those are all the promises of Abraham, and you participate in those by observing the Mosaic law. What Paul does is say, no, no, no, if you read the Old Testament, Paul's scheme would look more like this, he says, the Mosaic law actually only played a temporary role until the promises of Abraham could be fulfilled in Christ. So, actually, I should probably draw an arrow from the promises of Abraham all the way to fulfillment in Christ, because Paul is convinced that the Mosaic law was not the primary way that the promises of Abraham and salvation were experienced by God's people.

It's only now through faith in Christ. So, the Mosaic law only played a temporary role. So, for example, listen to what he says.

For all those, let's see, I read that one. Brothers and sisters, I give you an example from daily life. Once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it.

Now that the promise is made to Abraham and to his offspring, it does not say, and to offsprings as to many, but it says, and to your offspring, which is Christ. Let's see. Then he says, listen to this.

Paul says, my point is this. The law, which came 430 years later, does not annul the covenant previously made by God, the covenant with Abraham. So, his point is, the Mosaic covenant does not overturn this or take precedent.

Instead, he's going to go on and say, that if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by the promise. But God granted it to Abraham through the promise. So, again, what Paul's trying to say through all this is the Mosaic law only played a temporary role until the coming of Jesus Christ.

Now that Jesus Christ has come, the main function of the law is set aside. Now, again, we still have to raise the question, how should Christians read the law? What should we do with it? Can we ignore it? Which I think the answer is no. But the question is, what are we to do with it? How do we read the law given to Moses? Again, when we're talking about law, we're not referring to any law.

We're referring to the law that was given to Moses as part of the covenant that God made with Moses. But do you see his point so far? Paul is saying, the Mosaic law came years after the promise was made to Abraham. And as he's going to go on and demonstrate, the law only played a temporary role until Christ could arrive, until Christ could bring the promise to Abraham to fulfillment.

The law of Moses didn't bring it to fulfillment. Jesus Christ did. The law only played a temporary role, and now that role is over.

But let me look at the third point, the argument from culture. Paul is going, to try to show that the Mosaic law is temporary, Paul is going to argue about a couple of things in their culture. And starting with verse 23.

Now, listen to the different metaphors Paul uses. Now, before faith came, and by faith, he'll use different words to refer to the coming of Christ, and trusting and having faith in Christ. Sometimes he'll just refer to promise.

Sometimes he'll refer to Christ. Sometimes he'll refer to faith. But they're all ways of referring to the same thing.

The coming of Christ, and trusting in Him for justification and salvation. So, he says, now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. So, notice the first metaphor Paul uses is of a prison or a prison guard.

He says the law functioned kind of to lock God's people up. It functioned like a prison. He's not saying that Israel was bad and they needed punished or anything like that.

The whole point is that the law had a very restrictive purpose. It functioned a very specific way for a limited period of time. Much like a jail or a prison, it functioned to lock and guard God's people.

Until Jesus Christ came and brought the promised salvation made to Abraham. So the first metaphor is a prison guard, the imagery of a prison or locking someone up. But then he says, in verse 24, the law was also our disciplinarian until Christ came that we might be justified.

That imagery of a disciplinarian draws on a very important image in the first century. Especially for wealthier people, if you had a child, usually a son, usually what you did is you hired a disciplinarian that was basically responsible for taking care and raising that child. The imagery here is not so much of a teacher that teaches you about or leads you to, it's more of a disciplinarian or a babysitter that keeps you out of trouble.

In other words, you were placed under this disciplinarian until you reached adulthood. Until you reached a certain age, then that disciplinarian was no longer needed. So what Paul is doing in using this imagery is saying the law was like a disciplinarian in the same way that a disciplinarian functions in the life of a child for a limited period of time until they reach maturity and adulthood.

So the law played a temporary role until the coming of Jesus Christ, until he came to bring fulfillment. So, Paul uses the imagery of a jailer, he uses the imagery of a disciplinarian. Both of those are taken out of the culture and the lives of the first-century Christians.

Paul uses all this, again he's mounting his case, he's drawing on all these images and on the Old Testament itself to demonstrate that the law only played a temporary role. It played an important role, but it was only temporary until Jesus Christ arrived. And once Jesus Christ came to bring fulfillment and to bring the promised salvation to Abraham, the Mosaic Law no longer plays its dominant role.

So why would the readers want to submit to it? Again, why would the readers be so quick to give in to these Judaizers who are telling them that faith in Jesus isn't enough, but you have to submit to the Mosaic Law as well? Paul says, no, no, don't you remember that you received the Holy Spirit, the New Covenant Spirit, as a sign that you're truly God's people, apart from ever obeying the law? And he says, have you not looked at the Old Testament? Have you not considered some of your own cultural images of a jailer and a disciplinarian? All of that should demonstrate to

them that the Mosaic Law played a temporary role in God's outworking of His salvation for His people. Now that that role is over, there's no need for the Galatian Christians to submit to the law. Why would they want to, in a sense, go backward and submit to the law of Moses? Now, that still raises the question that many may have wondered as well.

If they're not to submit to the law of Moses, one question we'll ask is, what role does the law of Moses play? But second, does that mean Christians are free from any obligation or responsibility or any law whatsoever? And Paul will, in a sense, respond to those questions in the remaining sections of Galatians. So, any questions so far about what's... I mean, hopefully, you see that Paul, he's trying to mount a persuasive case to get his readers not to give in to these Judaizers. He's not just giving us a theology of the law or the Holy Spirit.

He's trying to argue with his readers and persuade them not to give in to the Judaizers.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in New Testament History and Literature lecture 19 on the book of Galatians.