

13. Justification & Sanctification are both by faith in Christ, not by the works of the law Gal 2:21 - 3:25

- ◇ (Galatians 2:21) "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Paul summed up his case against Peter in this statement. By bowing to the pressure of the circumcision party, Peter and the others who followed him were "setting aside" God's grace!

(GK) *atheteō*: to do away with, disregard, to reject, to refuse

The essence of grace is for God to give people what they do not deserve & have not worked for cf. Rom 4:4 "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt." A worker's wages are rightfully earned - they are not a gift. A worker deserves his pay.

When good things are given freely to one who has not earned them, that is grace.

(Cf. Mercy : - *lenience, compassion, patience or forgiveness shown toward someone who has offended & harmed you; with-holding the punishment which someone deserves for doing wrong.*)

Christ's death was not necessary if we can get salvation by works, law & self-efforts!! If by their own obedience people can remove their guilt & condemnation, and can earn forgiveness & eternal life by "doing things," then Jesus' death was not necessary. To add to grace 'sets it aside'!!

- ◇ (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?*

Cf. Gal 5:7-8 "You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you." ... cf. Gal 1:6 says they were "called in the grace of Christ" ... called to obey the truth of the principle of grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Christ, not works.

What you are doing is very foolish! Who tricked you & brought you under their spell? Why are you fascinated with a doctrine that is not the truth?

As Christ was "crucified," so you ought to have been by faith "crucified with Christ," and therefore "dead to the law" (Gal 2:19, Gal 2:20). To demonstrate convincingly that faith alone is God's method of dealing with us, the apostle asked a series of 4 questions in Galatians 3: 2 - 5

(1) How did you receive the Holy Spirit? Vs 2

The evidence of conversion is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (cf. Rom 8:9). Paul asks an important question: did they receive the Spirit by faith in the Word of God, or by doing the works of the Law? Of course, the Spirit came into their lives because they trusted Jesus Christ.

(2) Can you sanctify yourself? Vs 3

It is foolish to think they could begin the Christian life in one way (i.e. by faith) but grow to spiritual maturity in another way (i.e. by works).

(3) Did you suffer (for your faith in Christ) in vain? Vs 4 (cf. Acts 14:21-22)

'In vain' = 'needlessly'... since you could have avoided them by professing Judaism

(4) On what basis did God perform miracles among them? Vs 5 (cf. Acts 14:3, 8-11).

The "therefore" at the beginning of vs 5 resumes the thought of vs 2 (vs 3 & 4 are a parenthesis) in order to use the example of Abraham as a proof of justification by faith - vs 6

- ◇ Gal 3:6-9 The example of Abraham, the “father of the Jewish nation.”

How was Abraham justified? Gen 15:6 He believed God’s promise, and it was credited to him as righteousness. It is very important to note that he was justified before he was circumcised (cf. Gen 17:24). How then could the ‘circumcision party’ insist that circumcision was essential to being accepted by God?

Just as Abraham was saved by faith so are those who now are his spiritual descendants. Both Jews and Gentiles are declared righteous by faith. This is in harmony with the Scripture which taught that all nations will be blessed through Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3).

- ◇ Gal 3:10-14 The contrast between the curse of relying on the law (vs 10) and the blessing & freedom of believing the promise of the Spirit through faith (vs 14).

- ◇ Gal 3:15-18

Some of the Jews agreed that Abraham was justified by faith, but said that the Law, coming at a later time, entirely changed the basis for achieving salvation. To refute this Paul argues that if human covenants cannot be broken, how much less can God's covenant. The promises of God are unchangeable (immutable) & permanent, and find fulfillment in Christ. The blessing of justification by faith is still in effect and was not changed by the giving of the Law.

- ◇ Gal 3:19-25 The purpose of the Law

It served as a means of restraining sins i.e. it showed the people they were acting against the character of God. The Law was temporary and was only in effect until the Seed (the Messiah; cf. Gal 3:16) came, after which it was no longer needed. The Law was inferior because of the way it was giving: while God made promises to Abraham directly, the Law was established by a mediator. There were in fact two mediators, the angels representing God, and Moses representing the people.

Vs 21-22 Is there conflict between the Law and the promises of God? God gave both the Law and promises, but for different purposes. And it was not the purpose of the Law to give life. Theoretically salvation could have come by the Law if people had been capable of keeping it perfectly, but they could not (Rom 8:3-4).

The Law could not justify or give life, but it did prepare the way for the gospel. What part then did Law play in this respect? It declared the whole world... a prisoner of sin... trapped under the dominion of sin (cf. Rom 3:9, 23). When people recognize this and give up attempts to please God by their own works, the way is prepared for them to receive the promise of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Vs 23-25 Paul used two figures of speech, likening the Law to a prison and to a child-custodian relationship. Before the coming of Christ, the Jews were kept under guard as if in a prison or in custody. The law is pictured as a guardian and guide of children, or as a tutor. This emphasizes the thought of teaching; the law taught lessons concerning the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, and the need for atonement.

The words “to bring us” are not in the original... the verse teaches that the law was a Jewish guardian until the coming of Christ.