

(Galatians 3:1 NKJV) 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?

One translator has written “O Stupid Galatians”. I don’t know if it’s obvious or not but he’s a Messianic Jew.

Bewitched – Paul is rhetorically asking: Who has lied to you so convincingly that you found their doctrines fascinating? Whose fallacious arguments did you succumb to that caused you to reject the Gospel that I taught you – the Gospel of Christ Jesus revealed to me by Jesus!

I taught you about the crucifixion and what it meant! I taught you about the resurrection and what it meant! You accepted the gospel of grace offered by God to reconcile yourselves to Him!

Perhaps Paul’s anger is coming through, but with whom is he angry? The bewitched or the “witches”. **Like** the Corinthians who, even understanding the gospel of grace, who Paul called “brothers and sisters”, these young Galatian Christians were susceptible to the lies of satan. For the Corinthians, it was behaviors; for the Galatians, it was core doctrines. And, perhaps, in actuality, it was a both.

How fast did the Church start to experience cracks, dissensions, and then grow into a Church-State that looked more like Judaism with its rules, laws, rituals, and a separate “priesthood”? How fast did many churches become the Church of Man instead of the Church of Christ (and not the denomination)?

I think he was angry but gracious; his speech was “tough love” but his goal was restoration of the truth in them.

(Galatians 3:2 NKJV) 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?—

Perhaps Paul is a bit mocking here. It’s like a babe in Christ challenging their teacher and the teacher says, “Ok Mister Smarty Pants”, you teach and I’ll learn!

“What laws did I teach you from the OC Scriptures that convinced you of salvation and justification so that believing, you received the gift of the Holy Spirit? Did you not hear the message and receive it by faith? YES! You did! I witnessed it!”

Luther: Our opponents regard faith as an easy thing, but I know from personal experience how hard it is to believe. That the Holy Ghost is received by faith, is quickly said, but not so quickly done. All believers experience this difficulty. They would gladly embrace the Word with a full faith, but the flesh deters them. You see, our reason always thinks it is too easy and cheap to have righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and life everlasting by the mere hearing of the Gospel

(Galatians 3:3 NKJV) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

What perversion of the truth have you accepted that you now believe that faith is not enough? That Christ is not enough? That perfection must now be fulfilled by the Law and by works of

your flesh?

The case for Law made to these Christians might have been something like:

1. You believe Christ died for you? Good; But how will you now live? You gentiles lived like heathens without any guidelines for good conduct; So, we're going to give your Church a commemorative plaque of the Ten Commandments to hang on your wall to remind you how to live.
2. Can you really trust the Holy Spirit to keep you righteous? That's what this Holy Law does for you! Obey the Law and you will enhance your standing with God! You want your name to stay written in the Book of Life, right?
3. You need to become like us Jews because, after all, we started this new religion, so it stands to reason that we'd understand these things. We Jews are saved because of the Jewish Messiah Jesus. When some of our people rejected Him, He then decided to reach out to you! Don't ignore His offer of getting right with God.
4. Paul isn't an apostle because you have to be ordained by church leadership and you had to have walked with Him when He was on earth! He's a usurper and teaches ideas that don't align with the teachings of the ancient sages.
5. Grace is ok but it's dangerous to believe that God will forgive you if you fall into sin! The Law will teach you how not to sin! So, keep the Law (oh, but not the ceremonial stuff of the Jews). Just keep the 10 commandments and you will live a holy, consecrated and sanctified life.
 - a. [1 Corinthians 6:11 NKJV \(11\)](#) And such were some of you. But you **were** washed, but you **were** sanctified, but you **were** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
 - b. [What can the Law do that will be transforming? It is by sole work of Christ that you are sanctified and justified and it is by the Spirit of Christ in you that will keep you until the day of your redemption](#)
 - i. [Romans 8:23 NKJV](#) Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.
 - ii. [1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NKJV \(30\)](#) But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— [\(31\)](#) that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."
 1. [WE ARE ALL THESE THINGS BECAUSE OF HIM AND IN HIM ONLY!](#)

[\(Galatians 3:4 NKJV\)](#) Have you **suffered** so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

Paul is never one to give up; He reminds them of the persecutions that they have endured for the sake of Christ.

If you fall away, it was all for nothing! But you can still repent; you can still return to the Father whose arms are opened wide! I want this for you my spiritual children!

You must repent of your view of justification by works of the Law! You cannot stand before Him and say, "we have given up everything for You; we have suffered for You". Because if

your righteousness is of the Law, your works are filthy rags and He will declare, I never knew you! That, my dear children is how important this matter is – a matter of life or death!

You once turned to God by faith; turn back by faith; justification by faith alone!!

Paul most assuredly taught them about suffering for the sake of Jesus. He might have taught them what he would teach the other churches:

Romans 8:15-17 NKJV For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (16) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

Philippians 1:29 NKJV For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

(Galatians 3:5 NKJV) 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?

Rhetorical question? Or a rebuke? I found it interesting that nearly all the miracles of Moses were performed before the Law was given. Two miracles after it was given are the Bronze Serpent incident and the striking of the Rock (instead of speaking to it); each, perhaps not so coincidentally, are pictures of Jesus! The Spirit cannot, will not do anything by the Law; therefore, you could not do any miracles or any other "good thing" by the Law because these are **His** works through you, and He can never be motivated by Laws given to man! Even if you could, God would consider your works/or so-called miracles as filthy rags.

