


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Are We Justified By Faith, or Works of the Law?

^{1a} You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? ^{1b} Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

Q1. Based on what we know from Scripture and our study – briefly – what are Paul's concerns?

Q2. The word “bewitched” is interesting. The translations for The Message (MSG) and the J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS) both use the word “spell”. Why does Paul use a word that implies sorcery?

Q3. What does verse 1^b mean: “Before your very eyes”?

Q4. Verse 1^b states, “Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.” Were the Galatians eye-witnesses to Christ Jesus' crucifixion? Or was the Crucifixion so plainly described that it was as if they witnessed it?

Lesson 3: Galatians 3:1-29

Galatians 3:1-5 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (Phillips)]

¹⁻⁵ O you dear idiots of Galatia, who saw Jesus Christ the crucified so plainly, who has been casting a spell over you? I will ask you one simple question: did you receive the Spirit of God by trying to keep the Law or by believing the message of the Gospel? Surely you can't be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances? Has all your painful experience brought you nowhere? I simply cannot believe it of you! Does God, who gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you, do these things because you have obeyed the Law or because you have believed the Gospel? Ask yourselves that.


² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

Q5. What is “the law”?

Q6. Paul asked if the Galatians “receive[d] the Spirit by observing the law”? Does that mean “by the work of human hands”? Or by “faith”?

Q7. Paul asked if the Galatians “receive[d] the Spirit by . . . believing what you heard”? Does that mean “by the work of human hands”? Or by “faith”?


Q8. Humans frequently think to themselves: if I can just be good enough; or if I can just say the right thing; or if I just do this one thing, then God will smile upon me, today. Are these “works” related thinking?

 In our imagined picture of Christ Jesus, He always seems so serious, stoic, unsmiling. Yet, we humans are created in the image of God and we laugh, and we cry. So, replace your imagined picture of our Savior with one who is smiling in

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love every time He looks at you. Jesus agapé loved you so much, He died for you! He knows your name. He knows you came to Him in faith. You believe Him! You make Him happy! You make Him smile! You!

Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Q9. Is there a difference between (1) performing enough good deeds to earn my way into Heaven and (2) Jesus' gift and our faith?

(1)

(2)

Q10. Without belief in Christ Jesus: (1) Can we be good enough? (2) Can we do enough good deeds to earn our way into Heaven? (3) Does God grade on a curve?

(1)

(2)


(3)

Q11. Once we are marked by the Holy Spirit as a Believer in Christ Jesus, (1) are we to 'sit on the sidelines' or (2) are we to obediently put our faith into action as God's hands, feet, and voice? And if you answered #2, then does that mean we are still trying to earn our way into Heaven?

(1)

(2)

⁴ Have you suffered so much for nothing -- if it really was for nothing?

 "Paul reminds them of what they had endured on account of their attachment to Christianity. He assures them, that if the opinions on account of which they had suffered were false, then their sufferings had been in vain. They were of no use to them - for what advantage was it to suffer for a false opinion? The opinions for which they had suffered had not been these which they now embraced. They were not those connected with the observance of the Jewish rites. They had suffered on account of their having embraced the gospel, the system of justification by a crucified Redeemer; and now, if those sentiments were wrong, why, their sufferings had been wholly in vain." [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/galatians/3-4.htm>]

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1 Corinthians 15:12-21 [NIV-1984] [In a letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church, he argued:]

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

⁵ Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

 Again, Paul is emphasizing that God's Holy Spirit was given to them through their belief, through their faith; not through good deeds, not through observing the Old Testament law.

Q12. Let's speculate. If my good standing with God and admittance into Heaven was the result of my good deeds, my works, to what might that lead? Pride? A lot of good works performed? Competition? God over-shadowed by MY good works? Did you see what I did? Thoughts?

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⁶ Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Genesis 15:4-6 [NIV-1984]

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to him [Abram (later in Abram's life God changed Abram's name to Abraham)]: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir."

⁵ He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars -- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he [God] credited it to him [Abraham] as righteousness.

Q13. In verse 8, God announced to Abraham that "All nations will be blessed through you." What is the blessing to all nations that God foretold?

