

Gal 3:1-6

I. The Galatians are foolish to try to live by works (1-5)

A. O Foolish Galatians! (1a)

The Galatians are foolish

b/c their grasp of the Gospel betrays their own experience

i.e. realize your own experience and change your grasp and application of the Gospel

on relationship between theology and experience:

Be careful

Experience does not define theology

But if real life does not and cannot match your theology,

You should reexamine it in light of Scripture/ the Gospel

B. Specific reasons why they are foolish (1b-5)

1. Four challenging questions and assertions (1b-4)

Rhetorical questions reminding them of their experience

a Who has bewitched you even though Christ is crucified? (1b-c)

1) Who has bewitched/deceived you? (1b)

i.e. someone has deceived/bewitched you

someone has deceived you

deceived - fig. use of religious/magical word "bewitched"

2) Going contrary to the expectation because Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed before you as crucified (1c)

Christ was publicly displayed

publicly displayed as crucified

before your eyes

i.e. in Paul's preaching

"It is as if a spell has been uttered over the Galatians because they no longer see the significance of the cross of Christ.... the significance of Christ's cross was vividly communicated when the gospel was announced...Jesus Christ was proclaimed as the crucified one. Once again the cross takes center stage in Galatians, and Paul hopes that the bewitchment will come to an end and that the Galatians will see again the significance of Christ crucified." Schreiner 181-2

- b Did you receive the Spirit from works or faith? (2)
 - i.e. you received the Spirit not by works of law but by hearing with faith
 - 1) Rhetorical intro: I want to learn this alone from you (2a)
 - 2) What I want to learn: how did you receive the Spirit (2b-c)
 - Churches were charismatic as the norm
 - a) Did you receive the Spirit from works of the law? (2b)
 - Implied answer: no!
 - b) Or [did you receive the Spirit] from the hearing/report of faith? (2c)
 - Implied answer: yes!
 - cf. Rom 10:16-17, Isa 53:1
- c You are foolish in beginning with the Spirit trying to finish with the flesh (3)
 - 1) Are you so foolish? (3a)
 - i.e. you are foolish if you change from Spirit back to flesh
 - 2) Specific reason you are foolish (3b-c)
 - a) Even though having begun by the Spirit (3b)
 - b) You are now [attempting to] finish by the flesh? (3c)
 - Don't change horses in midstream
 - If you are winning the first half of the race with the supercharged motor, don't try to finish by pushing the car!
 - i.e. going back to law is same level of stupidity
 - Both justification and sanctification are by faith –
 - work of God received by faith, not by works
 - "The opposition between the Spirit and flesh represents the eschatological contrast between this age and the age to come...with the flesh representing the old age and the Spirit the age to come." - Schriener 184
- d Have you experienced these things in vain? (4)
 - i.e. if you go back to law, everything you have experienced is in vain
 - 1) Have you experienced so much to no avail? (4a)
 - Without result or effect
 - 2) If indeed it was to no avail (4b)

2. Summarizing question (5)

a The benefits (5a-b)

- 1) The One providing the Spirit to you (5a)
- 2) And working powers/miracles among you (5b)

b The reason (5c-d)

-cf. v. 2

- 1) Neg. – [Did He do it] because of works of the law? (5c)

Implied answer: no!

- 2) Pos. - Or because of the hearing of faith? (5d)

Implied answer: yes!

Both their objective relationship with God (2:15-21) and their subjective experience of salvation has come by grace through faith, not works of the law

II. The reason: Comparison to the Biblical precedent that Justification is by faith (6)

(quoting Gen. 15:6)

A. Abraham believed God (6a)

B. Result: It was reckoned to him into a state of righteousness (6b)

If you want righteousness, go the way of trusting God,

No other path will get there!

Follow Abraham's example

-cf. Heb. ch. 11 for many others