

Gal. 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

"O foolish Galatians" - Paul is not very tactful is he; he just tells it like it is. You are not using your brains. Someone must have cast a spell on you for you not to obey the truth. You were personally and clearly presented with the truth of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

(12/13) Luther expresses Paul's declaration as follows: "No artist with all his colors could have pictured Christ to you as vividly as I have pictured Him to you by my preaching."

Gal. 3:2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Paul says, just tell me one thing; How did you receive the Spirit--by doing the works of the law or by hearing based on faith? He knew that if they thought this through logically, there would only be one answer - the right one.

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Gal. 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Are you without reason? You began your Christian walk in the Spirit by faith. Do you think you can do or become better by works done in the flesh?

I liked Guzik's observation: "Under law, we are blessed and grow spiritually by earning and deserving. Under grace, we are blessed and grow spiritually by believing and receiving."

Gal. 3:4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Then he reminds them of the suffering and persecution they have faced because of their faith. Was it for nothing? Didn't they learn anything from the experience?

"if it be yet in vain" - Paul still holds out hope that they are basing their salvation on faith and not works.

Gal. 3:5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

He asks them to look inward - Does the one who sent you the Spirit and works miracles among you do this because you are obeying the law or because of your faith?

Basically, all I've done is paraphrase what the scripture is saying to me, but following are some lessons to learn from these verses.

1. Christians are to hold each other accountable for their actions.

2. Christians are susceptible to the lies of Satan and the world. (We need to stay prayed up and filled up.) We need to evaluate everything by comparing it to the truth of God's word.
3. God made man unique with the capability of a will and the ability to reason. Once we accept Jesus, we do not become Christian robots that automatically do the right things.
4. Once you know the truth, you should be able to recognize what is false with some careful examination.
5. If obedience to the law was the key, they should have been able to experience the power of the Spirit before the crucifixion of Jesus.
6. The truth of faith and being able to utilize the power of the Spirit are directly connected to the crucifixion of Jesus (and His resurrection—this is implied since the truth involves the whole).
7. Identifying yourself with Jesus will bring suffering and/or persecution.
8. The Spirit is a gift from the Father to His children.

Gal. 3:6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

It was the fact that Abraham believed God that God identified him as righteous. Righteousness was imputed to Abraham because of His faith—not his works. (See journal for Romans 4:9-10.)

Gal. 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Then Paul says basically that our faith - our belief in the Son of God - connects us to Abraham as spiritual children, not physical.

Gal. 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

I like this verse. It always makes me think of the old example of a person looking down on a parade and seeing the whole thing, while the person on the ground can only see what is in front of him. Nothing about the future was hidden from God from the very beginning. God chose Abraham to be the human root from which would come the Branch of blessing to the heathen.

Genesis 18:17-18 "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

Heathen is a good word. It doesn't color or soften the picture of the kind of people we are. Heathen sounds dirty and wicked. Not only that, the plan always included faith as the key to justification. (I guess you have heard the old definition for justification - just as if I'd never sinned.) When the promise was given to Abraham, it was presented as a done deal. God's provision for our salvation was never dependent on anything on our part.

I just noticed that the verse started with "*And the **scripture**, foreseeing...preached.*" This is identifying the *scripture* with the Word, Jesus. I think this is the first time

I have noticed that. What a confirmation of **John 1:1**—“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” God's salvation was always intended for ALL nations.

Gal. 3:9 **So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.** Our blessing as believers is the same as Abraham's. He didn't know the full story, but he believed God. How blessed we are to know the whole story. I guess that's why the Lord balanced it out by being more visible and audible to the Old Testament saints—they really didn't know or understand how their salvation was going to come about or the sacrifice it would require. We may not get to see Him visibly, but we have the whole story and the ability to look back and see all the fulfillment of prophecy. Not only that, we are getting to see prophecy fulfilled in our lifetime. I think it is significant that God chooses to emphasize "faithful Abraham." As the book of Hebrews emphasizes—“*without faith it is impossible to please Him.*” (Hebrews 11:6) Our faithfulness is important to Him—more important, it is pleasing to Him.

Gal. 3:10 **For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**

Paul continues to draw a picture of the difference in faith and "doing" the works of the law. He quotes the Old Testament to remind them that there is a curse on those who do not continue in ALL things written in the law. Failure in one point = failure.

Deuteronomy 27:26 “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.”

James 2:10 “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

This is in direct contrast to the believer who is blessed.

Gal. 3:11 **But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**

Now he flat out states, “*No Man is justified by the law in the sight of God.*” “*The just shall live by faith.*” (Paul was so learned in the scriptures that I am sure he was quoting from *Habakkuk 2:4* “*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*”) This is the gospel they have been preaching all along. It's the only gospel (cf 1:9).

