

FAITH BRINGS RIGHTEOUSNESS (3:1-14).

Introduction to Chapters 3 and 4.

1. The necessity of obedience (to the fullest extent of human ability) in order to be saved, does not make man his own Savior; because the Christian, no more effectual than the Jew, is simply not able to give perfect compliance to God's teachings. Thus, all salvation is by grace, without human merit, unearned and incapable of being earned. [JBC]
2. Paul was out to prove that salvation is by grace through faith and not by works of the Law. And his logic is unassailable. [WWW]
3. Paul uses six different arguments to prove that God saves sinners through faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law:
 - a. The Personal Argument (3:1-5); in which he asks the Galatians to recall their personal experience with Christ when they were saved.
 - b. The Scriptural Argument (3:6-14), in which he quotes six OT passages to prove his point.
 - c. The Logical Argument (3:15-29), he reasons with his readers on the basis of what a covenant is and how a covenant works.
 - d. The Historical Argument (4:1-11) explaining the place of the Law in the history of Israel.
 - e. The Sentimental Argument (4:12-18), is where the apostle appeals to them to remember his love and their happy relationship in days past.
 - f. The Allegorical Argument (4:19-31) which is based on the life of Abraham and his relationships with Sarah and Hagar. [WWW]

A. The Personal Argument (3:1-5).

Intro.

The argument from Christian experience was a wise with which to begin, because Paul had been with them when they had become Christians. Paul balances the subjective experience of the Galatian Christians with the objective teaching of the unchanging Word of God. Paul reminds them:

1. "They saw God the Son" (3:1).
You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?
 - a. In calling them "fools" or "foolish" Paul is not violating Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:22), because two different words are used and two different ideas are expressed. Foolish in Gal. 3:1 means "spiritually dull" (see Lk. 24:25), while the word Jesus used carried the idea of being "empty" or "empty headed." [WWW]
 - b. It was "Christ and Him crucified" that Paul had preached in Galatia, and with such effectiveness that the people could almost see Jesus crucified for them on the cross. The words evidently set forth translate a Greek word that means "publically portrayed, or announced on a poster." [WWW]
2. "They received the Holy Spirit (3:2-3).
This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
 - a. This is a shameful rendition of a phrase which actually means "the obedience of faith." As so frequently in the NT, faith must be understood as an obedient faith, as in Rom. 1:5; 16:26. "The hearing of faith" in this verse means exactly the same thing. [JBC]
 - b. One of the evidences of conversion is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (Rom. 8:9). The work of the Spirit:
 - 1) The HS convicts the lost sinner and reveals Christ through the word (Jn. 16:7-11).
 - 2) The sinner can resist the Spirit (Ac. 7:51) or yield to Him and obey Christ.
 - 3) The believer is born of the Spirit (Jn. 3:1-8) and receives a new life.

- 4) The believer is baptized by the Spirit so that he becomes a part of the spiritual body of Christ (1Cor. 12:12-14).
- 5) The believer is sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14) as a guarantee that he/she will one day share in the glory of Christ.
- 6) The Christian should walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,25) by reading the Word, praying, and obeying God's will.
- 7) If he/she disobeys God, then he/she is grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), and if he/she persists in doing this they may quench the Spirit (1Th. 5:19).
- 8) Christians are to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21) which simply means to be controlled by the Spirit. [WWW]
- c. The full meaning is: "Are you so foolish, after receiving the Spirit in consequence of your faithful obedience of the gospel, to think that Judaism can bless you in any manner?" [JBC]
3. "They began by the Spirit" (3:4).
 Did you suffer so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain?
 - a. This leads Paul to another question: "If you did not begin with the Law, why bring it in anyway? If you began with the Spirit, can you go on to maturity without the Spirit, depending on the flesh?" The word 'flesh' here does not refer to the human body, but rather to the believer's old nature.
 - b. Since we were saved through the Spirit, and not the flesh, through faith and not Law, then it is reasonable that we should continue that way.
 - c. When a normal child is born, he/she has all that he/she needs for life; nothing need be added. When the child of God is born into God's family, he/she has all that they need spiritually; nothing need be added!
 - d. "You have begun in the Spirit," writes Paul. Nothing need be added! Walk in the Spirit and you will grow in the Lord. [WWW]
4. "They experienced miracles from God the Father" (3:5).
 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
 - a. The same Holy Spirit that came into the believer at conversion continues to work in him and through him so that the whole body is built up (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19). The Father continues to supply the Spirit in power and blessing, and this is done by faith, not by works of the Law. [WWW]
 - b. The "obedience of faith" mentioned here at the head of the chapter makes it certain that Paul was dealing with a contrast between Judaism and Christianity, and not between two ways of understanding the gospel. [JBC]

B. The Scriptural Argument (3:6-14).

Intro.

