

#6 Galatians

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Verse 3:1: '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?'

Foolish Galatians... so soon you have betrayed the Gospel. Who has cast a spell on you? The Greek word Paul uses for 'bewitched' is, **baskaino**: It means, to speak evil about, to lie about, to *traduce*, which means, to tell lies about. These Judaizers were lying about the Gospel; they were speaking evil about the truth of the Gospel saying that it was untrue, that Gentiles, that Christians were not free from the Law but that they were, in fact, liable to its demands and curses. They were, in essence, lying about the Lord Jesus Christ and what He had done for them.

These poor, ignorant Gentiles, having no knowledge of Old Testament writings, having these arrogant, self-assured deceiving Jews from Jerusalem stand before them, claiming to know and understand the things of God, better than Paul, and so these Gentiles fell into unbelief, misbelief and disbelief; they cast away the simplicity of the True Gospel, brought to them by Paul, and embraced the false gospel of the haughty Judaizers from Jerusalem. After all, these learned theologians from the Emerald City, from Jerusalem, must know more than simple Paul from just down the road in Tarsus. Paul was 'one of them;' these Judaizers were sophisticated, cosmopolitan cool guys from Jerusalem.

Remember, Jesus said, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Mark 6:4

Paul is saying, 'Who in their right mind would go back under the cruel, impossible, futile bondage of the Law? The Jews could never do it; these Judaizers could never do it. What makes you foolish Galatian Gentiles think you could ever do it!'

Paul says, I told you the truth, I showed you the truth. Jesus Christ lived a perfect and sinless life, fulfilling the Law **completely for you** and was then crucified, taking the full curse and punishment of the all the Law **in your place**, so you would never have to. If you believe that keeping the Law is in any way productive for you, then Jesus Christ died in vain, as far as you are concerned; His death and resurrection are of no value to you at all.

What did he write just a few verses previous to this one: 'knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.'

Verse 2: '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? Are you so foolish?'

Paul is saying: 'God's Holy Spirit entered you: He made you a new creation. Did that ever happen for any of you, for even one of you, or ever for any Jew through keeping any part of the Law? Remember what happened when you first believed, when you recognized and knew, with all certainty, that God had saved you, cleansed you and made you a new creation; had any of you kept any of the Jewish Law, in any way whatsoever? Well had you!!? Did God suddenly reverse what He had done for you at the cross and now demand that you keep the Law, that you become circumcised? Open your eyes, open your ears, remember the truth! Jeez Lueeze... am I dealing with children here... are you stupid... have you been bewitched, has someone cast a spell over you?' Wake up!!

You know, we all do the same thing in our own lives; when we become angry, that our salvation now rests in our own efforts, on our own works off the flesh. When we are depressed or fearful... what we are doing is saying to the Lord Jesus Christ that we no longer believe what He has said to us and about us. We no longer believe that He is caring for us more than He does for the birds of the air or the flowers of the field. We believe that suddenly, it is up to us to care for ourselves, The Galatians believed that they needed to become circumcised and keep the Law. We believe that we need to take over for God in our day to day lives and also we, too, begin to believe that we must keep the Law to be more acceptable. It may not be the Law of Moses we believe we must keep but we make up our own laws: must not swear, must not drink, must not smoke, must not vote democrat... all of those things and many more are things we should avoid but they make no

difference at all in God's love for us or in His complete acceptance of us, that He loves, accepts and wants us dearly.

Verse 3: 'Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?'

Paul is saying, 'Your Eternal Life began with only your belief in the Gospel... nothing else! You had no concept of 'The Law,' so obviously, The Law had nothing to do with your having been born again. All you had known was your Paganism with your worship of countless false gods, untold sexual perversion of every kind and even the sacrifice of your children to wicked demonic false gods and goddesses.'

Salvation is all God's work and only God's work from beginning to end. He chose and elected you before the foundation of the World; He called you and gave you the faith to believe. Then He caused you to be born again as a new creation; He forgave all your sin, past, present and future and caused you to become the Righteousness of God in Christ. Now... after all of that, are you going to stand before God and tell Him that your puny efforts at cutting off a piece of your skin and keeping some of the Laws which were given only to the Jews, through Moses... that those feeble efforts will now perfect what God was too weak to fully accomplish by His Own work... is that what you're telling God... and me... you foolish Galatians?'

