



GALATIANS 3 Part 2 Faith or Works of the Law

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Paul is asking these questions to have them think this thing through. It’s like when you were little and your mom. I want to talk today about maybe not so much about us putting our trust in the law or our works, but putting our trust in things besides the Lord. We aren’t prone to put our trust in levitical works, but we are prone to put our trust in our own resources.

- 1) **Who has bewitched you?** “Bewitched”. What is Paul really saying? “cast a spell on someone and get control of them. This is pagan magic. There were magicians in the Bible. They were using Satanic power. Paul is asking them, “Who has gotten power over you?”

Paul uses the singular form of “who” which is a reference to Satan. Remember Paul said that people are not the main issued, ¹² “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12

And the Peter says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” 1 Peter 5:8

It is easy for us to forget that we don’t wrestle against “flesh and blood”, but we wrestle against spiritual forces in high places.

Recently we have seen people that are called “antifa” or “black lives matter” the political organization. These are anarchists and marxists. The political movement called BLM describes themselves as Marxists and they were trained by Marxists. Marxism calls for the overthrow and destruction of the existing government. The idea is to move towards a human made utopia. Marxism is diabolical because it is anti-Torah. It is anti-

God's law. By God's law, I mean God's constructed order of things: Private property rights, impartial justice in established courts of law et.

I think what I would like for us to remember is that things that often seem to make no sense, do in fact make sense when we look at them with spiritual eyes. Don't let your peace be stolen and destroyed.

Let's don't let us have our hearts stolen away. We can't have our souls stolen away, but we CAN have our hearts and minds stolen away. Young Christians are especially prone to being pulled away.

An observation that I am having during this Covid crisis, is that it is getting more and more comfortable for people to devoid themselves of spiritual input. Staying at home becomes more and more attractive. Then other influences take over. People seem to fall under a spell.

Then Paul asks,

- 2) **Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law?** You received the Holy Spirit by hearing the Gospel and responding to it. And you feed the Spirit by daily submission to the Holy Spirit in your life.

When you've been saved and sealed by the Holy Spirit – You will know it. You will know it because the Spirit puts an appetite in your soul for more of God in your life. And when you aren't feeding the Holy Spirit within you, you will have a hunger that you recognize.

We've already discussed this idea of Jesus + Nothing = Everything

- 3) **Are you so foolish?** He's telling them that they are people that have been given the Holy Spirit, but they're listening to the wrong influences. Are you so foolish to try to feed your soul on Facebook, Fox News, CNN, etc.?
- 4) **Are you now perfected by the flesh?** Are you trusting in your own abilities to fulfill God's will for your life. Do you really think that things that you can do in the flesh are more powerful than the Spirit of God? Paul was indeed talking about legalism in the life of believers who were tempted to boast in their own efforts, but it helps me to think about it differently today. The powers of the flesh can only help us so far. They end pretty quickly. We've all read the verse, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak".

We have no power to do anything to accomplish our own salvation, and in the same way we have limited power to affect our future. I guess I'm thinking about this with all of the prevalent societal chaos. We shouldn't sit and stew and have great angst and worry.

The Bible is clear. Jesus said in Matthew 10:16 “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” He’s telling us to be prudent. Be planners. But, maintain our purity of heart where we realize that at the end of the day, our confidence is in Him and in Him alone.

Sandy and I are both planners. She has her seeds and her garden. She counts her seeds and I’m more inclined to count my bullets so to speak. Perhaps that is being as shrewd as a serpent. that we’re to be as sly as foxes but we as harmless as doves, and

5) Did you suffer things in vain?

We never suffer things in vain. “All things work together for good for those who love God for those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

6) Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

Paul is reminding them again that their own works of righteousness were not the source of the “miracles” that they saw God work in them. It was in believing what they had heard that they saw miracles of changed lives brought about in and among them.

SONS OF ABRAHAM BY FAITH

⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Paul is continuing to argue that it is foolish take hold of the law or any other thing in being saved. Paul is saying that believers in Jesus are going to receive benefits from the covenant that God made to Abraham. God made a promise to Abraham based on Abraham’s belief. We are inheritors of that standard of belief. Let’s review covenants for a moment. Remember that covenants are promises. And God told Abraham that through Him all the nations of the world would be blessed. This is called the Abrahamic covenant. Remember when we were going through the Torah together, I explained the making of that covenant in Genesis 15. It was unique and unusual in that God was the only one who made the promise. Remember that Abraham was asleep during the making of the covenant. In a usual covenant like a business deal, two parties would kill animals and they would walk through them as they made a promise to each other. The parties to the covenant were in effect saying “may the parties that break these promises be slaughtered like these animals.”

Let’s look at it again in Genesis 15.

Abraham was childless and he cried out to the Lord.

² But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

Then we read the part about the covenant being made.

¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. ¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.

The text then tells us that the Jews would become slaves in a country that was not their own, but they would eventually come out free. Now listen to the text.

¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

Note: Abraham was asleep. Abraham watched in his dream state.

When God took Abraham out of the tent that night and showed him the sky, He made promises to Abraham, and the text tells us, “Abraham believed and He (God) accounted it to him (Abraham) as righteousness. “Belief” has always been God’s standard to attain righteousness. Abraham attained right standing before God and we too attain right standing before God in our belief. The writer of the Book of Hebrews is clear that “God is a rewarder of those who believe”.

Belief is so much more than just mentally agreeing that God exists. To “believe in” means that you trust that God is Who He says that He is, and that He will do what He says He will do. It means relying on Him, believing in Him, trusting in Him, submitting to Him, willing to be a child of God.

When Paul speaks to the Galatians, he will speak of “belief”. The Jews were telling the gentiles that if they wanted to be saved from their sins, then they had to become Jews, get circumcised, etc. Paul is telling them, “YOU HAVE INHERITED THE MEASURE, THE STANDARD OF BELIEF THAT I HAD FOR ABRAHAM – BELIEF!”

The Mosaic covenant was conditional. The Abrahamic covenant was unconditional. All this talk also reminds us that no one is born a Christian. I've told you guys before that God has no grandchildren. Every person must come to their own saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their own personal savior. It is the Mosaic covenant that was replaced by the New Covenant Jesus said was "in His blood". That is what I read you guys every time we have Communion together.

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The Abrahamic Covenant is ours. The Mosaic Covenant was replaced through Jesus. Paul then talks about those who rely on their works.

*¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."¹¹ Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith."**[see Habakkuk 2:2-4]** ¹² The law (the Mosaic Law) is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them."¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole **[Jesus going to the cross]**."¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham **[belief being credited as righteousness]** might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*

The law (Mosaic Law) and Faith are incompatible. You can't mix the works of the law with the grace of Christ. Paul then gives another example.

*¹⁵ Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. ¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise **[the Mosaic Covenant doesn't set aside that covenant of faith]**. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*

*¹⁹ Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed **[Jesus]** to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. ²⁰ A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.*

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²² But

Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Children of God

²³ Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.