

Sunday, February 26, 2023—Galatians 3:3-5 Paul's Probing Questions

### **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?”
  - Galatians 3:1—note the connection between “foolishness” and disobedience.
    - Paul is essentially calling the Galatians a bunch of immoral, ignorant people who cannot even discern right from wrong.
- Romans 8:7-8—if the works of the flesh cannot please God, then how is Law keeping going to perfect our faith?
- Galatians 3:3—essentially Paul is saying, are you so stupid, that you cannot see what you are doing is 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 conducted in the manner by which we received Christ, i.e., by grace through faith.
- Galatians 2:20—Christ lives His life out 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 chose to follow Paul's gospel also suffered greatly for their initial decision.
- Galatians 3:4—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. Put another way, would they have endured any persecution had they stuck with what was popular i.e., law keeping?
- **If it be yet 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. Paul's motive for writing the epistle is that Galatians will recover themselves out of the doctrinal errors addressed in his letter. If they do, their suffering will not have been in vain.

### **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?**
- The Acts chronology bears out that Paul worked miracles during his time in Galatia on his first apostolic journey.
  - Acts 13:6-13—Elymas blinded by Paul.
  - Acts 14:3, 8-10—man with impotent feet healed by Paul.
- 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.
- II Timothy 4:20—at the end of his ministry, Paul is no longer healing people.
- I Timothy 5:23

- Galatians 3:5—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 unconfessed sin, or has to get rid of some other sin issue before they can get healed.
- Romans 11:6—is the answer to all of Paul’s questions in the first five verses of Galatians 3. The Law had absolutely nothing to do with the giving of the Spirit, the sanctification of the believer, or Paul’s working of miracles. Pastor Charles F. Baker stated the following in his book *Understanding Galatians and the Law*:
  - “Law and the gospel are in no sense on a continuum. Those who try to combine Law with the gospel end up with a concoction in which each has lost its identity and power. In such a scheme, the Law has lost its teeth and the gospel has lost its freedom.” (Baker, 39-40)