

# Easy As 1-2-3



## Galatians Chapter 3

It's as Easy As 1-2-3. Select where you would like to begin and enjoy!

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## Overall Understanding

### Galatians 3<sup>1</sup>

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? <sup>2</sup>This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? <sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? <sup>4</sup>Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

*Paul is using strong language. "Foolish" means unthinking (rather than unintelligent).*

*"The term ἀνόητος portrays more than mere intellectual dullness; it denotes a **culpable** failure to perceive spiritual reality that has already been made clear. The word is frequently paired with ideas of stubbornness, self-reliance, or slowness of heart, highlighting the moral dimension behind the lack of understanding."<sup>2</sup>*

*Paul probably knew who had bewitched them and might have been asking them to wake up and understand who is lying to them.*

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> Topical Lexicon, Biblehub.com

*“Bewitched” is only used once in the New Testament (here), making its emphasis even greater. The Galatians had previously clearly “seen” Christ portrayed as crucified for them, but now their thinking had become twisted. Remember the last verse before this one, Paul had said, “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through law, then Christ died in vain.” This is what the beliefs of the Galatians implied: that Jesus’ death was in vain.*

*Did they receive the Spirit (when they were saved) by obeying the law or by believing in Jesus? Then he asks them again if they are really this foolish (unthinking, illogical).*

*The core error is then perfectly stated:*

**Having begun in the Spirit,  
are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**

*Most Christians understand that we are saved by grace through faith, but afterwards, we are often bewitched into believing that we are made perfect by following the law and other religious expectations. THIS IS VERY COMMON. We need to consider if we ourselves see only salvation as through grace by faith, but afterward it is up to us—what we do and abstain from doing that makes us right before God.*

*It’s easy to miss at first that “the flesh” is being paired with “the works of the law.” We often think of the flesh as doing something sinful, but here Paul equates the works of the law with the flesh.*

**Flesh, works, and law go hand in hand.** *This is especially evident in the book of Galatians.*

**Also observable is that Spirit, grace, and faith are used nearly interchangeably to contrast with flesh, works, and law.**

*What the Galatians had suffered was likely persecution for their faith in Jesus. Now, not only was His suffering “in vain” but so was theirs.*

*He knows they still don’t get it because they have become unthinking, so he goes on to explain.*

<sup>5</sup>Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— <sup>6</sup>just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for

righteousness.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.<sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify (make righteous) the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”<sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

*There was a time when David and I would have answered Paul's question incorrectly. We had been led to believe that miracles happened among us because we fasted, prayed, and lived holy lives. We believed miracles were a result of how spiritually someone was living. Paul is clearly saying that miracles happen by the hearing of faith.*

*This insults those who are working so diligently to see “a move of God,” but it is meant to set us free. We not only can't earn our salvation, nor be perfected by the flesh, but we also can't earn miracles. The life we now live is all by grace through faith.*

*Abraham was not under the law. It is his blessing we inherit, not that of the law. “All the nations” means Gentiles. Abraham was accounted as righteous because He believed God would be faithful to him. He calls Christians “**those who are of faith.**” Only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*

*This probably got their attention. To be a son of Abraham was not through keeping the laws that they were told they had to follow (circumcision and the law of Moses). It was through believing.*

<sup>10</sup>For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”<sup>11</sup> But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”<sup>12</sup> Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

*Paul informs them that to be under the law is to be under a curse if one does not obey all of it.*

*He repeats that no one is made righteous by obeying the law. The just (the righteous) LIVE BY FAITH.*

*The law is not of faith but by works.*

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

*If you don't want to be under the curse of the law, turn to Christ. He became a curse for us by hanging on the tree. When He died, everything changed. He fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law. Those who believe in Him are NOT UNDER ANY CURSE. We are BLESSED with believing Abraham. We receive salvation, are made perfect, and miracles happen by FAITH.*

<sup>15</sup> Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. <sup>16</sup> Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

*Our promise is not of the law but of Abraham, and therefore by faith because Abraham was not under the law which came 430 years later. The law did not annul the promises made to Abraham—it was given to him because He believed God, not because he kept the law.*

<sup>19</sup> What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. <sup>20</sup> Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

*Paul, anticipating that many would get defensive of the law, gives the true purpose of the law: to keep the sinning Jews until Jesus would come. The promise was made to Abraham's Seed—Jesus. But the Law was mediated through angels and Moses.*