(Galatians 3:6 NKJV) just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

By way of contrast, Abraham believed God (not just believed in God). And in His grace, imputed righteousness to him.

(See Genesis 15:4-6 where the promise of a descendent from his own body was given to Abraham such that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven!)

(Galatians 3:7 NKJV) Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

This is a cutting remark. Even John the Baptizer understood:

Matthew 3:7-9 NKJV But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (8) Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, (9) and 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.

And the God of Abraham understood when He argued with the Pharisees:

John 8:39-40 NKJV They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. (40) But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.

John 8:52-58 NKJV Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' (53) Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" (54) Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. (55) Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. (56) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." (57) Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" (58) Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

(Galatians 3:8 NKJV) 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."*

The gospel preached to Abraham is the same as was told to Adam and Eve; it was the same passed down from generation and generation and it was believed by those who **believed** God – that the ‘Seed’ of a woman would come and make everything right and in defeating death, would, by faith, bring life everlasting. He removed our sin and has “cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

The eternal gospel saved all who believed God and His Promised Seed.

(Galatians 3:9 NKJV) So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

As we have been studying in Hebrews 11, Abraham was blessed both materially and spiritually. But we learned that his eyes were on his heavenly homeland and not on his earthly homeland which he never received. Yes, we are blessed in this life, however,

Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures **on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;** (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is not a call to voluntary poverty; it is just a warning that earthly treasures (which Jesus referred to as “the deceitfulness of riches”) have a way of stealing our hearts and then all our

attention.

Heavenly treasures are eternal and more precious than the purest gold; for in heaven, gold will be used to pave the streets upon which we will walk.

Spiritual blessings have been called:

- “the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering”
- “the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God
- the exceeding of His grace
- the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- the unsearchable riches of Christ
- all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both Father and Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Even Moses “esteemed [ing] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” [Hebrews 11:26 NKJV](#)

[\(Galatians 3:10 NKJV\)](#) 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."

The Apostle reminds his readers about the truth of the Law. While it was holy and good, it also contained curses for disobedience. NOTE: the law is NOT a curse! It **contains** them.

[Deuteronomy 11:26-29 KJV](#) Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; (27) A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: (28) And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. (29) And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

[Deuteronomy 27:26 KJV](#) Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

[\(Galatians 3:11 NKJV\)](#) But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

[Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV](#) "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

[\(Galatians 3:12 NKJV\)](#) Yet the law is not of faith, but "THE MAN WHO DOES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."

This comes from Leviticus 18:5. God told the Israelites not to live as they had lived in Egypt

NOR to live like the heathens in Canaan when they entered the land. No, they had to follow after God and His judgments and ordinances, His statutes and commandments. He told them they will have a blessed life in the land by doing what He said.

And if you do them, you must do them perfectly. For there were consequences to obedience and disobedience – blessings and curses. And, what does someone do with the commandments to Love God and Love Others? If those are part of the Law by which we are justified, according to the legalists, then what's left after the Law was repealed by Christ's perfect fulfillment of it? The only thing that remains is faith, which was given for justification and salvation before the Law was given.

Verse 11 and 12 oppose each other....

(Galatians 3:13 NKJV) 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"),

Christ was called a sinner, the devil and a Samaritan by the Jews. The Greeks didn't use many works, they just beat him, scourged Him, nailed Him to the 'tree' and then pierced His side which ensured death.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 NKJV (22) "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, **(23)** his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

So, by His death on the cross, the sinless man took what sinful man should have received – death, cursing by hanging on the tree. As the people were mocking Him, He was, in fact, redeeming us from the curses contained in the Law for all who disobeyed it. Yes, do not underestimate the power of the phrase "having become a curse for us".

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV (21) For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(Galatians 3:14 NKJV) that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Paul is reminding his gentile believers that it was Christ dying on the Cross that affected their eternal destiny. It wasn't just for the Jew but "for the many". The blessing of Abraham was as much theirs as it was the Jews since God said, "all nations", not just a nation which would have been interpreted as only Israel.

And like the Jews, the blessing, the justification, the salvation only comes to those by Christ Jesus.

Many believe that the "promise of the Spirit" should be translated "the Spirit of Promise", for it is Him that we receive.

John 14:16-17 NKJV **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper,**

that He may abide with you forever— (17) the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; **but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**

Romans 4:7-10 NKJV "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS ARE FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS ARE COVERED; (8) BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD SHALL NOT IMPUTE SIN." (9) Does this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. (10) How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

Luther:

When we hear that Christ was made a curse for us, let us believe it with joy and assurance. By faith Christ changes places with us. He gets our sins, we get His holiness. By faith alone can we become righteous, for faith invests us with the sinlessness of Christ. The more fully we believe this, the fuller will be our joy. If you believe that sin, death, and the curse are void, why, they are null, zero.

Whenever sin and death make you nervous write it down as an illusion of the devil. There is no sin now, no curse, no death, no devil because Christ has done away with them. This fact is sure. There is nothing wrong with the fact. The defect lies in our lack of faith.

The true church of Christ must be seen through eyes of faith as much as we must see ourselves AND others through the same lens:

In Christ there is no sin, no curse, no evil, no death. Your eyes say, "Yeah, right...but what about...". There are so many shortcomings, so many offenses, so much unforgiveness, so much falling into temptations, so many ungodly emotions! Yes! These are facts.

But faith says: "I believe that I am holy, justified sanctified, redeemed to life everlasting in the Presence of my Savior and my God!!!"