

# Let's Worship God

3rd-8th June 2024  
Galatians



# Galatians

## Monday - Galatians 3:1-2 - A Hybrid Gospel

The opening words of ch 3 are some of the most dramatic and urgent among Paul's writings. What the Galatians are doing is particularly disturbing because they have seen Jesus Christ publicly portrayed as crucified. That's what makes it so unbelievable. That, by the way, is an astonishing statement. The Galatians hadn't been standing round the cross. They hadn't physically seen Jesus put to death. So how can Paul say that Jesus was publicly portrayed as crucified before their eyes?

What Paul is describing here is his own preaching. When Jesus is preached, he is pictured in front of those who hear by the Holy Spirit. Verses like this should really transform our view of preaching. When you listen to a sermon, you're not coming to hear a man give a talk. You are coming to see Jesus Christ publicly portrayed before your eyes. If people knew that they were guaranteed to see Jesus Christ in a certain place at a certain time, would they not come? And yet that's exactly what preaching is. But people would rather sit at home and watch TV, or go and visit family, or do things that they could do any other day of the week.

This links in with verse 2 where Paul asks the Galatians about the time they themselves became Christians. He says: 'Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?' And the answer, of course, is the second one. They became Christians - they received the Spirit - by hearing with faith. This is backed up by what Paul says in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing.

Preaching isn't just one option of many of what we could do when we get together. It's God's appointed means to picture Jesus to men and women - and boys and girls. It's primarily through preaching that he stirs and develops faith in us. And that's the privilege that the Galatians had had. But they were quickly turning from it. And you too - if you walk away from the faith - would be rejecting a Jesus who you haven't just heard about - but who has been publicly portrayed before you. That's why Paul is in so much agony over the Galatians. They've had such privileges. Such opportunities. And they're in danger of walking away from them. There's no more foolish thing that someone can do than reject the gospel of Christ. And the more they know about him, the more foolish it is.

### Questions

1. What does preaching do?
2. How does God use preaching?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the faithful preaching of God's Word.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?  
Galatians 3:6

**Praise: Psalm 62 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## **Tuesday - Galatians 3:1-4 - Heights From Which They Were In Danger Of Falling**

Paul still speaks to the Galatians as those who are believers. He asks in v2: 'Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith'. By asking about when they received the Spirit, he's simply asking about when they became Christians. The Bible teaches that we're indwelt with the Spirit from conversion. In fact it's only because the Holy Spirit is in us that we are able to repent and believe in the first place.

And so Paul is taking them back here to when they first became Christians. And he says - was it by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Did they move from Paganism to Christianity by being circumcised or observing Jewish ceremonies or doing good works - or did they simply hear and accept the good news? The answer is clearly the second option. They had begun the Christian life by faith. Simply by believing the good news about what Jesus had done for them. And it's madness to think that they could start off like that - wholly relying on Jesus, but then switch their engine from faith to works.

This was not only a message which they had believed - but a message that they'd suffered for. We see this in v4. Paul is always gracious - always hopes for the best in people - and so he puts it as a question and not a statement. But he says - if you abandon the gospel that you heard, then all your suffering for it is in vain.

It's the same in any age. If you hold to the true gospel, you will be persecuted. You'll be unpopular when you tell people that their good works are like dirty rags in God's sight. You'll be unpopular when you hold to the Bible's teaching on marriage, divorce, adultery, gender and so on. Well, the Galatians had been there. They'd taken the hit. But now they're starting to cave in. They're realising that if they accept the hybrid gospel of faith and works then all the persecution will disappear. Imagine how much easier life would be if we changed our beliefs to fit in with the culture! But to do that would be not only to cave in to those around us - it would also mean that all the hits we had previously taken would be in vain.

### **Questions**

1. How did the Galatians first receive the Spirit?
2. Why is persecution a part of the Christian life?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for Christians suffering severe persecution in other countries.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? Galatians 3:6

**Praise:** Psalm 63 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

# Galatians

## **Wednesday - Galatians 3:1-5 - The Depths They Were In Danger Of Ending Up In**

What danger are the Galatians in? Well in v1, they are 'bewitched'. It's as if someone has cast a spell on them. For Paul, the idea of turning from Jesus is so unthinkable, that it's as if someone has bewitched them. It's not that someone has literally cast a spell on them. And yet there is a supernatural element involved. Paul says elsewhere that 'the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ'.

The most seriously bewitched people are those who don't believe in the eternal realities of Heaven and Hell. Or within the church it's those who say: it doesn't matter if I'm not born again because as long as I live a good life, God will accept me. The only way someone can look at Jesus Christ as he's publicly portrayed before them and say - "no, it's ok, I'll be alright on my own" - is if they are bewitched. The Galatians are bewitched because they're about to swap the Lord for the law. To choose circumcision over Christ. To swap a relationship for ritual. In v3, having begun by the Spirit, they are now trying to be perfected by the flesh. But it's a delusion. You simply can't do it.

What does living by the Spirit look like? Well even as Christians, obeying God doesn't always come naturally to us. We still must, as Hebrews 12.14 says, strive for holiness, without which no-one will see the Lord. As Paul says in Philippians we must strive together for the faith of the gospel. So how do we make sure that we're striving by the Spirit, and not the flesh? Because it's possible to devote your life to serving God, but be doing it by the flesh and not the Spirit.

Someone who lives by the Spirit will live their life in dependence on the Holy Spirit, not their own efforts. That dependence on the Holy Spirit will be seen above all by prayer. A lack of prayer in our lives should be a big flashing neon sign that we're living by the flesh, and not the Spirit.

