

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
B. 3:1-4:31 Reasoned Grace
1. 3:1-14 Lessons learned

3:1-9
“Bewitched”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-5 So foolish

III. Vs. 6-9 Abraham

I. Intro.

The gospel is not good advice to men, but good news about Christ; not an invitation to us to do anything, but a declaration of what God has done; not a demand but an offer!

So why were the gentile believers so ready to cash in grace for works? Back when I was kid there was a sitcom called “*Bewitched*” and it was about a mortal who inadvertently married a witch. Samantha was trying desperately to live as a mortal and not cast her spells on her husband Darrin. Yet in each episode she found that to make it she had to wiggle her nose and use her witchcraft to make it through. That is what Paul say’s the Judaizers had reverted to get these gentile believers to let go of grace and embrace legalism to be right with God. These Judaizers weren’t wiggling their noses they were point their fingers to employ there witch craft. Paul will use 6 different arguments in Galatians to prove that Jesus saves us by faith alone and not by works and her in this section we see two more.

II. Vs. 1-5 So foolish

Vs. 1 In this chapter Paul attempts to correct their vision of Jesus who Paul says was “*clearly portrayed*”. He question the Galatians’ on their own experience; they had experienced Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit all before they were indoctrinated into the idea that they need first to become Jews. ***What in their experience suggested that something was missing? What else could they add by works that they hadn’t already received by faith?*** Their blurred vision had come about because the Judaizers had come in and told them falsely that they were “*Made right before God based on what Jesus did for us, plus what we do for Him under the Law of Moses.*” In calling the Galatians “*foolish*” Paul is not saying that they are morally or mentally deficient instead he uses a word that suggests a person who has the right answer but fails to use that answer. The word “*bewitched*” reflects that they were behaving as if they were under some spell that has caused them to not respond to what they knew was true. The word was used of an ancient superstition where someone would place an “*evil eye*” upon another. Martin Luther wrote, “*Through the centuries, error after error arises, and we are well able to see some of the errors of the past, but many are blind to the errors of today.*” One author put it this way: “*It is wonderful to have a soft, tender heart before God. But some people have softer heads than hearts. Their minds are too accommodating to wrong, unbiblical ideas, and they don’t think things through to see if they really are true or not according to the Bible.* They had become “*spiritually dull*” to the gospel that they had accepted from Paul which proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah who had been crucified.

Vs. 2-3 Paul makes the correlation that receiving the Holy Spirit is when the Christian life begins. The question Paul asks is “*How did they receive the Holy Spirit, by human works or by faith.*” Note the contrasts between the law and faith:

- The law says, “*do this*” and the gospel says, “*Jesus has done it all*”!
- The law requires human works and achievement; the gospel requires faith in Christ’s achievement.
- The law makes demands and bids us to obey; the gospel brings promises and bids us to believe.

These two are diametrically opposed to each other; to establish one you must destroy the other as they cannot coexist. It is hard for us to imagine that these Judaizers were telling already saved gentile believers that God would not bless them unless they first became circumcised and kept the law. ***One wonders how many of these men undertook the operation only to find out that all that they received was a little less skin, a lot more pain but no blessing.*** The blessing of the Holy Spirit is not earned He is received! God gave them the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit indwelling and empowering them then why would God cause growth by efforts of the flesh?

- Under law, we are blessed and grow spiritually by earning and deserving.
- Under grace, we are blessed and grow spiritually by believing and receiving.

If Satan cannot stop us from being saved by faith, then he will attempt to hinder our blessing and growth and maturity by faith. Spurgeon said, “*When the works of the flesh are substituted for faith, self-confidence and pride are the inevitable result. The reason of*

this contention lies in the fact that man is not only poor, but proud; not only guilty, but conceited; so that he will not humble himself to be saved upon terms of divine charity.”

Vs. 4-5 Apparently while Paul was among them these Galatian believers had suffered persecution from Jews who thought their liberty in Christ was wrong and now that they had switched sides Paul asks them about this by saying, “*He who supplies the Spirit to you...*” That would be a gift from God in response to our simple trust. Yet now at the words of the Judaizers these Galatians believers believed that the spiritual riches came from God based upon human effort. There is a choice to make:

- a. *Do you believe you will be blessed by the works of the law?:* Will you earn and deserve your blessing from God.
- b. *Or by the hearing of faith?:* Or will you believe and receive it?

The Holy Spirit is mentioned 18 times in this letter and is the evidence of a life that has been transformed by God. There are two persons necessary for the birth of a baby and there are two persons necessary for the New Birth in Christ: The Word of God and the Spirit of God. And just like a baby nothing more needs to be added, you don’t need to take the child to the hospital to add an arm, or grow a tow, as if they are Mr. Potato Head. “*You have begun in the Spirit*”, Paul says, “*Nothing more needs to be added*”.

III. Vs. 6-9 Abraham

Vs. 6 Here in these four verses Paul calls Abraham to the stand and quotes Genesis 15:6, quoted four times in the New Testament. There was not a Jew who wouldn’t claim their ancestry to one man, Abraham. He was the reason why they got circumcised so Paul will reveal to the Galatians that Abraham is not a symbol of works he is a symbol of faith alone. No one could say that Abraham was made right by his obedience or fulfillment of

the law as he was before the law. Abraham put his trust in God's promise to give him children that would eventually bring forth the Messiah and God credited this belief to Abraham's account as righteousness. God spoke to Moses in Deut. 7:6-8 saying, "*For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*" Abraham didn't "**believe IN God**" he "***BELIEVED GOD***".

Vs. 7 Since Abraham was declared right by God solely upon his trust in God and not by his trust plus his works Abraham is the father of all who trust in God and are declared right. The Judaizers believed they were superior to Gentile Christians because they descended from Abraham but Paul says that ***the link to Abraham is not in the genes it's in the faith!*** Some Jewish Rabbis taught that Abraham stood at the gates of Hell, just to make sure that none of his descendants accidentally slipped by. In Matthew 3:9 John the Baptist dealt with this same thinking when he said do not think to say to yourselves, "*We have Abraham as our father. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*"

It is a sad fact that some have taken Galatians 3:7 and misapplied it to support the false teaching of "replacement theology": ***The idea is that God is finished with the people of Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group, and that the Church spiritually***

inherits all the promises made to Israel. But you don't interpret the Bible on one verse you interpret the one verse by what the entire Bible. Romans 11:25 says that the "hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." This means that God is not finished with Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group. God is not "finished" with Israel, and Israel is not "spiritualized" as the church. All who put their faith in Jesus Christ are sons of Abraham; but Abraham has his spiritual sons and his genetic sons, and God has a plan and a place for both.

Vs. 8-9 Paul has already said that his experience as well as the Galatians experience supports grace and not works but here **Paul says more importantly the Bible supports this position.** Paul believed that when the scriptures speak God speaks as he personifies the scriptures. Even back in Abraham's day according to Genesis 12:3 it was clear that this blessing of righteousness by faith was intended for every nation, for Gentiles as well as Jews, because God pronounced that in you all the nations shall be blessed. **If it was essential that a Gentile must first become a Jew before they can become a Christian, God would never have said this blessing would extend to every nation, because Gentiles would have had to become part of the Israelite nation to be saved.** The most important question we can ask is, "Am I of faith?" "Do I believe God even as Abraham did?" "When God says it, do I believe it"? "Do I live as if I really believe God is true"? "Can others see that I am trusting God"?