Gal. 3:12 **And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.**

If a person chooses to live by the law, then he will be judged accordingly as stated in Leviticus.

Leviticus 18:5 “*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.*”

One's eternal life will be determined by one's obedience to that law, and we already know that all have sinned. (5/08) Life is eternal; it will either be in the presence of God or an existence that is banished from His presence.

John 5:28-29 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power...."

"The law is not of faith." - Faith depends on God, and the keeping of the law depends on man. I know on whom I'm depending; and it's not on me.

Gal. 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: "Christ" = (the one and only Son of God)

hath "redeemed" (bought back what had been lost; you would only buy back something that was of great worth to you.) (5/08) The word studies of K. Wuest add insight—"from 'exagorazo' – bought out of the slave market, never to be put up for sale again in any slave market."

us (you, me, our loved ones...)

from the curse of the law (spiritual death, being separated from God because we can't keep the whole law)

being made a curse for us: made sin for us to suffer the judgment of our sin

for it is written (breathed from God to man)

Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. This is a statement from Deuteronomy 21:22 where it spoke of the hanging of the body on the tree as evidence that the person died of a crime guilty of death. When Christ was "hung on the tree," crucified, He was hanging there in place of me; I was the one who deserved to die. My understanding is that the body was hung on the tree in Old Testament times as a deterrent to the "breaking of the law." It was a fear tactic that God turned into a love tactic. He wants us to realize how much He loves us and realize that we don't have to suffer death if we will just accept His sacrifice of love.

Gal. 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Abraham was promised that through his seed ALL the nations of the earth would be blessed. This promise was fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*. (I've heard in the

past that when these two terms are used together, it's an emphasis of His humanity and deity in one person.) Not only did God choose to redeem us through the sacrifice of His Son, He has given us the Spirit...

- to teach us in the Word - *John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*
- to encourage us to good works – *Ephesians 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*
- to comfort and strengthen us in times of trial or testing - *Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. - and - Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...*
- to provide a way out when we are tempted - *1Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*
- to work through us by giving us special gifts of ministry - *1Corinthians 12:7-11 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*
- to help us pray when we don't know how, etc. – *Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

All this is available to us by FAITH.

Gal. 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

"after the manner of men" - in a way that you will understand. Even a man's covenant (promise, agreement) cannot be changed once it has been confirmed (made authoritative, ratified).

Gal. 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Here we are told that the promises were made to Abraham and his seed; then we are even told that his seed (singular) was Christ. That helps to understand from

the human viewpoint God's tremendous patience and mercy toward His chosen people—His promise was to His Son who was to come from this people.

Gal. 3:17 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Such an emphasis has been placed on the law that Paul emphasizes that the covenant of the law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham and Christ. The introduction of the law did nothing to change the covenant with Abraham. The Mosaic covenant involving the law was to reveal man's need for a Savior.

Gal. 3:18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

If our inheritance (blessing) depends on the law, then it can't be from the promise. God's promise to Abraham was dependent on God; the blessings promised through obedience to the law given to Moses were dependent on man. God would never allow a promise to His Son to become dependent on the works of man. God's promise to Abraham was totally dependent on God's grace and love, and the Scripture affirms over and over again that His love never fails.

Lamentations 3:22 "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

1John 4:8 "...for God is love."

Gal. 3:19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

Gal. 3:20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

Well, I understand the first sentence—What is the purpose of the law? God gave us the law because of our sin, to show us our need, to provide a way of maintaining fellowship with God in spite of our sin (in combination with the sacrificial system) until the "Seed should come to whom the promise was made" - the Messiah, Jesus. Again, I think we are seeing the emphasis that the real heart of God is toward His Son. Our blessing comes because of the Son's love for His Father and us.

The word "ordain" means to put into effect, to decree, order, establish or enact. So the literal interpretation would seem to mean that it was enacted by angels in the hands of a mediator. I know that angels are messengers. Does this mean that God used the angels in the giving of the law (not just the commandments) to the people through Moses, the mediator (a position eventually assumed by the high priest)? I don't recall thinking in any of my reading that anyone was talking to Moses except God. Maybe He'll tell me more as I keep going. We know that a mediator isn't needed unless there is more than one entity involved--but God is one. Therefore, the mediator is needed between God and someone else (you and me). Also, a mediator is only needed when communication/ fellowship has been suspended/ destroyed between parties (for any number of reasons - in this case sin).

Gal. 3:21 *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

Does the law go against the promises of God? No. If there could have been a law that would have provided spiritual life / righteousness, then that is what God would have used.

