

Book of Galatians –Teaching #4

Without the letters from the Apostle Paul, the church would be in darkness concerning the Church as the body of Christ, its function, its activity, and its destiny.

It is astonishing how dependent we are upon the writings of the Apostle Paul.

Christianity might have been just one more Jewish sect without the writings of the Apostle Paul.

The main theme of the book of Galatians is the activity of the Judaizers. These folks admitted that we are “saved” by grace alone, but that we need to remain “saved” through the works of the law.

You can see that in the churches today. Give your heart to Jesus as He beckons you through His Holy Spirit, however once you belong to Him, in order to remain in Him there are certain things that you must do. Thus, they have added to “saved by grace” by adding works on our part in order to remain saved.

This message may be subtle, or it may be outright, but the fact remains that there are those who teach that there is work of some sort on our part in order to remain in relationship with Him. Be aware beloved of this heresy and reject it as often as you hear it. It may include things like – what you wear, where you go, what you eat, how you live your life or whatever. It adds to “faith” or belief with something else in order to be fully saved.

In the case of the Church in the Province of Galatia, these believing Jews – the Judaizers, were adding to the ‘saved by grace’ message that Paul preached, with a more “perfect salvation” by adding to their relationship with Jesus, the Old Testament rituals such as circumcise, and dietary laws and other provisions given by Moses to the Jews.

When you think about it, this is all they knew. Steeped in tradition, knowing that they were the chosen of God, given miracles after miracles throughout their history, what else could they believe? Obviously, God was with them throughout their history, why would He change anything now?

Many sects in the Church today have fallen into the same trap. I do this because it has always been the “Baptist” way. We “Church of Christ” folks have always done things like this, why would we change? We are the ones with the “truth” and I will be glad when others see it.

Problem was that God had called out this “highly intelligent” “well taught and steeped in tradition” Pharisee, sent him to the ground, blinded his eyes, speaking directly to him about “great things he must suffer” for the sake of the gospel message, with Paul’ on the road to Damascus. In addition, Jesus had taken Paul into the desert to teach him “mouth to mouth”, not allowing him to be taught by anyone else but Himself.

So here come these folks that were teaching that people are “saved by faith” AND by keeping the law.

Now it is very interesting that according to **Romans 15:4** it says “*for whatever things were written before (Old Testament) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.*” Many Christians today ignore the Old Testament, some even have left it out in their bibles with the exception of the psalms and proverbs. And are totally ignorant of the Jewish holidays, Jewish feasts and they are missing out. However, the temptations are that we are to include them in our worship today and they are thereby placing themselves back under the law. They are rich positive things that need to be known by the church today. Studying the articles in the temple, lampstand, table of showbread, mercy seat, Laver, holidays etc. all have deep meaning for the believer today. But not to be placed in our lives to place us back under the law.

Remember beloved, the flesh **loves** to do things that are religious. Celebrate holy days, practice rituals, in an attempt to do good works for God. Many religious systems today present a garbled confused way to salvation, that is actually a way of **bondage**. Such things as keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, earthly priesthood, holy days (with ashes on your head), obeying rules - ALL OF WHICH ARE SWEEPED AWAY IN GALATIANS AND ARE REPLACED BY THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY THE BELIEVER HAS THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. AMEN AND AMEN.

The Galatian believers were in a pickle because the foundation of their faith was being attacked.

The Epistle contains no word of commendation, praise or thanksgiving, there is no request for prayer, and no mention of their standing in Christ.

By the way beloved, did you realize that Paul is the only Epistle writer who ever asked for prayer. Just a side note. He is also the only Epistle writer who uses the word “grace” at all. Peter uses it once but not in the salutation.

Paul has no toleration for Legalism. Remember beloved that if left to ourselves, we all have a “bend” toward legalism. That is why it is critical in the maturity of the believer today to be setting under a message steeped in the “grace of God.”

Anyway, Paul was faced with these folks who were teaching these Gentile believers these truths to be part of their personal lives.

Ok, now to **Galatians chapter 3 verse 1**- “*O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not believe the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?* – Paul’s tone is direct and severe. Foolish Galatians, you have embraced a doctrine that declares the death of Jesus Christ was irrational and unnecessary. You see their eyes have been diverted from the “cross to the law”

Did you receive the Holy Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He asks them. He did not question their salvation, only the means by which they received salvation. Interesting question here beloved. These folks did not have the law to begin with. The law was never given to the gentiles, only the Jews.

Paul asks, did you receive Christ through the law (which they did not have) or the hearing by faith? Further he is asking them, “are you now going to move forward in your relationship with Him through what you do? Are you now perfected by what you do- ie. Your works. Are you going to now move on to maturity by what you do?”

That is exactly what these Judaizers were proclaiming.

That question is paramount in the church today.

Scripture says; “As you have received Christ, so now walk ye in Him.” Well, how did you and I receive Christ? Right – by faith. Well then how do we walk toward maturity having now received Him? Same way beloved, by faith.

Remember beloved, Justification and Sanctification (being set apart from this world) or being perfected, are both by faith. Not by works, but by faith.

There is no provision under the law for the Holy Spirit to do the work of sanctification. Apparently, these believers thought that keeping the law would somehow aid them in their walk. It would not.

Many believers today are under the same impression.

Verse 3 of Chapter 3 is the **key** verse in this Epistle. “*Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect (complete) by the flesh*”?

The statement in **verse 4** is really true. They were suffering as Christians. Not that they were looking for suffering from Jewish believers (Judaizers) but from the rest of the unbelieving world. “*Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vein*”? Paul is saying that to suffer is going to happen, but have you done so in vain. How foolish to think this.

Paul then asks them – On what basis did God perform miracles in your life? Was it through the law, or by the hearing of faith. These miracles were done in their lives and recorded in the book of **Acts – 8-11 and 14-3**. These miracles were preformed as supernatural things not by the law, but by hearing that leads to faith.

This then was the personal argument **3-1-5**.

Paul will now address the spiritual argument - **3: 6-14 Here** Paul will make 6 Old Testament passages to make his case. In verse 6 he builds his case on Genesis 15:6, verses 8&9 from Genesis 12:3. The 10th verse on Deuteronomy 27 verse 26, verse 11 on Habakkuk 2:4, verse 12 from Leviticus 18:5, verse 13 on Deuteronomy 21:23 and verse 14 on Genesis 12:3.

He is taking these 6 quotes to build his bedrock arguments. In Genesis 6:14, Abraham was saved by faith because it would be 400 years before the law was even given. Could not have been by law, it was not yet given.

More next time.

www.TomMorrisonGodcast.com