

The Evidence for Grace

Galatians 3:1-14

We all want to be accepted. We do whatever we can to win the approval of others, and try our best to avoid rejection. If we put so much effort into pleasing other people, then what about God? How can we possibly please Him and avoid His rejection?

The Galatians struggled with this. They wanted to be accepted by God, but they seemed to forget that God had already accepted them! They also seemed to forget why God accepted them. Their thinking had gotten so mixed up, that Paul practically wondered if they had been bewitched. In Galatians 3:1-14, Paul sets them straight and reminds them of the sufficiency of faith in Christ and His sacrifice for us.

Faith or Observance of the Law

Read Galatians 3:1-5.

1. What strong word does Paul use to describe the Galatians in verse 1? Why do you think he calls them this? (You may need to read the first two chapters of Galatians to get a better idea of what led up to this chapter)

2. What seems to have been Paul's frustration with the Galatians?

3. By appealing to their own experience, what did Paul want the Galatians to realize about the Holy Spirit? (v. 2)

4. What do you think it means to try to attain your goal by human effort? (v. 3)

5. A word in verse 4 can be translated as either "experienced" or "suffered." Explain what you think each translation could mean:

6. What has their faith (and not observance of the law) produced? (v. 5)

Read Galatians 3:6-9

- 7. Who did Paul give as a prime example of one who gained favor with God through faith? (vv. 6-9)

- 8. What does Paul quote from Genesis (see Genesis 15:6) that shows that God favored this man of faith?

- 9. What is the difference in believing in God and believing God?

Here is a summary of Paul’s line of reasoning in Galatians 3:6-9.

Abraham (Genesis 15:4-6)

God made a promise to Abraham: to multiply his offspring and through his offspring to bless all nations.
Abraham believed God (i.e. took Him at His word)
God credited Abraham with righteousness (declared him righteous, not guilty).

Us

God made a promise to us: to cancel out our sins and give us eternal life.

We believe God (i.e. take Him at His word).

God credits us with righteousness (declares us righteous, not guilty).

Read Galatians 3:10-14

- 10. According to Paul, who are under a curse? Why? (v. 10)

- 11. Men were teaching the Galatians that to claim salvation through the Messiah, they must become Jews. How does Paul show that living by faith and living by the law are not compatible? (vv. 11-12)

- 12. We often say that Christ saves us, but what is meant by Christ *redeemed* us? (v. 13)

- 13. How did Christ become a curse for us? (v. 13)

- 14. Read Romans 4:4-10. What is the blessing of Abraham? (v. 14)

Life Application

1. In what ways do people still think today that they need to do certain things to earn their way to heaven?
2. How would you respond to someone who says they hope that they are good enough to get to heaven?
3. There are several important words in verse 1-14 which describe what Christ has done for us. Identify some of these, then spend time thanking God for each one.