Genesis 18:17-19 [English Standard Version (ESV)]


¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

Genesis 22:15-18 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

¹⁵ And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸ and in your offspring [or seed; the usage is singular, not plural] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

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Day 3

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The Righteous Live By Faith

¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ¹¹ Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."

Q14. I am a good person, why am I cursed?

Q15. I obey the Ten Commandments. Why am I not "justified before God by the law"?

Habakkuk 2:2 & 4 [NIV-1984]

² Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it . . .

⁴ "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright - but the righteous will live by his faith"

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Q16. When Christ Jesus was crucified, was Jesus "under God's curse"? (Can God tolerate sin?)

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Deuteronomy 21:20-23 [NIV-1984]

²² If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree [or a pole], ²³ you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Q17. How were we Believers redeemed?


Q18. How “might [we] receive the promise of the Spirit”? (Hint: one word)

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession -- to the praise of his glory.

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Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

The Law, The Promise

 The next verses are difficult to understand. Hopefully, the following paraphrase (↓) will help.

Galatians 3:15-20 [The Message (MSG)]


¹⁵⁻¹⁸ Friends, let me give you an example from everyday affairs of the free life I am talking about. Once a person's will [as in 'Last Will and Testament'] has been signed, no one else can annul it or add to it. Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his descendant. You will observe that Scripture, in the careful language of a legal document, does not say "to descendants," referring to everybody in general, but "to your descendant" (the noun, note, is singular), referring to Christ. This is the way I interpret this: A will, earlier signed by God, is not annulled by an addendum attached 430 years later, thereby negating the promise of the will. No, this addendum, with its instructions and regulations, has nothing to do with the promised inheritance in the will.

¹⁸⁻²⁰ What is the point, then, of the law, the attached addendum? It was a thoughtful addition to the original covenant promises made to Abraham. ^[19] The purpose of the law was to keep a sinful people in the way of salvation until Christ (the descendant) came, inheriting the promises and distributing them to us. Obviously, this law was not a firsthand encounter with God. It was arranged by angelic messengers through a middleman, Moses. But if there is a middleman as there was at Sinai, then the people are not dealing directly with God, are they? But the original promise is the direct blessing of God, received by faith.

¹⁵ Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

Q19. Who established the "human covenant"?

Q20. Why cannot the "human covenant" be changed?

 "To take an illustration from purely human relations. A covenant once ratified is binding. It cannot be treated as if it did not exist, neither can fresh clauses be added to it. Now the covenant and promise made to Abraham (by the terms in which it was made) could point to no one but the Messiah. That covenant remained unaffected by the Law, which was

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four hundred and thirty years subsequent to it in point of date. Law and promise are two totally different and mutually exclusive things. But the covenant with Abraham was given by promise. The Law, therefore, had nothing to do with it.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/galatians/3-15.htm>]

¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.


Q21. Briefly, what promises were spoken to Abraham?


Genesis 22:15-18 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

¹⁵ Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶ and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand, which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ And in your seed [singular, not plural] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

¹⁷ What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.

Q22. Since the covenant is a promise from God, why did the law from God not supersede it?

 “430 years later”: Paul counted the years from God’s promise to Abraham, through the Jewish enslavement in Egypt, to the gift of the Ten Commandments during the forty-year exodus under Moses’ leadership. This was probably an established historical fact routinely taught in Jewish schools.

 “This verse contains the direct inference from the argument stated in Galatians 3:15. When a document has been sealed, no subsequent addition can affect it. The Law was subsequent to the promise; therefore, the Law cannot affect it.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/galatians/3-17.htm>]

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¹⁸ For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Q23. What does “inheritance” mean?

Q24. What do we, who believe through our faith in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus, inherit, if anything?

 in·her·it (ĭn·hĕr'ĭt) [© 2003-2023 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/inherit>]

1. Law


1. a. To take (property) by law of descent from an intestate owner.

1. b. To receive (property) by will; receive by bequest or devise.

2. To receive or take over from a predecessor: The new administration inherited the economic problems of the last four years.

