

Galatians 3:1-6–You are a fool if you believe you are saved by ceremonies

Rienecker, TSK, GreekLexicon, Henry, PNT, Geneva, Trapp, Family, JFB, Clarke, Gaebelein, Handfuls, Calvin, Gray, Poole, INT, Robertson, Barnes, Beloved in the Lord Jesus: There is **a notable change** in Chapter 3 of Apostle Paul's letter to Galatian Christians. **After proving his equality and authority** with the other Apostles, Apostle Paul then **turned his focus on the Galatians**. He had the **right to speak**...and **they were bound to listen**. So he spoke.

What did he tell them? Based on what he proved earlier, he pointed out **they were foolish to be drawn away from the doctrine of salvation** by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Today you will see **3 ways** Galatians proved they were foolish.

Our headings are: If you believe you are saved in any other way than I have taught,

You are foolish and you mock God's Son

You are foolish and you mock God's Spirit

You are foolish and you mock God's Servant

Our goals are: That you will **rejoice because you were justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone**, and that you **realize the mockery others make of God by trying to add human works to salvation**.

You are foolish and you mock God's Son

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?

1. Apostle Paul addressed believers in Galatia as "fools" because they were mocking the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Is that strong language? Yes. But it was **a huge mistake they were making**...a very careless mistake...and they should have known better...for they were taught better.

They heard of Christ's full atonement for all sins of his people, and if they only *received his work* by faith they would be saved. Yet they tried to work for their salvation.

Christ was clearly portrayed (literally: a graphic image)...and the necessity of the cross emphasized...but the Galatians were still fooled.

This deception was worse than for someone who was ignorant and never saw Christ displayed.

These people knew the truth and still allowed themselves to be fooled.

2. Apostle Paul said they were deceived -like those who do witchcraft deceive!

As a result they abandoned true doctrine that gave praise to God and instead replaced it with doctrines where man gets the credit for what God did. They were like demon possessed men who abandon their families and become self-destructive.

3. Lessons:

a. There is no need for images of wood and stone when the Gospel can be proclaimed clearly! That is what men are bound to listen to. This is what preachers are required to do. The Gospel is portrayed by clear preaching.

b. Sometimes you have to use strong language to correct bad behavior. Yes, there are times you can correct by encouraging others to do what is right, but there are times when you have to be bold and strong! **(Political correctness is killing us! Speak the truth in love – as long as your goal is to correct.)** So telling my I'm fat to insult me is wrong. Telling me I'm fat so I can lose some weight and be healthy is good.) **The same thing is true when someone has doctrinal errors!**

c. Christians are to be known as children of wisdom (for the Lord is Wisdom), and this is what people must see in you.

d. Don't be foolish and let the popularity of a preacher make you take at face value what he says. Learn to search out what he says. **We see what happened when Canada had a balanced budget, we were paying off our debts, and we were the most respected nation in the world, and then PM Trudeau said, "We need change."** It hasn't work well, has it?

e. Don't ever reject the gifts of God! What can you offer? Yours gifts will never be good enough. And what an insult to God!

You are foolish and you mock God's Spirit

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?**

1. All Christians had received the Spirit of God when they were saved; none can be saved without the Spirit of God!

All Christians had the sense of their spiritual adoption by the Spirit of God.

Some likely would have received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, and yet, because they wanted to promote human intellect, they ignored what the Spirit was doing in them. *Downright foolish!*

2. These Christians expected they would complete the work of sanctification by their own efforts, even though they knew they

could only be regenerated and restored by the Spirit of God.

Ever seen people take a beautiful house, do some exterior upgrades, and then the house looks uglier? In a way, that's what these people were doing. They thought they could update that which was perfect...that which was built by the Holy Spirit of God!

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

3. Worse, they abandoned that which they knew to be true and had suffered for in the past (but were sustained by the Spirit)!

Specifically, the Jews persecuted new believers in Galatia who had put their trust in Jesus. Jews were the first persecutors of Christians, long before the Romans. They also took advantage of Christians.

Hebrews 10:32 But recall the **former days** in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while **you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations**, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and **joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods**, knowing that you have a better and an **enduring possession for yourselves in heaven**.