We might say, 'You foolish Galatians!' Yet many of us do think or say the same things: 'Yes, I was saved by God's Grace through faith... but it is important for me to *'do my part,'* to do what is right so as to continue to better deserve His good favor; I must keep the 10 Commandments or go to Church on Saturday or do this or that or not do this or that. If I demand that others measure up to my standards of spirituality or conduct or to what I believe a 'good Christian' should do, it indicates that I am not accepting God's unconditional love and good favor toward me and so, fail to offer that same agape love to others. If I do not understand that God really does love me always with the same complete love with which He loves His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, then I will not love myself or others with His same unconditional love. If I do understand and believe His love for me, then I am unable to offer it to others and to myself. I can't forgive and love others with the love of God, to love my neighbor as I love myself, if I am unable to forgive and love myself. If I understand that God loves and forgives me, then the first person I should forgive and love is myself.

People often say, 'No, we don't obey God's Laws because *we have to* but, rather, because *we love Him*. That is the line you will get from Seventh Day Adventists and Hebrew Roots groups. Then they will quote Jesus saying, 'If you love Me you will keep My commandments,' but failing to understand that Jesus Christ never reiterated the Mosaic Law in His commands to His Church, only to those to whom He ministered before His Crucifixion, Resurrection and inauguration of the New Covenant. His only commandments to us were, 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you.' John 13:34 and: 'Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" Matt 22:37

He was not referring to the Ten Commandments because 'Love your neighbor as yourself' is nowhere to be found within those Ten. He commanded us to: '*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen*' Matt 28:19 He also said, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' Mk 16:15 We have no commandments other than those to obey. Those are the things Jesus meant when He said, 'If you love Me you will keep My commandments.' He did not mean the Ten Commandments or any other part of the Law of Moses. Why would He ever say, 'If you love Me, you must do something that is impossible for anyone but Me to do?'

Paul tells us over and over that we are free from the Law, that it was done away with at the coming of the New Covenant, that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law completely for us. He did not need to keep it for Himself, He has always been completely righteous. He did it for us. Now, for us or for the Galatians to believe that any part of the Law is still laid upon our backs is to completely dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ and to dishonor and discount His Sacrifice for us on the Cross. It is for us to say, 'What you did on the Cross was

simply not enough; it was insufficient; more is needed that only I am qualified to accomplish so why don't You just sit back and let me take control here... I'll show you how it's supposed to be done.'

No one can ever be made perfect in the flesh or by works of the flesh; every born again child of God was perfected once and for all when we believed the Gospel by faith. That's it! 'But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.¹⁴ For by one offering ***He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.***' Heb 10:12 Us! We are those who have been perfected forever while we are still being sanctified. No Jew, no Hebrew, no Galatian, no Judaizer, no anyone has ever been perfected by works of the flesh, by the keeping of any law.

Verse 4: 'Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

Because of your step of faith, because you embraced the Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel, you Galatians have suffered many things; you have been persecuted, your families have disowned you, you've lost your jobs, you've been beaten and jailed but you have borne up under all of it for the sake of the Gospel and your testimony before men. Was all of that in vain? Would you now go back and put yourself under the crushing burden of the Law? And for what? You wouldn't suffer any less, except perhaps from Jews... but who cares... you are Gentiles living in a Gentile World... why would you try to become some kind of half Jew?

Verse 5: '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?'

God had supplied His Holy Spirit to live inside every Galatian believer. Paul was the one who preached the Gospel in Antioch (Galatia) while God performed miracles to confirm the truth of that Gospel. They heard and believed by faith. Paul performed miracles by faith. Works of the Law were never involved nor will they ever be.

Of course, the greatest miracle which God performs is our new birth, that He removes our sinful heart and replaces it with a spiritual heart that seeks after Him.

Jesus performed miracles to confirm that He was the promised Messiah and that His Words were true. After His ascension the Apostles preached the New Covenant, the Gospel and God performed miracles through them in order to confirm their Word, God's Word. He performed no such miracles when the Judiazers preached.

There was no written Bible, no Mathew, Mark, John, Acts, Romans etc. They preached the truth of the Gospel and performed miracles to confirm that what they preached was true. Then, when their words and books were committed to writing, the miracles ceased which also served the purpose of not confirming what false teachers taught afterward.

