

Galatians: Free - Chapter 3:1-9

Galatians 3:1-5 ESV, *“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that **Jesus Christ** was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive **the Spirit** by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having **begun by the Spirit**, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does **he who supplies the Spirit** to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—*

This is a powerful portion of Scripture. It is powerful because Paul **makes a wonderful defense of the true Gospel by referencing the Trinity** – the Son (Jesus Christ), the Spirit, and the Father (who supplies the Spirit). Essentially, *“By being foolishly bewitched, you’ve called into question the work of God.”*

In other words, *“Your **foolishness has resulted in you offending the work of the God of Heaven in all His fullness.**”* Ouch!

Now, the **big word** that jumps off the page is the word **“bewitched.”** You won’t find that word anywhere else in the Bible. Paul says, your foolishness is the result of you letting someone bewitch you, and it wasn’t **Elizabeth Montgomery**; no, it wasn’t a lighthearted funny mishap. It was vicious!

Baskainó (bas-kah'-ee-no) *“to fascinate or charm in a misleading way, to slander – or seek to do harm to someone by lies or deception or false promises.”* It’s even related to ***magic spells and sorcery, the evil eye and demonic power.*** It is a Greek word always used in a bad sense.

*So, is Paul actually saying that **these Galatian believers** were bewitched?*

If that’s true: Can any Christian be bewitched? Can a genuine believer, a child of God, follower of Jesus indwelt & regenerated by the Spirit be bewitched?

Well, the fact is, the Galatians Paul is writing to here had to be true believers given the presumptions laid out in these questions. How **did you** receive the Spirit? **Having begun** by the Spirit! God **supplied the Spirit to you, did miracles among you** because **of your faith, not works!!**

There’s never a doubt, in Paul’s letter, of whether or not these were believers. **So, absolutely yes**, genuine regenerated Holy Spirit indwelt believers can be bewitched – **Paul says so!**

Maybe you've never thought that true believers could be bewitched. But every warning in the New Testament about false teachers and false doctrine is an assumption that **believers can be bewitched**. Commands to hold on to the truth and to guard it, are based on the assumption that we can be **bewitched**.

Now that bewitching of **believers** isn't seen when someone says, *"I don't believe in God, or don't believe in the Bible or in Christ or in the cross or in the resurrection."* All those truths we sincerely believe! The bewitching comes when those who've accepted the gospel of grace through faith, are led to question the sufficiency of God's work of salvation and then **redefine it**.

Bewitched, not by sorcery or magic spells, but **by false doctrine**.

How is it possible for believers to become susceptible to this?

Back to **Galatians 3:1-3 ESV**, *"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? **Are you so foolish?**..."*

"You foolish Galatians," – Paul calls them "foolish" twice here. It is the Greek word, **anotos**, meaning, *"without knowledge," "ignorant," "lacking in the power of perception," "lacking in sense."* It means *"impotent of intellect."*

"You're just being dumb. You should know better. You're not using your spiritual minds."

J. B. Phillips' translation, *"O you dear idiots, how can you be so stupid?"*

Which reminds me of something that happened at the airport. But before I tell you about that, let me tell you...

We just got back from **a trip from Birmingham, to the Grow** conference, it was as wonderful as always, and I can't wait to put in place some great new ideas that will help all of us here at Discover reach our God-given potential and lead the joy-filled life He intended for us **and how** we can be more effective in making this a safe and comfortable place for our friends and loved ones who are not believers and who are looking for joy and hope in their lives.

Anyway, back to what I was going to say about things that hit me as rather stupid, *"I was at the airport, getting ready to check in my carryon, and the airline attendant asked, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?" To which I really didn't know how to reply, so I said,*

*"If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" She smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask." My **Dumbfounded** look - still don't get it!*

That beats the story I heard about a person who was at one of those "stoplights on a street corner that buzzes when it's safe to cross the street. This guy was crossing with a coworker who asked if he knew what the buzzer was for. He explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, the coworker responded, "What on earth are blind people doing driving?" Paul says, "O you dear idiots, how can you be so stupid?"

Think Paul was being a bit hard when he called out their foolishness? Well, after Jesus' resurrection, He did the same with 2 disciples going to Emmaus...

Luke 24:25 ESV, *"And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"*

Foolish! It is so hard for you catch your heart up to your brain. It's not just a mind issues, it's a heart issue too. The mind is not examining and applying the truth, because the heart is not devoted to that truth.

By the way, as a footnote, if you have a New King James version you will see another phrase there...

Galatians 3:1 NKJV, *"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you **that you should not obey the truth**, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?"*

Obeying the truth! Another way to say this in stupid vernacular is: *"Stupidity is a choice, but some people are abusing it!" SMILE Sorry!*

this NKJV rendering is supported by what **Galatians 5:7 ESV**, says later, *"You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?"*

That is exactly the case. If you have been bewitched, then you've chosen to not obey the truth or take it into consideration. *"You're foolish, because you've allowed yourself to be bewitched."* If a person claims to be a believer but doesn't read their Bible, they'll be willingly ignorant of the truth and easily dupped into believing foolish things.

That is why Paul writes often about the importance of our minds: **Romans 12, Ephesians 4, Colossians 3**. *"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, renewed in knowledge. Christianity is about clear guided Biblical thinking."*

Set your hearts on being faithfully devoted to letting the truth transform and renew your mind! Commit to regular devotions!!

