



Session 7: Galatians 2:19-3:5

Galatians 2:15-21 | Justification in the Age of Grace

- Verses 15-18 included on session 6
- Verse 19 –
 - The heart of the sentence is this: *I died so that I might live.*
 - The death came *to the law, through the law.* How does one die to law through law?
 - Paul said in Romans 4:15 that **the law worketh wrath** to those who disobey its commands.
 - Because Paul had lived outside the law, the law had condemned Paul.
 - There was, therefore, no sense (nor ability) in which he could go back into the law and begin to live in harmony with it once again, it would be *too little, too late.*
 - But, the reason Paul died to the law was to **live unto God**. Thus, Paul claims that God *led him away from the law*, just as he had made the same claim in relation to Christ in verse 17.
- Verse 20 –
 - Just like Christ was crucified through the Jewish law, Paul joins with Christ to say, “me too!”
 - This does not say that *I live by "faith in the Son"* but rather **by the faith of the Son**.
 - That is, "by the faith of Jesus (**who loved me, and gave himself for me**) I am able to live."
 - If Christ had not had this faith (to pray, "not my will but thine be done,") I would not be able to live today. This is a focus on Christ's work, not our faith.
 - See also Galatians 2:16 and Philippians 3:9
 - Note that Paul does NOT say that we are *saved* by His faith. Rather, we are saved by placing our faith in His Work.
 - Note the Darby translation: "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me; but *in* that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me."
- Verse 21 –
 - In having left the law to trust rather in the completed work of Christ, Paul says he will not **frustrate the grace of God** by returning to the law. The word **frustrate** is a translation of ἀθετέω [atheteo], a negation of “to put into place.”
 - One should not conclude that because **righteousness** does not **come by law** that a person has always been saved in the same manner as under this dispensation. We will see this more in Galatians 3:21-25.
- A summary of vv. 15-21 -
 - The entire section has been written to **Jews by nature** (v. 15), because Gentiles were *never* under the Law.
 - Specifically, it is written to Jews who know that **a man is not justified by the works of the law** (v. 16) and are believers **justified by the faith of Christ** (v. 16).

- Some of these Jews were wanting to be **justified by Christ** (v. 17) but were moving back to the law to which they had already died (vv. 18-19).
- Paul teaches that there is no way to go back. The law had crucified them, just as it had done so for Christ (v. 20), and now Christ was their only hope (v. 20).
- Paul encourages the Jews not to **frustrate the grace of God** by going back (to that which they cannot return if they wanted) (v. 21).

Galatians 3:1-5 | The Bewitched Galatians

- Verse 1 –
 - Paul comes with perhaps the strongest language he has used in any of his epistles. This is in order, since the work of the Judaizers is such a different Gospel than the one he proclaims.
 - Paul calls the Galatians **foolish** and **bewitched**. The word **foolish** is the translation of ἀνόητος [anoetos], from *nous*, the Greek word for *mind*, thus “mindless” or “brainless.” He speaks to the Galatians as if they were under a spell.
 - The crucifixion of Jesus Christ had been **evidently set forth** by the written word (the word προγράφω [prographo] requires writing).
 - Note: the modern versions do not contain the words, **that ye should not obey the truth** nor the words **among you** (a reference to the written word, not to the location of the crucifixion). The problem was that they were no longer obeying **the truth** of Paul’s gospel. To leave this out changes the meaning of the text and leaves the content of the *bewitching* in doubt.
- Verse 2 –
 - Paul asks a rhetorical question about whether **the Spirit** was received **by the works of the law** or by **the hearing of faith**. Clearly they knew the answer.
 - In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were obedient to the Law. Under Paul’s ministry, the Spirit came to those who came to the Lord “by grace through faith.” Paul asks, in effect, “under which dispensation were you saved?”
- Verse 3 –
 - Sadly, many today are **so foolish** to believe they can be **made perfect by the flesh** through the works of the law. It is not hard to find those who teach that we are **made perfect by the flesh**.
 - For example, Dr. Michael Horton says, “The law functions as the threatening judge to send us to Christ for our justification, but it also functions as the command of our Father in sanctification.”¹
 - Statements like this abound and create a continuing role of the law both in evangelism and continuing in the faith.
- Verse 4 –
 - If the Galatians are going to go back to the Law, then their suffering for Christ was **in vain**.
 - We do not know what manner of suffering the Galatians had experienced, but Paul is shocked that they would suffer so much and then leave that for which they had suffered.
- Verse 5 –
 - The personal pronoun **he** must be a reference to God, who **ministereth** (supplies) **the Spirit, and worketh miracles** among the Galatian believers.
 - As in verse 2, Paul asks if this is **by** (out of) **the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith**. Once again, the answer is clearly that God blesses with the Spirit and miracles in faith, not works.

¹ <https://www.whitehorseinn.org/2012/03/sanctified-by-grace/> - accessed 11/07/19