This is why, today, those who teach that we should still be doing the miracles of the Bible, which never seem to materialize, and yet they keep teaching it, that is why they are teaching falsely. God has no intention of causing miracles to happen today like they did then and especially not when false teachers spew out their heresy. That is not to say that miracles cannot happen today, but they are not the norm, nor should it be taught that they are.

Verse 6: 'just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."⁷ Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.'

How was Abraham 'saved'? How was he made righteous in God's sight? How was he righteous without having been born again? Was it because he was careful to keep the Law? The Law was not even given until nearly 500 years after Abraham was declared righteous in God's sight.

Did you know that Abraham's relationship with God was very much like ours is during this time of the Church, this time of God's Grace and Mercy poured out without measure on His children?

God deals with us in complete grace and mercy. We will never come under any judgment whatsoever. We are under no law so there is no law for us to break, only that we love. The same was true for Abraham. God made promises to Abraham that were without any condition at all. Abraham was not required to do anything or refrain from doing anything in order to receive the fulfillment of God's promises to Him.

Abraham was righteous before God simply by virtue of the fact that he believed God; he believed that God was able to do what He promised and that He would do what He promised. We are made righteous in the very same way and only in the same way: we believe God and we believe the Gospel. We believe that God did what He says He did and that He will do what He has said He will do.

All Jews and all Hebrews are not all sons of Abraham, only those who have come to God by faith, who believed in the coming Messiah and those who now believe in the Messiah Who did come. We, Gentile children of God are sons of Abraham who have believed and pleased God with the same faith; that we have believed God.

Verse 8: 'And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying*, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then, those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.'

The Word says that Abraham believed God and did not waver, knowing that God could give him a son through Sarah. He didn't consider his very old body or Sarah's. Now, of course, we know that he did waver when he had a son by Hagar, Ishmael who would be a terrible thorn in the side of the Israelites until Jesus returns. But even though Abraham wavered, even though he sinned with Hagar, God still loved him and blessed him and remained true to all His promises to Abraham.

The same is true for us and our relationship with God; ***He loves us and forgives us no matter what.***

We are under no law, there is nothing we must observe, only to love God and love others; but even when we waver and fall short in that, God still loves us and forgives us completely; He already forgave us for that sin or that failure, while He was on the Cross. He paid the penalty for that sin, that failure so that we would never have to... ever! Now, just like with Abraham, with Hagar, there may still be painful, life altering consequences for our sin but we will never be judged; God will never love us any less than He always does. Others may refuse to forgive us, to love us or to accept us... even friends or family members but God never will... ever!

Verse 10: '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."

Never forget why God gave the Law; it was never to be a way for men to be made righteous. Its purpose was twofold: first, to exemplify the absolute Righteousness of God and then, to make obvious the complete sinfulness of all men. The Law was good in that it created a 'fence' within which a moral society could successfully operate but anyone who believes they can or must keep the Law, or any part of it, to be acceptable to God, is under the curse of the Law because they have not kept all of the Law, perfectly throughout their entire life. One might think, 'I am more acceptable to God, He loves me more, because I have not murdered, even though Jesus said that if we even hate someone we are guilty of murder or we may think, I am more loved by God because I have never committed adultery even though Jesus said that if we even look at another person with lust in our heart, we are guilty of adultery.

We don't have room, here, to print here the full curse, from Deuteronomy 15, with which God promises to curse every person who seeks to be made righteous through works of the Law and fails to fulfill it perfectly. Suffice to say, no one would ever want to be under that terribly all consuming curse.

Verse 11: 'But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for "the just shall live by faith."¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

No one has ever been justified by the Law, only by faith in God and His Word, by believing Him and His Word. Those who have been justified have been justified only by faith and they continue to live by faith, by believing God and His Word. The justified do not remain so by keeping the Law to be and remain 'good enough.' Day by day, minute by minute, the life of the one justified continues being justified by continuing to believe God and His Word.

The Law is not of faith and the one who seeks to keep the Law must, then, live by the Law every minute of every day, keeping every law perfectly and completely for the rest of his life, a complete impossibility.

The just shall live by faith and their faith in God shall then keep them just and perfect in God's sight.