

Chapters 3 & 4 are the doctrinal division of Galatians. Paul lays out several arguments as to why grace is better than works and the only grounds of salvation.

So he uses 6 different arguments to prove that God saves sinners thru faith in Christ and not by the works of the law.

His first argument is a personal argument in the first 5 verses. He wants the Galatians to go back in time to what they first heard regarding the gospel, not to the time they were trying to obey the law, but when they first heard the gospel.

In the second section, verses 6-14 Paul moves into the scriptural argument. There he quotes 6 OT passages to prove his point.

Gal 3:1-9

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? 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? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain – if indeed it was in vain?

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? – 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. 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." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Notice how Paul opens this chapter. O foolish Galatians! Another translation, the Philipps translation reads, O you dear idiots of Galatia.

Matt 5:22

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. (Morally worthless, a godless person)

Jesus was speaking of people who were filled with malice.

Foolish as used in Galatians refers to a person lacking intelligence or someone who is spiritually dull. It's the same word Jesus used on the Emmaus road when He said to the disciples that they were foolish and slow of heart (they were spiritually dull, they didn't recognize the Messiah).

"who has bewitched you" - or who has cast a spell on you or who has fascinated you?

NTWSD

To bewitch as with the eye, to cast an evil eye. A Greek commentator on the work of the poet Theocritus observes that the noun “báskanos” means one who with his eyes kills or destroys. Superstitious people believed that great harm might result from the “evil eye” or from being looked upon with envious and malicious stares.

In chapter 1 of Galatians, Paul marveled that they turned away so soon from the Lord to a different gospel.

They were struck with admiration or astonishment.

But they admired the wrong crowd. And Paul warned against hanging out with evil people.

1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”

King Solomon’s words:

Prov 13:20

He who walks with wise *men* will be wise,
But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

Paul asks 3 rhetorical questions in the first 3 verses.

1) Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?

- Who has cast a spell on you?

Then in verse 2 Paul asks the second rhetorical question.

Gal 3:2

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?

Gal 3:9

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? What a great question.

If they’d begun in the Spirit, why would they now go back and practice this form of legalism which never saved them in the first place!

Too often people think it’s Jesus and something else. Surely it can’t be just Jesus!
That’s too easy!

Muhammad Ali’s response to Readers Digest on other religions. He responded, “Rivers, ponds, lakes and streams - they all have different names, but they all contain water. Just as religions do - they all contain truths.”

He was right in that all religions contain some truth, but none offer the Spirit of God but Christianity. There is only one way to receive the Spirit, thru Christ!

John 7:37-39

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Third rhetorical question, verse 3:

Gal 3:3

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Are you so foolish to think you can begin your Christian walk in the Spirit and then complete it by the deeds of the flesh!

Gal 3:4

4 Have you suffered so many things in vain — if indeed it was in vain?

Evidently some of the believers in Galatia suffered some kind of persecution.

Although there is no account of Paul's converts suffering, that doesn't mean they didn't suffer any persecution after Paul left.

One day we will be rewarded.

2 Tim 2:12

12 If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him.
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us. (deny - to reject or refuse someone)

Matt 10:33 But whoever denies me before men, him I will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

If we draw back then we may just forfeit our reward.

Heb 10:38

38 Now the just shall live by faith;
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."

To draw back is to shrink back, to avoid.

Gal 2:12

12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when (certain men came from James) they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

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? —

Paul wanted the Galatians to remember Christ was crucified for them. He wanted them to remember the miracles.

God supplies the Spirit.

- Who receives the Spirit?
- Every believer of Jesus Christ!

Acts 2:38 repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That in itself is a spiritual miracle of God.

- Once we receive Christ, we receive His Spirit.
- At that point we are no longer spiritual orphans.

That means we now have the rights and privileges of God's children.

Yes, we still have the desire to sin.

Romans 7 tells us that our Spirit is at war with the flesh.

The Lord told Cain in Genesis 4:6-7 that if he did what is right, he'd be accepted. Then He said if he didn't do what was right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it!