*Verse 20 is basically saying that the law required two parties to agree: God and man. The promise was one-sided. Remember that God put Abraham into a deep sleep when He sealed the covenant with him. It was a covenant between Himself. Our covenant is also one-sided. Jesus paid the price. We receive the benefits by faith,*

*not by “doing our part” and not by promising to keep commandments.*

<sup>21</sup>Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

*The law is not against the promises of God. If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have been by the law (but it couldn't give life, so righteousness is not by the law.)*

#### **Romans 8:3-4**

*For what the law **could not do** in that it was **weak** through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> that **the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh (the law) but according to the Spirit.***

<sup>22</sup>But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

*When we understand what Paul has written thus far, we can clearly see what is meant in his letter to the Romans. Read this slowly, and you will see it. This is the message Paul preached: justification (righteousness) by faith and not by keeping the law.*

#### **Romans 3:19-26**

*Now we know that whatever the law says, it says **to those who are under the law**, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified (made righteous) in His sight**, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God **apart from the law** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, **through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all (“all” in context is referring to both Jew and Gentile) and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> **being justified (made righteous) freely by His**

***grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,***  
<sup>25</sup> *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood,*  
*through **faith**, to demonstrate His righteousness, because*  
*in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were*  
*previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present*  
*time His righteousness, **that He might be just and the***  
***justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

*Oh, glory to God. Both Jew and Gentile are made righteous by grace through faith and NOT through keeping the law. This includes any religious law for righteousness.*

<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to *bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

*Now Paul beautifully sums it up. Before we came to faith in Jesus, we were protected by the law until faith came. The law was our tutor (the one leading us to Jesus) to bring us to Christ so that we could be justified by faith, not the law. Hear this:*

***BUT AFTER FAITH HAS COME, WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER A TUTOR. WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER THE LAW.*** *The law did its job. It led us to Christ. Now that we are in Christ, we don't need the law to lead us.*

***Important to Note:*** *When Paul speaks of the law, he means all of the law. Only Christians divide the law into three parts: ceremonial, civil, and moral. Galatians loses nearly all of its impact if we remove the moral law from what Paul is saying. We are not now led by the moral law.*

*For the Jews, the law was one entity, all of which had to be kept perfectly. So, Paul is not just telling them they are only free from ceremonial and civil laws as is COMMONLY TAUGHT. He is declaring all free from all of the law. This includes the Ten Commandments. Christians are not led by the tutor of the law. We are led by the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah.*

*"The division of the law into moral, civil, and ceremonial is a Christian, not a Jewish, idea. Ancient Jews did not divide the law in this way; for them the law was a unified whole."  
– E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism*

*We are free from the whole law. When Paul writes “law,” that is what he means—the whole law which he called “the ministry of death” and the “ministry of condemnation.”*

**26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

*“All” refers not only to Jew and Gentile, but includes other classes as he states in verse 8.*

*We are sons of God by faith, not by working our way up the supposed ladder of sonship. The word for son is not a child, but a mature, recognized, and legally standing son. Sonship is also, therefore, not earned by works, but received by faith.*

**27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

*Paul is not speaking of water baptism, but of our baptism into the body of Christ. After all he just said, he would not say that the act of going underwater would save us. We are baptized into Christ when we believe. We are baptized in water to declare that we have died and risen in Him.*

*Putting on Christ gives the image of putting on a robe. We take on His robe of righteousness.*

**28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

*Now we see that “all” includes all. Jews and Gentiles are religious classes. Slaves and the free are social classes. Male and female are gender classes. Don't miss the significance. Jews despised the Gentiles and saw them as unclean. His death put them on an equal footing. The free and rich despised the poor and enslaved. Jesus makes no distinction. Men generally viewed women as less. Jesus puts them on the same level.*

*Christianity is often presented as an oppressive religion, especially for women. But this is completely untrue. Christianity is a liberating force for all. Anyone who uses the religion of Christianity to justify slavery or oppression of women does not represent Jesus.*

*We all stood guilty before God, but we are all made righteous before God in the same way—by grace through faith.*

*So think about this: What make you righteous before God? Is it because you are doing and abstaining? If you could be made righteous that, Jesus did not need to die. May our lives never reflect that.*

*For Your Edification:*

*[Creative Video: Galatians 3:21-25](#)*

## *Topics Coming Up in Galatians Chapter Four*

*Paul speaks of “the fullness of time” while elaborating on our sonship.*

*He calls upon the love they once had for him to help them see how much they had changed in their attitude toward him.*

*He tries to make them see the false motivations of their teachers.*

*He argues again for only one covenant, the new covenant.*