When Paul asks, “*Who has bewitched you? Who cast a spell on you? Who confused you about the gospel?*” **It is a rhetorical question.**

He has already pointed these people out. **The Judaizers** did it by their words and their false teachings. So, Paul confronts that in a powerful way.

Galatians 3:1-5 ESV, “*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that **Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified**. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **Did you suffer so many things in vain**—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—*

So, Paul goes on to use an argument in these first five verses, based on **their own personal experience**. The word **pasch** in **verse 4**, which is translated sometimes “**suffer;**” actually refers to “**experience.**”

“*Did you experience so many things all for nothing?* Please remember your spiritual experience and understand it from the **viewpoint of the Trinity**.

First of all, remember **what Christ did**. *He is the focal point*. Your experience started when Christ was proclaimed to you, and you could see Him **right before your eyes** nailed on that cross – **for you**.

Paul had clearly preached the cross of Jesus to them. *Had they literally seen Jesus at His crucifixion?* This is Galatia (600/sea, 700/land to Jerusalem). These are Gentiles not inclined to travel to Jerusalem for Passover as Jews.

What is Paul saying? Over and over he says, “*I preached Christ and Him crucified. To this degree, I’m determined to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified.*” ***What does it mean?***

He preached the significance of Christ’s death for the world and the believer.

He painted a picture in their minds so they could see and hear the hammers as He was nailed to the cross; hear the cries of the mocking crowd, hear the cries of Jesus, see His blood and sweat running down His body.

The hearer understood this on a personal level. That this substitutionary sacrifice was for them; He was dying in their place to take the penalty of their sins upon Himself so His righteousness could be credited to their account.

He says, you believed this gospel, were miraculously transformed when you came to know Him from personal experience. You put your trust in Him, in His crucifixion and resurrection, and was transformed. **They knew** their **justification** was by grace through faith. *Was it in vain? Don't be bewitched.*

Secondly, they not only had personal experience with faith in the crucified Christ, **they had personal experience with the Holy Spirit.**

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*“Did you receive the Spirit?” **Yes. Yes**, because everyone who believes and receives Jesus, receives the Holy Spirit! This is the born-again experience Jesus Himself describes to **Nicodemus in John 3.***

John 3:3-7 NKJV, *“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”*

John 3:14-16 NKJV, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

So, Paul rightfully and rhetorically asks, *“Did you receive the Spirit by...?”* *“Yes, you did receive Him – the question isn't about if you did (**that's a foregone conclusion**... the question is about how – we'll get to that.*

You did and He transformed your lives, didn't He? You have new loves, new affections, new desires – all because you've been born again by the Spirit to a new life."

Then Paul gets to the how, *"How did you receive the Spirit, by doing the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?"* What's the answer? **BY FAITH IN THE GOOD NEWS!** *It is about what Jesus did – not you!*

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In other words, *"Is the Good News of the work of **Christ** only **partially sufficient** for salvation and you then have to add another important part? And is the presence of the **Holy Spirit** only **partially effective** in your transformation if you don't add that other important part?"*

NO, Christ's work is complete, the Holy Spirit's presence is complete, the Law adds nothing to the work of Christ or the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

And what about the Father? *"**Does He** who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"* **Jesus clearly said that it was the Father who provides the Spirit.**

In John 14:16 & 26 ESV, *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth."...**"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."***

"Galatians, are you saying that the Father who lavishly provided you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, is deficient and needs your help?"

Did He give this to you because you kept the law or was it by your response of faith upon hearing the gospel?" **We know the answer:** The work of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is altogether sufficient, needing none of our help. **Complete and altogether sufficient!**

We've experienced the power of the gospel in our lives. So, lean into that truth. It is by the Glorious Grace of God THROUGH faith in His work, not yours. The active agent that allows that complete work to affect your life, isn't works – it's faith.

Galatians 3:5-9 ESV, *“Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or **by hearing with faith**— just as Abraham **“believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”**? Know then that it is **those of faith** who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles **by faith**, preached the gospel **beforehand to Abraham**, saying, **“In you shall all the nations be blessed.”** So then, **those who are of faith** are blessed along with **Abraham, the man of faith.**”*

How many times must I say it Paul – the key to your salvation – which God alone accomplishes – is Faith! The key to your continued growth and transformation isn't by your works but by your FAITH! 6 times faith is referred to here. Faith in what? In your works? No! In the Gospel, Good news.

There was not a salvation by works in the Old Testament nor the New. It has and always will be by faith because people are always sinful, always incapable of coming to the standard of God's righteousness.

And if they are to be righteous enough to win God's favor, it has to be granted by grace and because of God's mercy. Faith in Him and His supply is key.

Anything else is a blasphemous assault on the Triune God. It diminishes His work of salvation and sanctification - making you holy – transforming your life!

Romans 5:1-2 ESV, *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we **have peace with God through** our Lord Jesus Christ. **Through** him we have also obtained **access by faith** into this **grace in which we stand**, and we **rejoice in hope** of the glory of God.” **Past, presence and future.***

*What are you placing your faith in for salvation?
For your continued sense of security in that salvation?
To secure your spot in eternity?*

I invite you to place your confidence in Him for each of these as we go to prayer this morning. **Let's Pray!**