

Sunday, December 20, 2009—Grace Life School of Theology—Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 3:1-5

Review

- If you recall from the introduction to this course the book of Galatians can be divided into three basic sections.
 - Chapters 1-2—Personal Section
 - Chapters 3-4—Doctrinal Section
 - Chapters 5-6—Practical Section
- Today we begin Chapter Three we are entering into the second section of the book. However, one should not assume that just because we are entering into a new section of the book that everything Paul has said up to this point is not bearing on the doctrine he is going to layout in Chapter Three.
- Galatians 1:6-9, 2:21—Paul has already established that a man cannot be justified by the works of the law. No humane effort or performance could ever justify anyone.

Galatians 3:1

- *“O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you”*
- The Greek word translated *“foolish”* in this verse means unintelligent according to *Strong’s Concordance*. Consider the other ways this word is used in the King James Bible:
 - Romans 1:14—is calling someone unwise generally something that is going to be taken as a compliment?
 - Titus 3:1-3—before we got saved we all were considered to be foolish in the eyes of God.
- Paul is essentially calling the Galatians a bunch of immoral, ignorant people who can’t even discern right from wrong.
- The word *“bewitched”* means to malign, or fascinate by false representations. Our English word literally means to cast a spell over, or to magically charm someone.

- Who was it that came into the churches of Galatia and caused them to be fascinated and charmed by things that are not true? The Judaizers who told them that they needed to follow the law.
- *“that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”*
- Paul is not merely pronouncing them foolish but disobedient. Twice in Chapter 2 Paul states that the word of the law cannot justify the believer. So by going back and trying to follow the law the Galatians were being disobedient.
- The Galatians allowed themselves to be bewitched away from the truth. The specific truth is contained at the end of the verse. They had once known the joy of the crucifixion as the only payment for their sin.
- Paul had *“evidently set forth”* that is to say depicted and set forth openly the truth of the crucifixion of Christ. Consider the other places this phrase appears.
 - Romans 15:4—“were written aforetime”
 - Ephesians 3:3—“as I wrote afore in few words”
 - I Corinthians 15:3-5—Paul no doubt demonstrated to the Galatians that the facts of the gospel were according to the Scriptures.
- The bottom line is this, we cannot with our filthy rags improve upon what God says is perfect. If someone is following the law today they are in direct disobedience to the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 3:2

- *“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”*
- Paul says okay you guys in Galatia I have one question for you; “did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?”
- Paul goes right to the heart of the controversy. They are either led by the Spirit of God or they are under the bondage of the law but the Holy Spirit did not lead them into law keeping.

- Galatians 5:18—the Holy Spirit leads no man today to follow the law.
- Romans 10:17—the only way they could have received the Spirit is through the hearing of faith.

Galatians 3:3

- *“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”*
- Once again Paul asks them a question, “are you so foolish and unintelligent that you think you can be made perfect by the flesh?”
- Romans 8:7-8—if the works of the flesh cannot please God then how is law keeping going to perfect our faith?
- Essentially Paul is saying, are you so stupid, that you cannot see what you are doing to completely illogical? You began your Christian life under the guidance and by the power of the Holy Spirit; are you now so stupid as to think you can perfect yourselves through the power of your own flesh?
- Do you see why believing that you need to work to stay saved is so ridiculous? If the Galatians could not be saved to begin with by keeping the law how are the works of the law going to keep you saved?
- This raises the issue of sanctification. How does God want the believer to live his life as a member of the body of Christ? The answer is, in the same way he received it, by grace through faith.
- Ephesians 2:8-9—says that we are saved by grace through faith. Colossians 2:6—teaches that our walk is to be based upon the manner in which we received Christ, by grace through faith.
- Remember Galatians 2:20, Christ lives in us through the believer. Law keeping only kills the life of Christ being made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Galatians 3:4

- *“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain.”*
- Remember that Paul and Barnabas suffered greatly as they went on their journey through the region of Galatia.

- Acts 13:50, 14:19-22—no doubt those who choose to follow Paul’s gospel also suffered greatly for their initial decision.
- Paul’s point here is that if they had received the spirit by the works of the law then the persecution they originally endured for the sake of Paul’s gospel would have been in vain.
- Paul looks upon their current state as temporary. If this were not so he would not have bothered to correct them through this epistle.

Galatians 3:5

- *“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”*
- Do not get thrown off by this verse mentioning that Paul worked miracles. During the transition period of the book of Acts as Israel was diminished Paul does many things that he does not do later in his ministry.
- II Corinthians 12:12—Paul possessed the signs of an Apostle
- Acts 14:3, 8-11—we see that Paul worked miracles in the region of Galatia.
- II Timothy 4:20—at the end of his ministry Paul is no longer healing people.
- I Timothy 5:23
- Once again the answer to the questions is quite obvious. Paul’s working of miracles was not based upon the ability of the Galatians to follow the law but rather upon their faith.
- This is an interesting verse for the modern faith healers to consider. Many times when someone is not healed it is said that the person has a rebellious spirit, is out of fellowship with God, has unconfused sin, or has to get rid of some other sin issue before they can get healed.