

# Galatians 3

# Review of Galatians 2

- Paul was relating to the Galatians the details of his calling to include his going from Antioch with Barnabas and Titus to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, James and John to validate his calling
- This led to the Council of Jerusalem
- Next, Paul presents the incident with Peter at Antioch where he challenged Peter for his action of removing himself from eating with the Gentile Christians when some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem arrived at Antioch

# Review of Galatians 2 (Cont)

Paul points out how he and Peter had agreed on the difficulty it was for them as Jews to live the Law of Moses and how unfair it was for them to impose all of that on the Gentile converts

Next, Paul begins, using much of his Baptismal theology, to explain his teaching on justification through faith in Christ vs in the works of the Law

# Justification through faith in Christ

- Paul expresses his doctrine regarding **grace and salvation** in terms of “justification by faith” and not by “works of the law”
- This is the same doctrine that Jesus used in rebuking the Pharisee who boasted before God of his good works in contrast to the humble publican who only prayed for God’s mercy (Lk 18:9-14)
- To be justified means being made righteous, just, holy and acceptable before God
- As Catholics we understand this as the change from the “state of sin” to the “state of grace”

# Justification through faith in Christ (Cont)

- When we are in the state of “sin”, we are alienated from God and nothing we can do ourselves via good deeds or works can earn or merit justification
- The reception of grace and justification is always a free and completely unmerited gift (grace in Greek means “favor” or “gift”)
- By “faith” Paul does mean any kind of belief (St James points out that even the demons have a certain kind of faith or belief which certainly does not bring them the grace of God)

# Justification through faith in Christ (Cont)

- Many scripture passages explain that the kind of faith we need for justification is a repentant faith
- Sorrow for sins and a sincere desire to change are required
- This repentant faith which leads to justification includes hope in God's mercy and it is only possible when the sinner receives actual grace which enables him to turn in contrition towards God's mercy
- St Paul's justification by faith theology must not be taken without the other Biblical passages that speak of the sacramental aspect of justification, to include Baptism and Penance which are "works" of God
- This faith can be seen as the beginning of human salvation

# Justification through faith in Christ (Cont)

- The New Testament also teaches that after we are freely forgiven and justified by faith and grace, one must then persevere in good works if we are to retain that grace and attain final salvation
- “Faith alone” is not sufficient in this latter stage of our spiritual journey
- Phil 2:12-13 “ So then, my dear friend,...work for your salvation ‘in fear and trembling.’ It is God, for his own living purpose, who puts both the will and action into you.”

# Justification through faith in Christ (Cont)

- Many of the Protestant errors are based on a:
  - Longing to feel completely free from the fear of Hell, and to know with total certainty that we are “saved” with no possibility of eternal loss
  - Desire for a doctrine which would make our final entry into Heaven completely independent of any actions, decisions, deeds, or works, of our own



# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:1-2** *“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by **works of the law**, or by hearing with faith?”*
  - None of these guys were present at the crucifixion of Jesus
  - He was talking about the preaching of the Gospel
  - The problem here is that Paul was traveling through Galatia and found people in his churches wearing the *yamaka* and doing everything Jewish – circumcision, Kosher, Jewish calendar

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Paul asked why were they doing these things
- They replied that some guys from Jerusalem told them they had to do these things to be a Christian
- Further, since Paul did not know what they were talking about, he asks:
  - How did they received the spirit of God?
  - Was it when he came preaching the gospel or after they circumcised their sons?
  - Did they start speaking in tongues before or after they began to wear the yamaka?

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Paul reminds them that the “works of God” came among them when they received the “Spirit of God” at Baptism

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:3-5** *Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" Did you experience so many things in vain?- if it really is in vain. Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*
  - Paul, rhetorically asked them why they were worrying about circumcision, or what they could or could not eat?

