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Galatians Chapter 3 - Pt 1

A Study

By

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Introduction



Tom Fuller has been teaching the Word since 1977. It is a driving force in his life to communicate God's truth in a way that will encourage growth and maturity in the body of Christ. Tom has studied and worked under such teachers as Chuck Smith, Jon Courson, and Rick Booye. Tom's teachings are now heard around the world thanks to the Internet. The Lord has especially used his teaching ministry to train and

encourage pastors, missionaries, and lay workers in spreading the gospel and teaching God's word in a way that is applicable to everyday life.

Tom was ordained a minister of the gospel by Trail Christian Fellowship in October of 1988. Tom began ministry in 1977, leading worship and teaching a Bible study at UCLA. In the years since he has served as elder, worship leader, and vocational assistant pastor at churches both large and small in California and Oregon. Tom and his wife, Margaret, have led worship for the past twenty five years together.

Galatians Chapter 3 - Part 1

Contract Law & Billboards

Driving down the freeway there are two types of signs we encounter: billboards and direction signs. Direction signs tell us of upcoming exits and towns. Billboards advertise products and services to us. It's important that billboards use a graphic that grabs the attention and no more than eight words—a driver just doesn't have the time to read more than that while going along at, um, 65 miles an hour.

As Paul the Apostle talks about the purpose of the law in order to counter those who were trying to make Christians into Torah observant Jews. He says the law is like a billboard in that it pictures Jesus Christ, and God broke the eight word rule a little—doing it in ten—commandments—to reveal His character. But it is also like a direction sign pointing the way towards the coming of Jesus Christ.

Before we get to that, the Apostle gives us a little lesson on contract law in order to show that righteous standing before God comes from believing a promise God made, and kept *before* the giving of the law.

We're been talking a lot about legalism. There are really two types of legalism. The first, brought by the Judaizers, brought the Law as a gate to salvation. The second group, called "Nomists" or "Labelists" allowed people to come to Christ through the gospel, but then added rules and requirements to them afterwards.

Nomists stress earning your salvation. Today the Seventh Day Adventists might fall into this category. Labelists insist on form to show your piety. You're okay as long as you perform the right ceremony or use the right method to reach God. A wide range of groups might fit here, but certainly the Catholic Church. But any kind of superstition to gain God's blessing would make you a labelist.

Bottom line: you can't improve upon the salvation of Jesus Christ! As we get into this, let me remind you of my definition of legalism: "Legalism is the application of an external set of principals or goals to your life (or the lives of others) in order to feel better about yourself or your relationship with God rather than letting God transform your life from the inside out."

1

Paul calls them "fools" but it basically means people who know better but are not using their minds



to perceive truth. HCSB says "who hypnotized you." King James says "bewitched." The Greek word means to "fascinate by false representations." It's kind of spiritual sleight of hand. Sometimes someone's presentation is so slick that you don't see the problem until it's too late. We need to pay attention to the words and then check it out with the Scriptures!

He says Jesus was "vividly" portrayed to them by Paul as crucified. It means as if he'd put it on a billboard it was so clear. The word "Crucified" is in past perfect, a past action with continued effect. The salvation we get from Jesus' crucifixion cleansed us from sin and continually gives us everything we need to have right standing with God.

2

See, the presence of the Spirit of God in a life is a key. In the days of the Old Testament Law, the Holy Spirit would descend upon or "envelope" a person for a specific time and purpose. Gideon, for instance, was empowered by the Spirit to fight the Midianites. Sampson was enveloped by the Spirit to fight the Philistines. But in Joel 2:28 God promised to pour out His Spirit "on all humanity." We saw this happen on the day of Pentecost.

Then in Romans 8:9, Paul says: "*You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God lives in you.*" The word "lives" is the Greek word *oy-keh-oh* which means "to remain." When you become a member of God's kingdom through the sacrifice of Jesus

Christ, God's Spirit takes up permanent abode within you. Jesus called it being "born again" in John Chapter 3. But the thing about being "born of the Spirit" is that you can't birth yourself. You can't save yourself. God has to do it for you. So when Paul wants them to think about how they got the Spirit was it by "works" or by "hearing of faith"? And then the punch line:

3

Again with the foolish! Paul is trying to goad them into actually thinking. They began their relationship with God by the Holy Spirit regenerating them and coming to live inside of them. He is taking an active part in transforming them. So now they are going to take over for the Holy Spirit to finish the job? Having a relationship with God is not like getting a jump on your car battery. "Thanks for the new charge, Lord. I can take it from here." No. You are plugging into a new power source and you must "abide" or "remain" connected to that source as Jesus said (John 15:4).

4

Paul and Barnabas suffered greatly at the hands of the Jews for representing Jesus as the Messiah. It's quite possible that the Galatians similarly suffered. If after that, why would buy the rap that you need to go back into Judaism after they just caused you to suffer?

5

Not only did God save them and give them the Spirit, He continues to work in and through them. All this did not come through their works. Their continuing relationship with God and effectiveness for the gospel isn't the result of their abilities but God's gift through their response in faith.

6 – 9

Here is where Paul begins a longer argument about the basis for faith, going all the way back well before the Law was given

to Moses. It could be that the Judaizers were trying to get the Galatians to become descendants of Abraham by becoming proselytes of Judaism. But Paul takes them to the Scriptures that show it wasn't the works of the Law but the hearing of faith that produced righteousness (Genesis 15:6). Further, God promised a relationship to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3, 18:18). It isn't just faith in and of itself, though, but faith in Someone in particular.

10 – 12

This is Paul's quick lesson in how the Old Testament really works:

Deuteronomy 27:26 says "Cursed is anyone who does not put the words of this law into practice."

Habakuk 2:4 "The righteous will live by his faith."

Leviticus 18:5 "Keep My statutes and ordinances; a person will live if he does them. I am the Lord."

So you are cursed if you don't obey, and can't be justified by obedience anyway. Yet the only way to live is to keep the Law. It's kind of a Catch 22, but purposeful because of what Jesus did.

13 – 14

I mentioned this last time. Deuteronomy 21:23 says that if you are hung on a tree you are cursed. Jesus, though innocent, allowed Himself to be hung on a wooden cross so that God's curse for our sins could fall on Him. He obeyed the law, was cursed by the Law, but raised from the dead because He was pure. Jesus then gave us His life by our faith, trust and reliance on Him—and not just any life. This isn't human created life, it is Spirit given, eternal life.



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