

**BOOK OF GALATIANS**  
**WHERE'S THE PROOF? PART 1**  
**PROOF IN THE BELIEVER'S EXPERIENCE**  
**GALATIANS 3:1-5**

**Introduction**

This passage actually begins the major teaching of the Book of Galatians—**that folks are justified by grace through faith alone and not by any good works nor by the works of the law.** Of course Paul has already addressed this issue in part both in Chapters 1 and 2.

I think that most of us would agree that **those who have a testimony of having believed on Christ for their salvation should be as good as they can be and do as much good as they can do.** (i.e. As a Believer on Christ, we should both **have a desire to live right** and **strive to live right** in our day to day walk!)

But that is not the point of what Paul is getting at here in this Scripture! The point of this Scripture is that a person **is not justified before God by doing good or by keeping the law! That is not what saves us and that is not what secures us or keeps us saved!**

There is **no one** who can **do enough good** or **keep enough laws** to become perfect and acceptable before God! God is perfect, and no matter how much good we do and how much law we keep, we do not become perfect at it! In fact, we messed up on the front end when we were born sinners, we continue to mess up each and every day, and even after we're saved, **we ALL still fall woefully short of the glory of God that is found in Christ Jesus alone!** (*Romans 3:23*)

**Good works and works of the law DO NOT save us or perfect us!** They do not make us acceptable to God nor do they in any way impart to us eternal life! **Only the righteousness of Jesus Christ applied to us by grace through faith can justify us and make us perfect in the sight of God!**

God knew from the beginning that **if we were ever going to have eternal life, then He had to give it to us!** None of us could have attained it on our own! But God's Divine wrath against our sins had to be satisfied! (*Romans 6:23*) **Payment had to be made for our sin! And God made the payment for us through the finished work of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary!**

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Someone says, "*Sounds too easy.*" (Easy for us, yes, but not easy for God!) "*Doesn't sound fair.*" (Do you want what's fair...[i.e. what you deserve] or do you want mercy? Me? I wanted mercy and received mercy!)

So, how do we know that God will truly justify us by grace alone through faith alone in Christ Jesus? Where is the proof? The answer to this question is in this section of Paul's letter to the Galatians!

**THERE IS THE PROOF IN THE BELIEVER'S EXPERIENCE:**

**Until someone has had a personal, spiritual experience with Jesus Christ, their concept of salvation will likely be built on a foundation of works!**

**The natural mind has no concept of grace and faith.** The Believer's experience validates the truth of one of the all time great invitation hymns: "*Just as I am without one plea.*" That is how we all come to Christ!

**When we realized that we were lost sinners and that we didn't stand a chance of getting to heaven otherwise, we looked to Christ and Christ alone and cast ourselves on God's mercy and grace that comes only through Christ's shed blood on our behalf!**

Understand what was happening here in these Churches in Galatia. There were some influential Jewish people **claiming to be Believers** who had become a part of these Churches. **Because of their knowledge of the Scriptures,** these new folks were placed too quickly in positions of leadership and teaching. However, **these folks had not been truly converted by Christ and their understanding of the true Gospel was all confused!**

**These folks began to teach this FALSE DOCTRINE that faith alone was not enough to save a person! They taught that in addition to believing on Christ, a person had to place themselves under the Mosaic law and focus their life upon the law in order to become acceptable to God!**

**But, that went CONTRARY to how they came to Christ in the first place!**

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**I. WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU, THAT YE SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH? (VS. 1)**

Note that **this whole passage is a series of questions. Paul is stirring the Galatians to THINK**, which we will see in a minute is something they **had not** been doing!

Paul first points to the salvation experience of the Galatian believers to disprove that a person becomes acceptable to God by the works of the law!

**The true Believer's experience proves that he is justified by grace through faith alone!** All a Believer has to do is to go back and remember **when he first truly believed the Gospel and he will see this truth!**

Paul begins this Chapter by calling the Galatian believers out for being so gullible in the first place! **(Read Vs 1) They weren't thinking!** They were just soaking up what these false teachers were teaching **rather than challenging them with the truth they knew!**

Falling for error makes a person *"foolish."* That word *"foolish"* means *"unintelligent; we'd say stupid!"* The Galatians were **listening to false teaching and just passively drinking it in!** They were **not thinking through what was being taught!** They were just **sitting and soaking up** what these false teachers were teaching **without actively applying their minds to see if what was being taught was true!** That is a very dangerous thing to do!