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:6** “*Thus Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’”*
  - Here Paul introduced his concerns related to circumcision and Kosher which he will greatly expand on the **Letter to the Romans**
    - In the Church of Rome this issue was divided between Gentiles and Jewish Christians
    - In the Churches of Galatia it was divided between Paul’s Gentile converts and those who were being confused by the Judaizers
  - In both letters (Galatians and Romans) Paul will return to the conversion of Abraham
    - Abraham believed and was deemed righteous by God in **Gen 15**
    - Abraham was given the covenant and circumcised in **Gen 17**

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Paul was being very subtle in his argument concerning Abraham's conversion by pointing out that he was **circumcised after** he was **justified**
- Thus, Paul is establishing that circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's justification!

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:7-8** *“So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’*
  - The “blessing of the nations” is the third and final promise God made to Abraham (**Gn 12**)
    - Land
    - People
    - Blessing of the nations
  - We know that this final promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ

# The Call of Abraham

## Gn 12:1-9\* (Cont)

- God, for the first time, give Abram His three blessings (Covenants) (Gn 12:1-9)
  - Land (Gn 15:1-2)
    - Promised Land
  - Royal dynasty (Gn 17:1-11)
    - Name Changed to Abraham
    - Circumcision is sign of new covenant
  - Blessing of the nations (Gn 22:1-19)
    - Bring nations dispersed at Babel back to God
- Blessings and curses are the language of covenant
- These offer a resolution to the problem of sin



# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:9-11** *“So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; **for it is written**, ‘Curse be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.’” (Du 27)* Paul was telling the Galatians that if they did not keep all of the Commandments they would be under the wrath of God
  - Obviously, they were not keeping all 613 laws and were merely playing around with the Law (Torah)

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Paul warned them that they were playing with something that was very dangerous
- He asked them if they thought that by doing these things they would be “justified” before God?
- He told them that if they thought that these actions would cause their “justification” then they were in big trouble (more in **Gal 5**)

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:11** *“Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law; for ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’”*
  - Paul was presenting a reinterpretation or expansion of the prophecy of Habakkuk who said *“but the righteous shall live by his faith”*
  - *Paul* asked how could one can be righteous without the Temple (which at this time had been destroyed),
  - He then pointed out that Habakkuk had told the people that they would “keep the Law” (even without the Temple)

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:12-13** *“Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law; for ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live’; but the law does not rest on faith, for ‘He who does them shall live by them.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree’-” (Deut 21:23)*
  - This led to a false understanding of Paul’s teaching known as the **“Replacement Theology”**

# The Replacement Soteriology

# The Replacement Soteriology

- St. Anselm (1033- 1109A.D.) developed the following theology:
  - Man is under the wrath of God, who was going to nail him with a lightening bolt
  - Mankind is almost always “dead”
  - God is eternally angry with us and since we are infinite beings there is no way we could stand the wrath of God and come out alive
  - So we are to be annihilated
  - But Jesus, who is immortal, eternal and can take the wrath of God for us, jumps in front of God’s lightening bolt

# The Replacement Soteriology (Cont)

- Luther (1483-1546 A.D.) took this and said
  - We men are a pile of dung
  - But Jesus comes back to life for us and covers us ( a dung heap) with the snow of his glory
- Sebastian suggested that this would be cosmic child abuse!
- Nowhere can one find this in the Pauline epistles
- Instead we will find all sorts of beautiful metaphors about how the death of Christ and His resurrection will save each one of us

# The Replacement Soteriology (Cont)

- In some of these metaphors Jesus will be compared to the:
  - Scapegoat of **Lv 16**
  - Accursed man who was hanged on a tree in **Du 21**
- Paul is talking about the “cosmic lover”!
- This is not about an angry God, but a loving Father who has been trying to save mankind ever since Adam and Eve were forced out of the Garden of Eden because they:
  - Walked away from the source of life
  - Died by choosing to disobey God



# The Replacement Soteriology (Cont)

- God did not want man to remain in the Garden for eternity eating from the tree of life for while unrepentant of their sins, spiritually dead but physically alive (this is called Hell)
- So God cast man from the garden because He loved him
- Once He restores man to life spiritually, he will bring him back to life physically in the Second Coming of Christ
- Then He will walk us back again into the Garden of Eden (This is based on the Book of Revelation)
- Thus God (Jesus) came the first time to bring us baptism

