

Galatians 3:1–5

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?

Why Did You Let the False Teachers Beguile You? Galatians 3:1-5

INTRO:

Do you remember our Lord's rebuke of Peter in **Matthew 14**? *“And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”* The implication is there was no reason to doubt. In a similar way, the Apostle Paul astounded by the defection of the Galatians to a false doctrine, could not understand why they left the truth. There was no reason for the Galatians abandoning justification by faith alone.

I. What Happened to you? (verse 1)

II. The Evidence of the Spirit (verse 2-6)

I. What Happened to you? (verse 1)

Galatians 3:1 *“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?”*

A. After giving a great deal of background, the Apostle Paul now turned his attention to the Galatian believers in a personal way. He is astounded that these Galatian Christians abandoned the gospel. He said three things to them.

B. First, they were *“foolish.”* The Greek word translated foolish means to be without sense or foolish. Their tolerance of these false teachers indicated the Galatians did not realize how dangerous these teachers and their doctrine was. Although Satan

the roaring lion seeking whom he might devour was in their midst, they did not see that eternal souls were on the line here. While the false teachers may have presented their views as enlightened, they were damnable heresies.

C. Second, the Apostle was shocked they did not see the problem. They had to be under a spell of some sort. ***“Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth.”*** This obeying the truth was believing in Christ not keeping the Law.

D. Third, they forgot what they saw with eyes of faith through the Gospel. ***“You should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?”***

This is the offense of the cross. If Jesus, the Son of the living God, the God/man, had to die in our place, how could we do anything to merit His provision? Remember **1 Corinthians 1:23–24?**

“We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Because we can do nothing but believe upon the crucified Christ Paul could write, **Titus 3:5.**

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

II. The Evidence of the Spirit (verse 2-6)

Galatians 3:2–6 ***“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?—Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 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?”***

A. In **verse 1**, the Apostle voiced his astonishment. Now here in the rest of this paragraph, Paul underlines the evidence which showed why they had no reason to listen to the false teachers.

B. What is the great sign of our conversion? It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need to remember, the Apostles categorical statement in **Romans 8:8–9.**

“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 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.”

Paul asks several rhetorical questions of these Galatians.

1. First in verse 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?”

From a doctrinal point of view this is easy to answer. The New Testament insists we receive the Spirit of God, who is also called the Spirit of Christ, when we believe. There are no tasks we must do to receive the Holy Spirit in our lives.

2. The Second question piggy-backs on the first question.

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

Having begun our walk with the Lord Jesus by faith, do we have to add circumcision or any other thing to make our standing in grace complete? Salvation from first to last is by faith.

3. Third, Paul alludes to the price they paid in that pagan environment for trusting Christ alone for their justification. ***“Have you suffered so many things in vain— if indeed it was in vain?”*** No one knows what exactly the Apostle Paul refers to in this verse. However, we need to recognize that being a Christian in the pagan society in that region was not easy. Remember when Paul and Barnabus originally ministered in that area, they faced pretty stiff opposition to his message. He even endured a stoning. Why would we assume these who initially believed his message would not suffer also?

4. Finally, Paul asked a concluding question.

“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?”

How did they know the Spirit of God was in them? **(1)** They received the Spirit of God by believing in Christ alone. There were no prerequisites to have the Spirit take up residence in their lives. **(2)** The Spirit of God ***“works miracles among you.”*** This can be understood as miracles (demonstrations of God’s power) among you. For example miracles like Paul’s healing the lame man in Lystra **(Acts 14:8-10)**. This was the early days of the church and God was still validating his message. **(3)** Or it could mean miracles in each of them. If this is the way to translate this, it probably refers to the contrast in **Galatians 5:18–23**.

“If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

C. So, was there a reason to depart from justification by faith alone and mix in a little works of the Law to make their salvation complete?

1. Salvation can never be by works. The cross demonstrates our inability to do anything to save ourselves. A do and don't list will never get us to heaven.

2. Are we sure we have the Spirit of God living in us? The evidence of His presence is not the Spiritual Gifts. It is the fruit of the Spirit. Do we find these qualities growing stronger in our lives as the Lord Jesus gain more and more control of us?

Hymn #405 *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*