3. Biology To receive (a characteristic) from a parent or ancestor by genetic transmission.

4. To gain (something) as one's right or portion.

 in·her·i·tance (ĭn·hĕr'ĭ-təns) [© 2003-2023 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/inheritance>]

1. a. The action of inheriting something: the inheritance of property from a relative.

1. b. Something inherited or to be inherited: Her inheritance included a large estate.

2. Something regarded as a heritage: the cultural inheritance of Rome.

Matthew 25:31-41 [NIV-1984] [Jesus foretold the future:]

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

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Romans 8:15-17 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are Heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 4:3-7 [NIV-1984] [We will study these verses in greater depth in an upcoming lesson.]


³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Day 5

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¹⁹ What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions ^[sins] until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. ²⁰ A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Q25. "What was the purpose of the law"?

 Verse 20: Commentators have struggled translating this verse. More than one commentator claimed that this verse has had 250 or more different translations over the last two millennia. [<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/galatians/3-20.htm>]. That said, in the Old Testament, Moses, who was then followed by various prophets and judges, could be considered a human mediator between God and the Jews and in this context the Jews represent humankind. Since Christ Jesus replaced the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, He replaced the human mediator with Himself – holy, divine, perfect, pure, a member of the Trinity, God! As Paul wrote in his 1st Letter to Timothy (↓):

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

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²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Q26. Verse 21: what are “the promises of God”? Is Paul referring to the promises God gave to Abraham and his descendants?

Q27. If a person follows the law and sins one-time, is the person condemned?

Q28. Do we know of any person who successfully navigated this life, followed the law, and was sinless when the person died as an adult?

Q29. What “might be given to those who believe”?

Galatians 3:11 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (Phillips)]


It is made still plainer that no one is justified in God’s sight by obeying the Law, for: ‘The just shall live by faith.’

Romans 3:20 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (Phillips)]

¹⁹⁻²⁰ We know what the message of the Law is, to those who live under it — that every excuse may die on the lips of him who makes it and no living man may think himself beyond the judgment of God. No man can justify himself before God by a perfect performance of the Law’s demands — indeed it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are.

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Day 6

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We Are Children of God

²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.

Q30. "Before this faith came": how did this faith come?

Q31. How were people "held prisoners by the law, locked up"?

²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Q32. The Jews had an animal sacrificial system, instituted by God, to substitute or replace the consequence of sin. Animal sacrifices were a substitute for death. How would the "law . . . lead us to Christ"?

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²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Q33. “Faith has come”: faith in what? Faith in Who?

Q34. I still sin. How does my faith replace the just consequence of death for sins I commit?

²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Q35. What does it mean to “clothe . . . yourselves with Christ”?

Romans 8:14-17 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

¹⁴⁻¹⁷ All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear — you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, “Father, my Father”. The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory.

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Q36. Verse 28: Does this verse allow for a Believer, who believes in the saving gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus, to discriminate, show bias, treat some people better than others, or follow others, including politicians, who do? How do our day-to-day actions demonstrate Christ's love?

Yes? Why?
No?

.....
Daily actions?
.....
.....

Matthew 25:31-46 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

31-33 “But when the Son of Man comes in his splendour with all his angels with him, then he will take his seat on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men from each other like a shepherd separating sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

34-36 “Then the king will say to those on his right ‘Come, you who have won my Father’s blessing! Take your inheritance — the kingdom reserved for you since the foundation of the world! For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was lonely and you made me welcome. I was naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you came and looked after me. I was in prison and you came to see me there.’”

37-39 “Then the true men will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you lonely and make you welcome, or see you naked and clothe you, or see you ill or in prison and go to see you?’”

40 “And the king will reply, ‘I assure you that whatever you did for the humblest of my brothers you did for me.’”

41-43 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Out of my presence, cursed as you are, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was lonely and you never made me welcome. When I was naked you did nothing to clothe me; when I was sick and in prison you never cared about me.’”

44 “Then they too will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry, or thirsty, or lonely, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and fail to look after you?’”

45 “Then the king will answer them with these words, ‘I assure you that whatever you failed to do to the humblest of my brothers you failed to do to me.’”

46 “And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the true men to eternal life.”

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