Paul now turns from their subjective experience, to the objective evidence in the word of God. We never judge the Scriptures by our experience; we test our experience by the word of God (Eph. 1:13-14). In the previous section Paul asked six questions; in this section he will quote six OT statements to prove that salvation is by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law. Since the Judaizers wanted to take the believers back into the Law, Paul quotes the Law! And since they magnified the place of Abraham in their religion, Paul uses Abraham as one of his witnesses! [WWW]

1. Abraham was saved by faith (3:6-7).
 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7
 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.
 - a. The words 'accounted' in Gal. 3:6 and 'counted' in Gen. 15:6 mean the same as 'imputed' in Rom. 4:11,22-24. The Greek word means "to put into one's account." When the sinner obeys Christ, God's righteousness is put into his account. [WWW]

- b. Abraham's faith, not his faith only but his obedient faith, was the basis of God's reckoning him to be righteous. See Jas. 2:21. [JBC]
 2. This salvation is for the Gentiles (3:8-9).
The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." **9** So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.
 - a. The logic here is evident: if God promised to save the Gentiles by faith, then the Judaizers are wrong for wanting to take the Gentile believers back into the Law. The "true children of Abraham" are not the Jews by physical descent, but Jews and Gentiles who have believed in Jesus Christ. [WWW]
 - b. The NT meaning of the word "faith" in the NT is most often faithfulness," which is the normal meaning of the word in the LXX, where the word never means trust/faith in the sense of the current usage of it. [JBC]
 3. This salvation is by faith, not Law (3:10-12).
For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." **11** Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." **12** However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."
 - a. Paul quotes from Deut. 27:26 and says that salvation could never come by obedience to the Law because the Law brings a curse, not a blessing. [WWW]
 - b. Paul's next quote is from Hab. 2:4; "the just shall live by faith." Nobody could ever live "by Law" because the Law kills and shows the sinner he is guilty before God (Rom. 3:20; 7:7-11). [WWW]
 - c. Next Paul quotes from Lev. 18:5 to prove that it is doing the Law², not believing it, that God requires. [WWW]
 - d. The Law cannot:
 - 1) Justify the sinner (2:16).
 - 2) Give righteousness (2:21).
 - 3) Give the gift of the Spirit (3:2).
 - 4) Guarantee the spiritual inheritance that belongs to God's children (3:18).
 - 5) Give life (3:21).
 - 6) Give liberty (4:8-10).
Why, then, go back to the Law? [WWW]
 4. This salvation comes through Christ (3:13-14).
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- **14** in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
 - a. These two verses beautifully summarize all that Paul has been saying in this section:
 - 1) Does the Law put sinners under a curse? Then Christ has redeemed us from that curse!
 - 2) Do you want the blessing of Abraham? It comes through Christ!
 - 3) Do you want the gift of Spirit? This gift is given through Christ to the Gentiles!
All that you need is in Christ! There is no reason to go back to Moses. [WWW]
 - b. In summary, all of this raises an interesting question: how could these Judaizers even convince the Galatian Christians that the way of Law was better than the way of grace? Why would any believer deliberately want to choose bondage instead of liberty? Perhaps part of the answer is found in the word 'bewitched' that Paul uses in Gal. 3:1. The word means "to cast a spell, to fascinate." Let us not be carried away from the truth of the Gospel by those who would bewitch us (see 2Cor. 10:5; 2Pet. 1:16). [WWW]

NEXT LESSON.

- A. Chris Shaffer will teach a Bible class, not from Galatians, next week (10-10). Gone to Texas.
- B. The Intent of the Law of Moses (Gal. 3:15-29) will be taught on 10-17.