That word *"bewitched"* there primarily means *"to draw away by fascination"*. These false teachers (the Judaizers) were **very learned in the law of God** (after all they were Jews). No doubt there were some **very persuasive speakers** among them with **dynamic personalities** and maybe even some **charisma** which gave their teaching a **reasonable and maybe even a logical air to it!** **But preaching and teaching must be grounded in TRUTH!**

And theirs wasn't! Oh how we must be cautious about what we swallow as truth!

It all may have sounded reasonable and logical, especially to a person who was **not taking time to think it through** and **not comparing the teaching to the true Gospel of Christ they had received!**

The Galatians simply **were not obeying the truth.** They had left trusting in Christ only and were trying to become acceptable to God by placing themselves under the ritual of religion and by subjecting themselves to the law and focusing their lives upon the law instead of focusing on Christ!

**False teaching can lead a believer away from Christ!** Now it can't cause him to be lost again. But still it is tragic, because the true Believer is a person who at one time has seen the truth that Christ was crucified for him!

**These Galatians had clearly seen the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ** through the preaching of Paul and his missions team! Paul's preaching had plainly pointed out and explained the Gospel! In fact, **the Lord's death had been so clearly explained that it was as though the Lord Jesus had been crucified in their presence, before their very eyes.**

**There was, therefore, no excuse for their following these false teachers!** Somebody should have spoken up to those false teachers and said, *"Hey wait a minute that ain't right!"*

**There was a time when these folks knew what Christ had done for them what they could not do for themselves!** How that He died for them and had taken their sins upon Himself and bore their punishment for them! **They knew that they had forsaken all of their religious ways, repented of them, and trusted Christ alone for their salvation!**

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How then could they be so foolish and bewitched as to now not obey the truth—especially when they had clearly seen and understood what the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was all about?

*Question #1 down...let's move to Question #2...*

**II. RECEIVED YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH? (Vs 2)**

**The point being: A true Believer receives the Holy Spirit by faith, not by the works of the Law!**

This question strikes at the very heart of the Gospel! **How did you begin your Christian life? Did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?**

There is one thing true Believers know, and the true Believers in the Galatian Churches knew it too—no person earns, wins, or merits the Spirit of God! **We are ALL too polluted and too short of God's glory to deserve the Spirit of God!**

No matter how much good a true Believer does or how much of the law is kept, the true Believer knows that he did not and cannot totally eliminate his sinful thoughts and behavior—not fully, not perfectly!

Therefore, he did not become a Believer—he did not receive the Holy Spirit—by good works nor by the keeping of laws! **He became a Believer and received the Spirit of God by HEARING the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believing it—“the hearing of faith.”**

He heard and came to an understanding of his sinful condition and the awful judgment to come because of his sin! **(Totally guilty!)**

He heard and came to an understanding of his inability to personally do anything to change his sinful condition! **(Totally bankrupt!)**

He heard and came to an understanding of the glorious news that Jesus Christ had died for him and paid his sins on the cross of Calvary by His death! **(Totally paid for!)**

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He heard and came to an understanding of the glorious news that after Jesus Christ died and was buried He gloriously rose again from the grave and they believed it! **(Totally Saved!)**

It was the Holy Spirit that convicted him of sin and of Righteousness and of judgment AND when he believed began to indwell him! **(Totally Secure!)**

**God took his faith in Christ and counted it for righteousness!**

The Believer's sins are transferred to Christ's account!

Christ's righteousness is transferred to the Believer's account!

*2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

The true Believer **knows that he is not righteous on his own**, but that God **counts him righteous** because he has believed on His dear Son!

The true Believer also knows that **the Holy Spirit does not dwell in him because of any goodness or work of his own!** He knows that he **has the Holy Spirit because God counts his faith in Christ as reason enough to put His Holy Spirit into his heart!**

**That is how a true Believer receives the Spirit of God**, and that is how these Galatians had received the Spirit of God!

