

Sermon follow-up

Galatians 3:1-14

The Promise to Abraham and the Gift of the Spirit

The text we looked at Sunday was quite complicated. My sermon was at best a thumbnail sketch of the overall contours of the argument Paul develops. Rather than try to trace out the shape of that argument once again, I figured I would point you to bibliography where you can get more detailed exegetical help. Here are some excellent sources:

Richard Hays' commentary on Galatians in the Anchor Bible series – This is probably the best overall treatment of the book; his handling of 3:1-14 is not flawless, but does a very good job of showing what Paul is up to. Hays is especially good at dismantling “law/gospel” readings that assume Paul's view of the law is entirely negative. Hays' commentary builds off his older work, *The Faith of Christ*.

N. T. Wright's essay on Gal. 3:10-14 in *Climax of the Covenant* – This article makes a compelling case for reading these verses in light of Israel's history rather than taking them in a more abstract, individualistic manner. Paul is dealing with the history of Israel as a corporate entity, and showing how Christ has fulfilled that history. Following Sylvia Keesmaat, Wright also demonstrates the prevalence of exile/exodus themes in text, serving as a kind of narrative substructure.

Don Garlington's commentary on Galatians, published by Wipf and Stock. Garlington does a fine job with the text, very much like Hays. Garlington's strength is in showing how Paul's use of Scripture, particularly Lev. 18:5 vis-à-vis Hab. 2:4, is faithful to the meaning of those passages in their original settings.

Don Garlington's essay on Gal. 3:10-14 in his collection *Exegetical Essays*. Garlington shows the kind of ironic “role reversal” going on in the text and demonstrates the fidelity to YHWH has been redirected from Torah to Christ. Since Christ has come, living by the law is actually a failure to keep the law because the law pointed eschatologically to Christ.

Ben Witherington's commentary, *Grace in Galatia* – Witherington is a fine biblical theologian and situates these verses within the larger biblical metanarrative.

There are certainly other sources worth looking at, including some classic commentaries like Calvin. But these give the best treatment because they seek to read Galatians 3-4 as a discussion of redemptive history. The text is not just about the fact that ongoing justification is by faith; it is also an argument that the cross of Christ has exhausted the accursed regime of the Torah and the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit has expanded the boundaries of the covenant people, redefined what it means to be the family of Abraham.