**Sons and Daughters of The Faith**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Galatians 3:1-9**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 6, 2022**

**Galatians 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.

**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?**

Saints, in chapter 1:11 Paul had called the believers in Galatia “friends”; in this verse, he used a much more impersonal Galatians to address his converts. He preceded it with a strong adjective reprimanding their behavior—they were foolish.

The Greek word does not mean that they were mentally deficient; rather, it suggests the behavior of people who are intelligent yet are not using that intelligence to perceive the truth (the same Greek word is used in Luke 24:25; Romans 1:14; 1 Timothy 6:9; and Titus 3:3).

**Luke 24:25**

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

**Romans 1:14**

“I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise”

**1 Timothy 6:9**

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition”

**Titus 3:3**

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Saints, the Galatians had shifted from believing in the death and resurrection of Christ for salvation to believing that they must obey the law in order to be fully saved.

Such illogical thinking implied that

 **“Christ died for nothing”**

Paul sarcastically thought that perhaps a magician had cast an evil spell on them. The Galatian believers had become fascinated by the false teachers’ arguments, almost as though they had been hypnotized. How else could this nonsense be explained?

He was questioning, not their intelligence, but their lack of discernment. They were being fooled by arguments that they should have been able to refute.

Paul’s preaching of Christ crucified was so clear and vivid, it was almost as if they had seen it with their own eyes, as if Paul had shown them a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. By turning their eyes from the Cross to the law, they were confusing the very simple facts of salvation.

**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?**

Saints, to rectify the Galatians’ confused thinking, Paul returned to the basics. Four simple questions in the following verses will reveal their foolishness.

**Romans 10:17**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

Paul’s first question was most basic, for it focused on how their Christian life had begun.

The Galatians’ shift to following the law for salvation was completely contrary to their initial experience of the Christian faith at Paul’s preaching. So he asked,

**“Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law?”**

The Galatians had accepted the gospel and had received the Holy Spirit (see also 4:6). Did this happen because they obeyed the law or because they believed the gospel Paul preached to them?

The Galatian believers, mostly Gentile in background, didn’t even have or know the law, so the answer was painfully obvious. Their salvation began by faith. Law keeping had nothing to do with it.

Paul mentioned as an indisputable fact that the Holy Spirit came upon the Galatian believers only after they had believed the message Paul had told them about Christ.

The apostle could point to their reception of the Spirit at the time of their conversion as proof that God had accepted them—based solely on their acceptance of the gospel message. God’s Spirit had been within them long before the Judaizers had entered the scene.

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

Saints, the Galatians had started their Christian lives in the Spirit, so why would they now try to become perfect by their own human effort?

**Romans 8:6-11**

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul highlighted how completely inconsistent it was to receive a gift and then try to earn it. But Paul had heard that those in Galatia were attempting just that—trading freedom in Christ for slavery to tradition.

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

Saints, Paul’s next question asked the Galatians to apply their past experience to their immediate situation. The words you have suffered so much for the Good News probably included actual suffering at the hands of nonbelievers.

Paul and Barnabas certainly had faced great suffering as they preached in the region of Galatia on the first missionary journey.

**Acts 13:45-50**

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " 48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

Saints, it may be that the new believers in each of these cities had been treated the same. “Are you now going to just throw it all away?”

In other words, “If you were willing to suffer so much for your newfound faith at the hands of the Jews, why would you now turn back to obeying the Jewish laws?”

This too was foolish. Even as he said it, he was unwilling to believe it, for he added: “Surely it was not in vain, was it?” Paul did not feel it was hopeless to try to bring the Galatians back to true faith.

**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?**

Saints, Paul had yet another rhetorical question. “Does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law of Moses?”

The similar question in verse 2 is in the past tense, reminding the Galatians of their initial response of salvation and what happened because of that response. This verse, however, is in the present tense, focusing on what God continued to do for the Galatians. He “gives” his Spirit and “works” miracles among them every day.

**Romans 10:17**

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

Was this happening because the Galatians were carefully observing the Jewish law or because they believed in Christ and proclaimed that opportunity to others? Again, the answer was painfully obvious. God’s continual blessings come just as salvation came—through belief in the message they heard about Christ, not through law keeping.

**6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

Saints, the previous questions pointed to the Galatians’ experience; then Paul turned to an example from Scripture to support his teaching of salvation by faith alone. For the Jews, there could hardly be a more important and influential person than Abraham, the father of their nation.

But how did the Galatian Gentiles know about Abraham? It could be that the Galatian converts had heard about Abraham from the Gentile converts to Judaism in the church (there were many Jews in southern Galatia).

To be “declared righteous” means accepted by God. Abraham did not have Moses’ law, nor did he have the cross of Christ, the gospel, or salvation as offered in the New Testament. But he was God’s servant, acceptable to God and considered righteous because he believed what he knew of God.

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

Saints, the Judaizers had argued that to be a Christian a person had to first become a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, and subsequently obey the Jewish laws. Jews, including these Judaizers, were extremely proud of their lineage traced back to Abraham.

**Romans 1:16-17**

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

At the heart of Jewish salvation theology was the concept of being “children of Abraham.” The Jews believed that they were automatically the people of God because of their heritage. But from Abraham’s own example, Paul showed that the real children of Abraham are all those who put their faith in God, those who believe in Christ and the salvation he offers.

As Abraham was saved by faith, so each person is saved by faith. As Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith in God, so both Jews and Gentiles who believe are declared righteous because of their faith in Christ. Belief is the first and only step to salvation.

**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."**

Saints, Although Paul had made his point, he added a further devastating application of the Scriptures against the Judaizers’ false teaching: not only are Gentiles and Jews saved by faith, but it was God who planned from the beginning to accept the Gentiles on the basis of their faith.

**Genesis 12:1-3**

1 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

God had promised this Good News to Abraham. God’s promise that all nations will be blessed through Abraham encompassed God’s plan for the ages. All nations would be blessed through Abraham because his descendant, Jesus, would bring salvation to all who believe.

The blessing promised to Abraham was intended, from the beginning, to be given by God to all nations, not just to the Jews. This blessing, both to Abraham and to the nations, was promised by God before any laws or works were given or required.

Thus, God would justify the Gentiles, not by works of the law, not by circumcision, but by faith. Salvation is the ultimate blessing, a gift simply to be believed and received. All believers in every age and from every nation share Abraham’s blessing.

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

**Romans 11:17-18**

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

Saints, Faith did not begin in the New Testament; rather, it has been the key requirement for all believers from the beginning. God’s relationship with his children has always been based on faith. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, exemplified faith in God, even though his faith faltered at times.

Abraham clearly stands out among those before and after him who lived by faith. All who put their faith in Christ and in the salvation we have been so graciously offered, share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

While it is true that “all nations” would be blessed, there is a qualifier—only the people in those nations who put their faith in Christ would receive the blessing of salvation.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**