In order for Salvation to take place, a person must hear the glorious message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believe it! Again, that is **“the hearing of faith!”** (See *Romans 10:1-17*)

The **Holy Spirit** is the **gift of God the Father** that is given to the Believer at **the request of the Son**. No man can earn, win, or merit the Spirit of God. God's Holy Spirit is given by God and by God alone! *John 14:16-17 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive . . .but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”*

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*Question #1 and #2 are down...let's move to Question #3...*

III. **HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT, ARE YE NOW MADE PERFECT BY THE FLESH? (Vs 3)**

The point is this: **A believer does not become spiritually mature by focusing upon his flesh or what he can do with...his efforts...his works...his goodness...his discipline...his morality...or his behavior!**

No matter how strong and disciplined one's flesh is—no matter how many good deeds he is able to do or how many laws he is able to keep in his flesh—**the Believer's flesh does not make him grow spiritually!**

**Focusing upon our flesh and upon the strength and work of the flesh only causes the Believer to concentrate upon himself.** It emphasizes **self**, not the **Spirit!** It emphasizes the human and that which is physical, not the spiritual and that which is heavenly!

No matter how many good works are done and no matter how many laws are kept, they cannot make a man perfect; they cannot impart eternal life to a man! And only the perfected get to go to heaven!

There is no person from descended from Adam that is in Heaven eternally because of his good works or his ability to keep the law! There is no law whatsoever that can keep a man alive forever and ever.

No matter how many works of the law a man has done in his flesh, he has not achieved perfection—not the holy perfection that makes him acceptable to God.

If he is ever to be perfect enough to be acceptable to a Holy God, it will be because God perfects him, not because he has worked and become perfect through his corruptible flesh and human efforts.

As Paul says, "*Are you so foolish?*"

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A man is saved when he sees his need, repents of his sin, and truly believes on Jesus Christ and is "born again"—a spiritual thing!

A man then matures in Christ as he is daily renewed by the Holy Spirit—also a spiritual thing!

The only way a Believer can spiritually grow and mature is to focus his life and mind upon Jesus Christ. The Believer must focus upon the things of Christ, and as he does, the Spirit of God will draw his mind to spiritual things.

The Spirit of God lives within the believer. He is there **to work within the true Believer and to help him grow and mature in Christ!** The Spirit is the one who helps the Believer be transformed more and more into the image of Christ!

*2 Corinthians 3:18 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

*Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

**And the Spirit is the guarantee that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to finish the project of that transformation and take us home to be with Him!** *1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

*THAT'S 3 QUESTIONS DOWN...LET'S QUICKLY LOOK AT THE LAST TWO...*

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**IV. HAVE YE SUFFERED SO MANY THINGS IN VAIN?**

When the Galatians accepted Christ, they had suffered ridicule, abuse, isolation and persecution from their neighbors; and apparently the persecution had continued for some time (Acts 14:1-7, 19, 22).

The point is this: If the Galatians now turned away from Christ to some false teaching, then the suffering they had borne for Christ would be in vain. They would have suffered for nothing. In fact, they would now appear foolish if they turned away from Christ when they had suffered so much in order to embrace Him!

**V. DO THOSE THAT MINISTER TO YOU THE SPIRIT AND WORK MIRACLES AMONG YOU DO IT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH? (Vs 5)**

There were different ones who had ministered to the Galatian Churches—The Apostle Paul and Barnabas are both mentioned in **Acts 14:8ff!**

These miracles were not due to Paul or Barnabas or others with them being subject to the works of the Law. It was God's Holy Spirit that was working in these workers the various gifts of the Spirit!

Nor were the miracles due to any of the Galatians having done the works of the Law. The Galatians did not earn, win, or merit the service of these workers or the miracles.

What happened was that they simply heard about the power of faith, and they believed God, that God would meet their needs. And God did—God worked miracles among them because of the "*hearing of faith.*"

They heard the glorious message of faith in Christ, and they believed in the power of faith in Christ; therefore, God honored their faith and met their needs through His Holy Spirit and His Spirit filled servants!

**Conclusion**

Let's wrap this up! **As Believers, our journey with Christ is meant to be a growing one that is full of faith!**

Our new life in Christ begins by grace through faith alone in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! (*Just As I Am Without One Plea*)

Our experience continues from that point as a faith walk! Just as we received the Lord Jesus Christ by grace through faith, so also our walk is by grace through faith! **It is not by the operation of God's Law in our lives, but rather the operation of God's Holy Spirit in our lives that brings about our maturity!**

**The Christian life is to be a testimony that's built on Christ's handiwork in our lives by our faith and trust in Him!** It is NOT a reflection of our own efforts, but a reflection of Christ in us, the hope of glory!