

Galatians 3



WHEN THE CHURCH TAKES A WRONG TURN

Student Guide

Daily Bible Reading

Day 1	Galatians 3: 1-5
Day 2	Galatians 3: 6-14
Day 3	Galatians 3: 15-29
Day 4	Galatians 3: 1-14
Day 5	Galatians 3: 15-29
Day 6	Galatians 3: 1-29
Day 7	Galatians 3: 1-29

The church at Galatia broke Paul's heart. How soon they had taken a wrong turn. Chapter three is Paul's blade cutting both ways. He cuts quickly and deeply into the Galatians' betrayal of their vows to follow Christ and Christ alone. At the same time, his own heart is sliced wide open because he loved the Galatians so much. He spent many hours teaching them, discipling them, and tutoring them in the faith once for all given to the saints. Now, at the blinking of his eyes, so to speak, the Galatians have foolishly taken a road which leads away from God not toward Him.

1. There is Corruption of the Gospel (vv. 1-5)

Paul gets to his point immediately (v.1). To turn away from God's way of salvation is a cosmic crime. To turn away after one has been clearly given the truth and thoroughly explained, is a detour on a dead-end street. Paul is not accusing them of stupidity, though they were for even thinking about going back to the bondage of the law. The Galatians had no idea of the boundary they were about to cross. Another term Paul uses to drive the severity of their condition home is "bewitched." While their foolishness displayed their insensitivity to danger, Paul's description of them as "bewitched" showed them as being under a "spell" of some sort. Evidently, the false teacher's words were filled with manipulation, giving an impression that the words were true.

The special message of the Gospel had been corrupted. Had the Galatians received the Spirit by faith or by works? That was the only relevant question (v.2). If so, how could they begin in the Spirit but end up in fleshly works (v.3)? If believers will stay in Scripture, and stick with Scripture, virtually every false teacher will be easily exposed. *Second, the spiritual maturity in the Gospel* had been corrupted (vv. 2-3). The Galatians were saved by faith. Nothing else qualified. Paul pushed them to think deeply about their faith; not what they did but what Jesus did for them. In addition, Paul insisted the *supernatural manifestation of the Gospel* had been corrupted (vv. 4-5). The ministry of the Spirit working miracles, changing hearts, renovating lives, and reconciling relationships were tests of the true Gospel of grace.

2. There is Correction from the Gospel (vv. 6-14)

Paul raised his cannon and pounded the Galatians' spiritual wall to powder. They were allowing the Gospel to be corrupted. Now, he appeals to the Biblical evidence to solidify his case.

First, we share the same justification with Abraham (vv. 6-9). How was Abraham saved? What constituted Abraham's relationship with God, being accepted in God's sight? Abraham "believed" God. He took God at His word. The result? His faith was, "accounted to him as righteousness." What could be any clearer? Simple faith saved Abraham. Furthermore, every believer is a spiritual descendent of Abraham (vv. 8-9).

Second, we share the same redemption (vv. 10-14). Paul affirms the law's curse but the Gospel's redemption (vv. 11-13). Hence, the Gospel is *indispensable* (vv. 10-12) as well as *incredible* (v.13). Even more significantly for us, the Gospel is *available* (v.14). Now the same salvation Abraham experienced, we experience. And, we experience it the very same way as did Abraham — *through faith*.

3. There is Commitment to the Gospel (vv. 15-29)

Paul's message could not stand unheard by both the Galatians themselves as well as the Judaizers who were spreading their false doctrines. While the Gospel had been corrupted by them, the same Gospel offered correction to them. The question Paul now addresses is this: If keeping the law cannot save, why did God give the law in the first place? The Apostle offers a three-fold answer.

First, the law was related to the promise of God (vv.15-18). In this section, Paul mentions the “promise” of God a staggering 7 times! The promise referred to God's promise to Abraham. The Apostle offered a *human illustration* (v.15). With the human illustration, Paul makes *spiritual application* (vv. 16-18). What is true of human covenants is also true of a covenant with God. God's salvation covenant is no different.

Second, the law was related to the purpose of God (vv. 19-20). Paul just showed how faith was and remains the instrument through which people are saved. Hence, the law cannot accomplish the purpose of God to save. The law makes aware of our natural inclination to sin. It does not make us sinners, it reveals us as sinners. The law creates in our heart an urging, a need to be saved. As a result, it drives us to Christ's cross, seeing in Him hope for salvation.

Third, the law was related to the power of God (vv. 21-25). The aim of the law is to lead a desperate law-breaker —a sinner —to Christ. The law is like a *custodian* who watches the jail (vv. 22-23). When the law of God is preached, listeners feel imprisoned by the walls of sin. Christ set us free. He paid our fines. He took our prison sentence upon Himself. We are free, saved by Jesus Christ. The law is also like a *child guardian* (vv. 24-25). The law “tutored” us; that is, it made sure sin would be exposed so we would run to Jesus for salvation.

Paul is now in a position to push the Galatians toward a commitment to the Gospel. They had been corrupted from the Gospel, and Paul had corrected them with the Gospel. Now they must make allegiance to the Gospel (vv. 26-29).

The Gospel identifies us with Christ. We are “baptized into Him” and now we must “put on” Him. Our garment is Jesus Christ.

Wrap Up

Churches can miss God. They can make a wrong turn and end up in a spiritual wilderness. That is precisely what happened to the Galatians. Instead of following the Gospel, they allowed false teachers to corrupt the Gospel. Paul corrected their error and empowered them with the truth in Jesus Christ.