# The Replacement Soteriology (Cont)

- Paul says that through baptism we died with Christ spiritually and were raised to the newness of life
- Death was conquered
- Through his death, Christ trampled death
- Jesus gives life to those in the tombs
- When Jesus comes the second time we will be resurrected in a new body
- At the next coming we will be physically resurrected
- More of this will be discussed in **Romans**

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:14-16** “- that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. To give a human example, brethren: no one annuls even a man’s will, or adds to it, once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings’ referring to many; but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ which is Christ.”
  - This is from **Gn 12** where it says “and through your **seed (singular)** all the nations shall be blessed”

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Paul sees everything in the Old Testament to be Christo-centric
- In the Old Testament context the seed of Abraham is the descendency of Abraham and through that descendency we reached Jesus
- It is also interesting that as it speaks specifically of Christ himself who is the one descendent through which all the nations shall be blessed, it is through the baptizing of all nations in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit that this will come about

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:17-18** *“This is what I mean: **the law which came four hundred and thirty years afterwards, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promised void. For if the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by promise; but God gives it to Abraham by a promise.**”*
  - God made a promise (Covenant) with Abraham (**Gn 12**)
  - He then said that Abraham was justified (**Gn 15**)
  - But the Law (Torah) came to Moses some 500 years later
  - Paul is saying that one cannot make void the promises that came before

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:19-22** *“Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions,...Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”*
  - Paul is quoting from both the Law and from the Psalms
  - Here (and in Romans), Paul was saying that the Law (Torah) was the light for their feet of the Jews
  - And as the Psalmist says the Law was a lamp for their feet (**Ps 119:105**)
  - Paul saw the Jews groping in the darkness causing God to send them the Law (Torah)

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- But even with the Law they could stumble and wander off of the path (Golden Calf event)
- Yet it was the Law that helped them from committing transgressions

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:23- 26** *“Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; we have the eternal light inside of us who is guiding us for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”*
  - Paul was asking how one could get into the body of Jesus Christ?
  - How did one become a member of Christ’s body



# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- “Son of God” was a Semitic idiom meaning to be a follower of God
- A disciple or one in perfect harmony with Him
- That was why Jesus asked the Pharisees if he cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom did they cast them out
- Paul was telling them that in Jesus Christ all are sons of God which happens through “faith”

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:27** *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*
  - Paul was telling the Galatians that those who were baptized in Christ had, in fact, put on Christ
  - For lack of a better term, this is Paul’s “theology of the body”
  - In **Ephesians 5** Paul will say that the Church is the Body of Christ
  - In **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12** he will again say that each of us becomes a part of His body just as an arm or a leg is an equal part of the body

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- Further, since Jesus is the only mediator between man and God we are united with God through baptism
- Christ is literally the “salvation of man”
- If one is in Christ, he is saved and united to Him

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:28** *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, (circumcised nor uncircumcised) there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
- Paul is saying that none of the diverse groups exist since they all died when they were baptized in Christ
  - The old spiritual man died and a new spiritual man lives with Christ inside of him
  - Now the spirit of God is within him

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- We must be a bit careful with Paul's teaching to ensure we do not attribute Gnosticism to him
  - The spirit is good while the flesh is evil
  - Salvation was freeing the spirit from the body
- **But that is not Christian spirituality**
  - Paul said that coming out of the Baptismal font one is risen as a new man
    - And now you must walk according to the spirit and not according to the flesh
    - If one Reverts to his old ways according to the flesh, he will die

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- This is hard to understand because the physical man is still there but now he must walk according to the new man of the spirit
- When Christ comes back the second time he will then raise their bodies from the dead just as he raised their spirits at baptism
- Then one will be restored in Christ and walk with him
- Remember whether Jew or Gentile those who were baptized are all dead and are all new creations

# Galatians 3 (Cont)

- **Gal 3:29** *“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, (singular) heirs according to the promise.”*
  - Paul is saying that if one has been baptized in Christ he has been justified through him and are in communion with the Father
- This will continue in **Gal 4**