Gal. 3:22 *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

The Scripture concludes that we are ALL under sin; there is none righteous...

Psalms 14:3 "...there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Romans 3:10 "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...."

...Because of that and because of His love for us, we were given the promise of a Savior, Jesus Christ, who would be able to give us the spiritual life that the law could not—if we would just have faith in Him.

Gal. 3:23 *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

"Before faith came" - This is a bit confusing since even Abraham and many other Old Testament saints were justified by faith. It appears that this would refer to specific faith in Jesus and His work on the cross.

"we were kept under the law" - The language seems to indicate bondage or prison, which of course is where sin puts us. We would continue to be bound by obedience to the law and the sacrificial system until the true faith through Jesus was revealed. Guzik makes a good point, however, in noting that those who were obedient to the law were protected (from the Greek for "kept"). He states, "It protects us by showing us God's heart. It protects us by showing us the best way to live."

This seems to be a good place for an excerpt from my journal in Romans.

Rom. 5:20 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

When God gave the law to man through Moses, He was giving us a standard by which to measure ourselves, a method through which to identify sin in our lives (as we learned in chapter 3).

Romans 3:20 "... for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Through comparison to God's stated standards, the fact that our lives abound with sin is revealed. That was a loving act by God. We can only appreciate the value of the gift in comparison to our need for it. Jesus established this principle when explaining what inspires love and then making application to the woman who washed His feet with her tears in repentance of her sin.

Luke 7:41-43 "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."

Luke 7:47 "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

It takes much grace to provide for much sin, and God's grace is available in abundance to the sinner—far more than He actually needs. Our need is to have our sins forgiven; His grace provides for us to go beyond that forgiveness and empowers us to live in obedience to Him and earn heavenly rewards.

Gal. 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

The law was meant to show us our need for Christ, just as a teacher reveals truths to students. This wasn't just a dead end fact. We weren't left without a way to fill that need. We can be justified by faith. We can be made whole---just as if I'd never sinned.

Gal. 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Once we have accepted Jesus' finished work on the cross by faith, we no longer have a need for a teacher to show us what we need; we have graduated. We have the Holy Spirit ever with us to teach us as necessary.

Time for another excerpt from Romans.

Rom. 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom. 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

One purpose of the law was to guide us into righteous living. It provided loving guidelines, but had no power to make us obey those guidelines. Obedience was subject to the flesh, the choice of the person as to whether to obey or not—and we discussed earlier our natural response to the forbidden (cf 7:8). In His great mercy God decided to make a way for us to be able to fulfill the righteousness of the law. He sent "His own Son" to earth as a man. The word *likeness* means "resemblance, similar." He was born without the sin nature (just like Adam was first created) inherited through Adam; He was born the seed of the woman—not the man.

*Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed**; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*

"for" sin – through (all over); (to "pierce"); through (as adverb or preposition), i.e. across:—beyond, farther (other) side, over.

I was a bit surprised when I looked up this word. It seems to be saying that God's Son, Jesus, was sent in the flesh to get man beyond the reach of sin, to "pierce" the sin nature. How? By condemning sin in the flesh through His victorious life of righteousness and obedience. He was tempted in every way that we are tempted; He can truly empathize with every struggle or sorrow or frustration or _____ with which we are confronted in this life. Yet, He responded in victory—never yielding to sin.

*Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in **all points** tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Through His willing sacrifice on the cross and glorious resurrection, we (through grace by faith) can now experience victory over our own sin nature. Our choice is to walk, live our life, in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit of God that indwells us. Our desire is to live so as to reflect the character of Jesus and the righteousness of the law.

Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we become God's children, His sons and daughters. Sometimes I just sit and think about what that means. It's pretty amazing to me that the God described in Job 38-41 and Isaiah 40-46 has taken me as His child, His daughter. And still I struggle with sin??????

And one more excerpt from Romans.

Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

It stands to reason that if we are children of God, we are heirs to all that He possesses, joint-heirs with Jesus His Son.

*Hebrews 1:2 "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed **heir of all things**, by whom also he made the worlds...."*

Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Paul is telling the people that their identifying with Christ in baptism was like putting on NEW clothing—not just any clothing; they had put on Christ. To "put on Christ" is to clothe ourselves with His power and His character. We should live accordingly.

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Once we put on Christ there is no such thing as Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female—we are all God's children, all on level ground. There isn't one set of blessings for some and another set for others. We all have access to the same privileges and the same source of power to enable us to live victoriously.

Gal. 3:29 *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

If we are God's children through Christ, then we are also the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. The "seed" is referring to our heritage. Our spiritual heritage is of Abraham since he is our father in the faith. He was the one through whom the promise of Christ was made (cf v14).