Another key factor will be our motivation. Are we striving to serve God because we have a sense that in Jesus Christ our sins have been paid? Or are we doing it to try and earn God's favour, or the favour of others? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? May it not be so in our lives!

### **Questions**

1. How can we be bewitched?
2. What is one way to be sure we are living by the Spirit?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would live by the Spirit.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?  
Galatians 3:6

**Praise: Psalm 64 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



# Galatians

## Thursday - Galatians 3:5-7 - The True Gospel Is No New Teaching

One of the ways the false teachers in Galatia were attacking Paul was by saying: He's coming with some new teaching that no-one has ever believed before. He's teaching a different gospel from the other apostles in Jerusalem. He's trying to get rid of our time-honoured traditions like circumcision. Don't listen to him! If you want to be true to God's Word - if you want to become real descendants of Abraham, you'll need to be circumcised.

So how does Paul respond to their claims that he's bringing some new teaching? And that by doing so he's not a true descendant of Abraham? Well firstly he says: If you want to be Abraham's children, you need to have Abraham's faith.

There have always been people who've trusted in their physical descent in order to get into Heaven. Maybe their parents have been Christians, and they think - it's ok, I'll be alright with God because they were.

V7 here is clear. It is those who are OF FAITH who are the sons of Abraham. You're only truly a child of Abraham if you share his faith. It doesn't matter if you're physically descended from him. It doesn't matter if you're circumcised. The only thing that ultimately matters is whether you share Abraham's faith.

Others would have thought of Abraham as a great man of God. And they would have thought - "God must have accepted Abraham because of the good life he lived. So if I can live a good life, maybe God will accept me too."

But again, the Bible is clear. Even though Abraham was a great man of God, what made him right with God was his faith. Vs 6 here is a quote from Genesis 15:6: Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'. Abraham was accepted before God, not because of his works, but because he believed. If good works could have saved anyone, Abraham would have been right up there. But he didn't rely on good works - and the Galatians can't either.

## Questions

1. What makes you a child of Abraham?
2. What made Abraham right with God?

## Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that we do not have to be saved by works.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"  
Galatians 3:6

**Praise: Psalm 65 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Galatians

## Friday - Galatians 3:5-7 - Faith in Christ

In v7 we're told that it's those of faith who are sons of Abraham. That's not to say your faith must be as strong as Abraham's. But is your faith in the same thing? What was Abraham's faith in? Well that word 'righteousness' at the end of v6 is really important. Because the fundamental human problem is a lack of righteousness.

Because of Adam's sin back in the beginning, you and I have what the Shorter Catechism describes as the 'want' (lack) of original righteousness. And who you're physically descended from can't change that. Whether that's Abraham or Christian parents. Their faith isn't automatically passed down to you. Neither can good works make up for your lack of original righteousness.

Abraham too was born with this problem. He wasn't righteous. So what did he do? He believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. He received a righteousness that wasn't his own. He was given the righteousness of God. And we can see more clearly now than Abraham ever could how exactly this was possible. Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, came and lived a perfect, completely righteous life on this earth.

When he went to the cross, two things happened. If you ask many people what the cross was about they'll say Jesus died to take our sins. And that's right. But it's only half the story. Because if Jesus had ONLY taken our sins then we'd have been back to square one. We'd have been left with a blank page. We would have been back where Adam and Eve were in the beginning. We would have had to obey God perfectly in order to get into Heaven. That didn't work out so well for Adam and Eve - and it wouldn't have gone well for us either. But instead, because Jesus both lived and died in our place, if we trust in him we have our sins taken away AND we get his record of perfectly obeying God. The gospel message is that when God looks at us, he sees not our record of failure, but Jesus' perfect righteousness. He sees Jesus' perfect life, but with our name at the top!

## Questions

1. Whom was Abraham's faith in?
2. What did Christ accomplish at the cross.

## Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the salvation we have in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness?" Galatians 3:6

**Praise:** Psalm 66 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

# Galatians

## **Saturday - Galatians 3:8-9 - People Are Saved the Same Way**

The second way Paul responds to the accusations that he's teaching some new doctrine is to show them that people have always been saved the same way. People are saved the same way in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

If we're saved by having the same faith that Abraham had, then it makes sense that we believe the same gospel that he believed. So how was the gospel preached beforehand to Abraham? Well v8 tells us it was when God told him 'in you shall all the nations be blessed'. Paul will further unpack this in v16 and following where he explains that this is a reference to Jesus. The nations would be blessed, as Genesis says, by Abraham and his offspring - Jesus Christ.

Do you see how this is all this relevant to Paul's argument that his gospel isn't new? He's saying that Abraham believed this gospel before Moses was even around. And before the law was given. Yes Abraham was circumcised. But that wasn't what saved him. As Paul will say in Romans he was circumcised as a sign and seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.

And even back then, the fact that the same gospel would go to uncircumcised Gentiles was already part of God's plan. The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify them by faith. These Gentile Christians don't need to be circumcised and keep the Jewish ceremonial law in order to be right with God. God had planned all along to save them by faith, not works. Just like the Jews.

Getting this one point will save us from so much confusion, and so much misunderstanding. Adam was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. Abraham was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. Moses was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. Peter was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. Paul was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. In the Old Testament they looked forward to the Messiah who was to come. In the New Testament they looked back to the Messiah who had already come, just as we do today. But it's the same gospel.

## **Questions**

1. How was the gospel preached to Abraham?
2. How were people saved in the Old Testament?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness?"  
Galatians 3:6

**Praise:** Psalm 67 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced  
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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