

Sermon Discussion

15 May 2022

Read Galatians 3:1-14

Dig Deeper

Paul's tone was direct and severe (*You foolish Galatians!*). To embrace a doctrine which declared the death of Christ unnecessary was irrational. It would almost appear they had been *bewitched*. For this they were, however, without excuse because the Saviour had been **clearly portrayed** (literally "to write for public reading" as with the posting of a public announcement) as crucified before them. Paul had vividly and graphically proclaimed the crucified Christ to the Galatians; yet their eyes had been diverted from the Cross to the Law. They were without excuse.

In order to demonstrate convincingly that **faith alone** is God's method of dealing, the apostle asked four questions.

(1) How did you receive the Holy Spirit? Paul did not question their salvation but challenged them to consider whether they were saved and received the Spirit by faith or on the basis of works.

(2) How will you grow? Presupposing the answer that the Galatians became Christians by faith, Paul asked if they were so foolish as to think they could begin the Christian life in one way (by faith) and move on to spiritual maturity in another (by works).

(3) Did you suffer in vain? Persecution evidently soon followed, and Paul reminded them that if they turned from grace to Law they would have suffered for nothing.

(4) On what basis did God perform miracles? That miracles were performed among the Galatians by divine power was recorded in the Book of Acts. It was clear that these were not the result of the works of the Law but from the hearing that leads to faith.

In v. 6-8, Paul linked the past with the present and declared that **just as Abraham was saved by faith** so were those who now claimed to be his children. Abraham and his spiritual descendants, both Jews and Gentiles, have **all been declared righteous by faith**. Abraham's faith in God's promise was accepted by God as righteousness and so the patriarch was justified...before he was circumcised.

1. Why is it important for Christians to study the Old Testament? What are some of the dangers of ignoring the Old Testament?

2. How did God's promise to Abraham highlight the need for faith?
3. What is the relationship between faith and obedience?
4. Read James 2:14-26. How do you reconcile Paul's words about justification by faith with James' words about faith and works?
5. How does the law help us see our sin? How does the law prepare us for grace?
6. In your own words, explain what it means that Jesus fulfilled the law of Moses.

Application & Prayer

Since the late 1700's, "Rock of Ages" has been a familiar song sung in many churches. The second verse of the song, in particular, beautifully articulates the truth we find in the book of Galatians:

*Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil the law's commands
Should my passion never fade
And my efforts all be weighed
All for sin could not atone
You must save and you alone*

Take some time singing this hymn or meditating on its words. Let it inspire you to thank God for meeting the demands of the law that we could not, forgiving us our sins, and saving us from ourselves.