

Discussion #5 — Galatians 3:1-14 — Faith or observance of the law?

Review: The Judaizers accused Paul of allowing Gentile converts to ignore the law so that he would be more popular with them. Paul, in turn, accused the Judaizers of nullifying the power of Jesus' sacrifice by adding conditions for salvation. The question they debated was: Does salvation come through Christ alone or does it come through Christ *and* adherence to the law?

1. Paul begins this chapter with “You foolish Galatians!” How would you react if one of today’s great men of God—Billy Graham, for example—began a letter to your church or Bible study group like that?

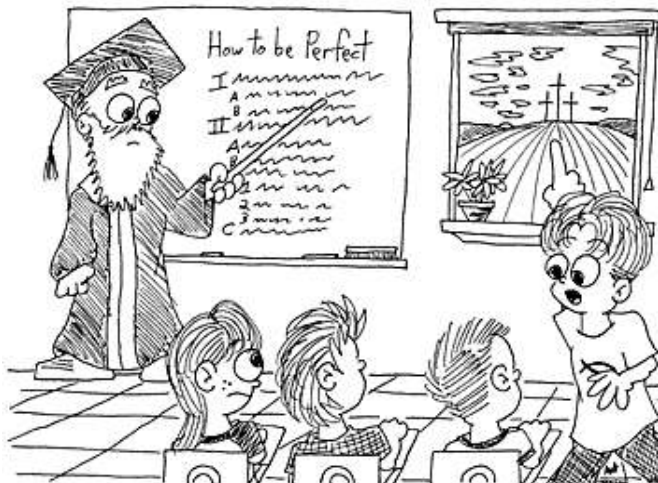
2. In verse 1, Paul suggests that the Galatian believers have been bewitched— taken in by magic or even the power of Satan—and reminds them that, in contrast, Jesus was crucified “before your very eyes.” Why do you think the Galatians might have been so interested in the teachings of these false teachers? (Acts 8:9-11 and 13:6-7)

3. In verse 3, Paul again calls his readers foolish and reminds them that, although they have received the Spirit, they are still trying to please God by observing the law. Can you think of any ways in which you try to please God by doing something other than focusing on Him and your relationship with Him?

4. How can we tell the difference between the religion-driven things that we do and those that are faith-driven?

5. What does Paul say about Abraham in verses 6-9? Why do you think he chose him as an example? (Genesis 15:6, 18:18-19, 22:18)

6. In verses 10-13, Paul quotes three Old Testament passages (Deuteronomy 27:26, Habakkuk 2:4, and Leviticus 18:5). What do these Old Testament passages tell us about the law?



Galatians 3:24-25. The Law controlled us and was supposed to teach us until we had faith and were acceptable to God. But once a person has faith, there is no more need to have the Law as a teacher.

7. Trying to be right with God (justified) by our own effort doesn't work. Good intentions such as “I’ll do better next time” or “I’ll never do that again” usually end in failure. How can we break this cycle of failure?

8. How does Jesus solve the problem presented by attempting to live by the law? (Romans 4:9, 4:16, Acts 2:33)