

Paul Proves that Faith Alone Brings Righteousness (Galatians 3:1-14)

I. Paul Appeals to Their Experience (1-5)

A. They Have Experienced the Preaching of the Gospel (1)

1. Paul wonders who has bewitched them
 - a. They had heard and responded to the gospel
 - b. Paul had painted a picture of Jesus' death and resurrection for them
 - c. They are turning from the truth in such a way that they act like they are under someone's spell
2. Paul marvels that those whose eyes have seen Jesus Portrayed as Crucified could turn away
 - a. Remember to add to the gospel is to nullify the gospel
 - b. This is not an issue of preference – it's all or nothing

B. They Have Received the Spirit by Faith (2)

1. Paul asks them how they received the Spirit
 - a. There are only two choices – law or belief
 - b. When they came to Christ, it was because they understood their sinfulness and inability to keep the law –
2. Paul equates reception of the Spirit with Salvation
 - a. Those who have come to the gospel receive the Spirit
 - b. No one Receives the Spirit by the law – not even the most faithful Old Testament saint – the Spirit is always a gift of grace through faith

C. They Have Begun Thinking They can Perfect Themselves Through Law (3-4)

1. Paul asks how they can be so foolish to think they began the Christian life through faith but somehow are perfecting themselves through the law
2. Paul is upset because believing you are perfecting yourself by works is saying Jesus is not good enough to perfect you
3. Paul wonders why they have suffered so much as Christians if they are just going to go back to living under Judaic Law

D. They Have Experienced Miracles By Faith (5)

1. He says that God, who provides the Spirit and works miracles, does all these by faith
2. We are not told of what miracles Paul speaks – but the sanctification of a wicked heart is miracle enough. It only comes through a growing faith in Christ
3. The Galatians were turning back to law keeping by adding circumcision to the gospel. Keeping laws will never grow a man's heart closer to God.

II. Paul Appeals to Israel's History (6-9)

A. Believers are the Sons of Abraham (6-7)

1. Abraham Himself was declared righteous because of faith, not keeping laws
 - a. The Jews took great pride in claiming Abraham as their father.
 - b. God promised Abraham a nation, a land, and a blessing – Israel claimed this inheritance because they are Abraham's descendents
2. Abraham's Sons Are Those who Believe (7)
 - a. Paul makes a radical claim here – all those who believe in Christ are Abraham's sons
 - b. This would have been scandalous to the Jews
 - c. The birthright they claimed brought righteousness with God comes by faith not by Law keeping or natural descent.

B. The Gospel Was Preached to Abraham (8-9)

1. The Scripture had always pointed toward the day when Gentiles would be brought into the people of God (8)
 - a. To evangelize the world has always been the purpose of Israel
 - b. The gospel was preached by God to Abraham when He gave Abraham the promise
2. The Gospel Given to Abraham (9)
 - a. The Gospel was proclaimed when God said all nations will be blessed in you
 - i. This was the promise of Christ to all nations
 - ii. This is what the promises of Israel always pointed toward
 - b. The Promise of Abraham is for all those of Faith (9)
 - i. Those of Faith receive the blessing
 - ii. Abraham had faith and received the blessing

III. Paul Appeals to the Scripture (10-14)

- A. Those Seeking to be justified by Law are cursed (10)
 1. The law can justify no one before God because we are unable to keep the Law
 2. Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 27:26
 3. The law must be kept perfectly and completely – anyone who does not keep the law completely and perfectly is under the curse of God
- B. Man must live by the Law or by Faith – there is no middle ground (11-12)
 1. Paul repeats that it is obvious man can't be justified by the law
 - a. This is why Scripture says, the just shall live by faith
 - b. This is a quote from Habakuk 2:4 – "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith"
 - i. The law only puffs up the soul

- ii. The justified before God will live by faith
- 2. Paul proves that a man trying to be justified by law must live in it
 - a. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5 – “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them”
 - b. The point is that one's life will only be lived in one of two ways – He will live by faith and be justified or he will live by the law and be cursed
- C. Jesus Died To Free Man From the Curse (13)
 - 1. Christ redeemed us from the curse of Law
 - 2. Christ redeemed us by becoming a curse for us
 - 3. Paul proves this by quoting Deuteronomy 21:23 - His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; **(for he that is hanged is accursed of God;)** that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
 - a. The Jews took this very seriously – (Joshua 10:26; 2 Samuel 21:6) They also wanted Jesus' body removed before sundown (John 19:31)
 - b. The Apostles made a point to show that Jesus was hung on a tree
 - i. Acts 5:30 - The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree
 - ii. 1 Peter 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed
 - iii. Acts 13:29 - And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher
 - 4. By being crucified Jesus became a curse for us so that we may be free from the curse of the law
- D. Jesus Purchased the Promise of Abraham for the Gentiles (14)
 - 1. Through Christ the blessing of Abraham (the promise) comes to the Gentiles
 - 2. This promise to Abraham is fulfilled in the reception of the Spirit – which came to the Gentiles through Faith.

The point of the section is that after one comes to faith in Christ, he / she cannot perfect themselves through law keeping. All God's righteousness is given through Christ and man can add nothing to his standing before God. To attempt to do so is to nullify the work of Christ and claim His death is not sufficient. Paul proves this point from the Galatian's experience, from Israelite history, and from the Hebrew Scriptures.