

Galatians

Chapter 3

Introduction:

1. Paul laid a solid groundwork in chapters 1 and 2.
 - He established his credentials as a God-called apostle.
 - He established the fact that his gospel of grace was of divine origin.
 - He established the fact that his ministry and message were unique and separate from the twelve's ministry and message, and recognized as such by the twelve.
 - At the end of chapter 2, Paul recounts the confrontation he had with Peter.
2. But as chapter 3 opens, Paul is now going to take aim at the Galatians themselves. This chapter opens with the words, "*O foolish Galatians...*"
3. Many of the Galatian churches had been ill-affected by the false teaching of the Judaizers and Paul will now follow the advice he gave in **Titus 1:13**, "*Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*"
4. Paul rebukes the Galatians out of the deep and sincere love that he had for them. cf. **Proverbs 27:5-6**

Verse 1

1. This first verse is very strong, direct, and to the point.
 - The word "foolish" means "unintelligent," also translated "unwise."
2. The Galatians were not thinking for themselves, they were allowing someone else (the Judaizers) to do their thinking for them. They were acting foolish and Paul lets them know it.
 - A word of warning: be careful what you get from the Internet and in books – do not allow someone else to do your thinking for you. False teachers are slick – they take a verse out of context, here and there, and construct doctrinal systems that are false, but sound so good. **Romans 16:17-18**
 - This is why your teaching should primarily come from our local church – there you can ask questions, dialogue with your spiritual leaders, observe their lives, and get clarification, when needed. You should compare what they say with the Bible, but not with every Bible teacher who has a Web-site (illustration: the Bereans - **Acts 17:11**).
 - Just as false teachers had crept into the Galatian churches, they creep in today via the television, Internet, radio, books, etc. It is so much easier to disseminate false doctrine today.
3. These false teachers had "bewitched" the Galatians.
 - "Bewitched" means to fascinate (by false representations).
4. These false teachers were slick. It reminds us of **Ephesians 4:14**, "*...by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*"
5. The result was that these believers were no longer obeying the truth. What truth is Paul referring to?

6. As we read the rest of the verse we see that Paul is referring to the sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross. Paul had set forth Christ before them.
 - "Set forth" means "to announce, prescribe, to write previously."
7. Paul had declared Christ to these people and they had heard it and believed it and were saved, completely apart from the works of the law.
8. Now they were attempting to add something to the finished work of Christ. They were attempting to add law to grace. What work could THEY do that could possibly add to the glorious, completed work of Christ?
 - This is why Paul said, "*O foolish Galatians...*"

Verse 2

1. Paul asks them a direct question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit by doing the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"
 - The phrase "the hearing of faith" refers to them hearing the gospel of Christ preached and simply placing their faith in Christ to save them (cf. **Romans 10: 8-17**).
2. They knew the answer to this question. They had heard Paul preach the gospel and trusted Christ as their Savior. Through faith in Christ, God had saved them and changed their lives.
 - The moment believing sinners trust Christ, they receive the Holy Spirit.
Ephesians 1:13
 - There are no works that need to be done. We receive the Spirit by faith alone.