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?

4. And then Apostle Paul made it clear that God did miracles by his Spirit, not because the people were good.

These miracles were done by those who preached. This confirmed what they were saying: Salvation was by grace, through faith, in Christ.

But the Galatians **refused to let their eyes be their teachers**.

5. Lessons:

a. It is possible for you to quell the Spirit of God – resist him- when you want to do your own thing.
You shouldn't! He always encourages you to do what is right and to give the right glory to God.

b. You will only be disappointed if you try to earn your salvation or contribute to it, rejecting the Spirit of God's work inside and outside of you. You will frustrate yourself because you will always fall so short of the glory of God. Worst of all, **in doing this you mock the Spirit** of God.

c. On the contrary, remember what the Lord has done your you and what he has given to you. And know it is all free – absolutely free – apart from any human contribution. **Remember your hopelessness.**
Isaiah 55:1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; **And you who have no money**, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

You are foolish and you mock God's Servant

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

1. Christians in Galatia, as they were influenced by Judaizers, mocked Abraham, the Father of the Faith.

They mocked him by **ignoring what he believed and taught**.

Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, **a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised**, that he might be **the father of all those who believe**, though they are uncircumcised, **that righteousness might be imputed to them** also,

2. Abraham came from a pagan nation and was likely a fire-worshipper from Ur of the Chaldees, even so, out of no good work of his own, God called him from darkness to light.

God never negotiated with Abraham in a covenant agreement.

God told him to he would save him and bless him and Abraham bowed in knees to God and received what God offered. (Genesis 12)

Jesus walked in between the cut animals on Abraham's behalf. (Genesis 15)

Abraham was too old to have children, but God gave him strength.

Sarah, Abraham's wife was barren, yet God opened the womb! (Genesis 21)

Jesus provided the ram so Abraham did not have to kill Isaac his son. (Genesis 22)

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 **By faith he dwelt in the land** of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for **he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.** 11 **By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed,** and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

3. Abraham believed in Jesus and looked forward for his justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

As a result, **he was credited with the righteousness** of Jesus.

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD, and **He accounted it to him for righteousness.**

John 8:56 "Your father **Abraham rejoiced to see My day,** and he saw it and was glad."

Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**"

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" And he was called the friend of God.

This is why God told Abraham **God was his exceedingly great reward.** (Genesis 15) **Abraham had nothing of himself to offer, but when he was restored to God through Christ, he had everything.**

4. Lessons:

a. Nothing in your hands you bring, simply to the cross you must cling. This was Abraham's tune and that must be your tune. **If you don't sing the same tune you are lost.** If you **try to take some of the credit** from God, **you are a thief** who is robbing God of his full glory. This is why Arminianism is so bad. Arminians always end up with a weak view of God! "**God has no hands but yours,**" is a **shameless lie.**

b. Don't try to negotiate with God. In doing so, you will try to steal credit that belongs to him alone.

c. Jesus did not just walk being the cut pieces of meat and say, "May this happen to me if I break covenant," but he literally had to endure the sanction of being "cut in two," for Abraham and for you on the cross. He had to do it. Even if you did die on the cross for your sins, you would not be able to be raised to eternal life. You could only meet God's justice.

Conclusion:

The Galatians were fools for thinking they could earn their salvation by fulfilling the Old Testament ceremonies, or help earn their salvation. In doing so, they mocked God's Son, God's Spirit, and God's servant. More, it left them feeling frustrated, inadequate, and lost.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus:

1. (Here is what you must always repeat.) Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. If you don't say so and believe it, you mock the Son of God, the Spirit of God, and the servant of God. If you don't say so and believe it, you rob the Lord Jesus of the full praises that must be raised to him.

2. So tell the world it can do nothing to save itself. It must simply cry out to God for help and receive forgiveness because Jesus paid it all. They are fighting to save themselves, but they will always fail!

Finally: It is natural to want to think you have within you the ability to save yourself, or at least help save yourself. But that is false thinking...thinking that way will land you in hell. **Your only hope is to recognize Jesus is your only hope** – the only one who can save you by his sacrifice on the cross for sins. Call on God today.