1 Jn 4:4 He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world! (We have God's Holy Spirit in us to empower us)

Back to verse 5:

Paul spent a lot of his time teaching from Synagogue to Synagogue. That was a big part of his life.

People in Galatia wanted to hear more:

Acts 13:42-43

42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

Now Paul continues his argument that we are saved by faith, an act of God's grace not by works.

In verses 1-5 Paul argues from personal grounds, now he will begin his argument from scriptural grounds.

Observe in the following verses:

- 1) Abraham was saved by faith,
- 2) Anyone can be saved by faith if Abraham was saved by faith
- 3) Faith has always been the condition for salvation.

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (1st quote from OT)

The Jews were proud of their relationship to Abraham.

In John 8 the Jewish leaders asked Jesus, are You better than our father Abraham and Jesus replied, before Abraham was, I AM.

The Jews believed that physical descent from Abraham equaled spiritual life.

They thought being Jew saved them.

Verse 6 is one of the most important verses in the bible. The phrase "it was counted to him as righteousness," is mentioned several times in scripture. Paul quotes it here, then twice in Romans chapter 4:9, 21, and 22. James quotes it in chapter 2:23.

Gen 15, would Abram make it home alive!

God assures him that he will, He says, "Do not be afraid Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." Abram's response, "what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

Abram had no offspring.

Then the Lord took Abram outside and promised his offspring would be as numerous as the stars.

Genesis 15:6 says, he believed in the Lord and He accounted to him for righteousness.

The word accounted in the same as reckoned or imputed.

Paul used the same word in 2 Tim 4:16 with a different twist. In that section of Timothy the apostles had abandoned him, only Luke remained with him.

2 Tim 4:16

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

In other words, Lord, don't hold this against them!

The Lord says to us, don't hold this against them! Forgive and you shall be forgiven!

He forgave us!

God's point is, Jesus earns salvation for you and God puts His righteousness to your account.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

Rom. 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

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."

This is the second quote from the OT. Five times the book of Genesis we're told that all nations would be blessed because of Abraham.

The Judaizers pointing the Gentiles to Moses, Paul took them back even further to Abraham.

Abraham understood salvation was by faith. When Abraham believed God, he wasn't a Jew, he was a Gentile.

Abraham came from one of the many nations, a pagan country, Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq). Then he migrated to Canaan (Israel) and looked up and he believed God, so God counted him as righteous because he believed and trusted Him.

So we're told in scripture that thru Abraham all nations would be blessed.

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Gal 3:10

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."

Some of the Galatians were still trying to live under the law and Paul issues a warning.

Paul's third quote is from Deut 27:26.
(the law is a curse to anyone trying to live under it because no one can keep it perfectly.)

No one can keep the 613 laws called the mitzvot. Paul once attempted to live by these laws as a Pharisee.

He said in Romans 7 that he tried and failed. James said in 2:10 if anyone failed in one point, he is guilty of all.

Here are 4, test yourself:

Not to wrong any one in speech (Lev. 25:17)
Not to cherish hatred in one's heart (Lev. 19:17)
Not to take revenge (Lev. 19:18)
Not to bear a grudge (Lev. 19:18)

Thank God we are not bound by this!

11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

He's quoting from Habakkuk 2:4 (the just shall live by faith).
God always justified men and women thru faith.

You may remember if you've ever read the book of Habakkuk in chapter 1 the Lord told the prophet that He was going to use the Babylonians, a wicked nation to come and judge the southern kingdom of Judah for their consistent rebellion and idolatry.

Habakkuk was astonished at the news and said to the Lord, Now I'm paraphrasing, I know we're not walking with you and we're bad, but the Babylonians are horrible. They are idolaters, they're the worst. How can you use them to come and chasten us.

Then the Lord spoke saying, the just shall live by faith. In other words, Habakkuk, you need to trust me. Trust that I know what I'm doing even though you don't understand. It may not make sense to you now, but you will know later on. So Habakkuk learned to trust God.

12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), (Deut 21:23)

14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.