

# Galatians – Called To Freedom: #8 Experience Check

- I. Paul Turns His Attention To The Galatians' Experience (Gal. 3:1-5)
  - A. Paul's shock and outrage with the Galatians (Gal. 3:1)
    1. "Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"

"Paul uses the language of pagan magic to characterize the pernicious activity of the false teachers and the perilous situation of the Galatians." [ESV Note]
    2. Christ portrayed crucified (Acts 13:27-30) – spec. 13:38-39  
"Crucified" is in the perfect tense implying Paul believes that his proclamation of the gospel was so vivid in the Galatians' presence that it was as if they had been eyewitnesses of the crucifixion. [ESV Note]
    3. The Galatians' initial response (Gal. 4:13-15)
  - B. Paul's appeal to the Galatians (Gal. 3:2-5)
    1. How did you initially receive the Spirit? Works or faith?
      - Based on Paul's assurance of the Galatians' definite experience of receiving the Spirit (Gal. 3:2) *Receive the Spirit* refers to...the Holy Spirit that comes...at the beginning of the Christian life...Paul knew this experience was so real for the Galatians that they would remember it. [ESV Note]
      - "In Galatians, it is striking how Paul's main argument starts from the well-remembered...fact of their reception of the Spirit (3:1-5). In the event, everything stood or fell on this. In effect [Paul] says 'You remember your experience of the Spirit. How did that come about? How did you receive the Spirit? The Spirit was that which identified them as Christ's...their entry into the experience of the new age began with the sending of the Spirit of God's Son into their hearts (Gal. 4:6)." [James D G Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 420]
    - a. Every religion is works-based (do this & you'll be saved)
      - 1) **Buddhism** – 8-fold Path (right thought, speech, action, occupation, effort, etc.)
      - 2) **Confucianism** – morality (polite, love, righteous, honest, kind & loyal)
      - 3) **Hare Krishna** – Karma & reincarnation (break cycle of reincarnation)
      - 4) **Hinduism** – do rites w/o error, gain knowledge to break karma, devoted to gods, family, & boss
      - 5) **Islam** – 5 pillars (Allah is God, pray 5 x's, give, fast, Mecca) & 6 pillars

- b. The Christian faith is grace-based, faith-based (Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16a) – you can't do anything due to your sin - BELIEVE
  - c. Having the Holy Spirit is the defining mark of a Christian (Rom. 8:9)
    - "The Spirit is thus to be seen as the defining mark of the Christian...[This] is put in blunt terms in [Rom. 8:9] 'You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, assuming that the Spirit of God does indeed dwell in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of God, that person does not belong to Him.' In this verse, in fact, Paul provides the nearest thing to a definition of a Christian...And the definition is in terms of the Spirit. It is 'having the Spirit' which defines and determines someone as being 'of Christ.'" A Spiritless Christian would have been a contradiction in terms for Paul...it is by receiving the Spirit that one becomes a Christian." [James D G Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 423]
    - Receiving the Spirit is not the second stage of a two-stage process, a "second blessing." When we believe in Jesus, we are born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6). The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are God's children (Rom. 8:16) "Paul's pneumatology had no room for teachings which have sometimes featured...in 'second blessing' circles. That is to say, [Paul's] pneumatology excludes the idea that the Spirit is not given until the second phase of discipleship or commitment. For Paul the gift of the Spirit has the essential character of beginning the process of salvation. In the near-definition in Rom. 8:9-- no Spirit, no Christian. So too is excluded any thought that there is a second gift of the Spirit (which is the Spirit) which some Christians do not or may not have." [James D G Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 494]
2. Since you began by the Spirit, why try to be perfected by the flesh?
- (Gal. 3:3) Paul's point is the way the Galatian believers' began (by the Spirit) is also the way they should continue (by the Spirit, not by law-works, Jewish observances).
- a. Humanly-speaking
    - 1) Food
    - 2) Exercise
    - 3) Medication
    - 4) Finances
    - 5) Work
  - b. Spiritually-speaking
    - 1) Basis of God's on-going approval – Works?

- a) Practices?
- b) Non-essentials?
- 2) Basis of God's on-going approval – Faith?
- 3. Is God's supply of the Spirit to you because of works or faith? (Gal. 3:5)
  - In Galatians 3:2 Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit's work at the beginning of the Galatians' Christian lives; here he mentions an ongoing, day-by-day work of the Spirit. [ESV Note]
  - God is bountifully supplying (present tense) you with the Spirit
- 4. Is God's doing miraculous things among you because of works or faith?
  - God is energetically working (present tense) miracles among you
  - By the hearing of faith, not based on the performance of law-works