

BREAKING MAN'S SPELL WITH THE GOSPEL

Text: Galatians 3:13, 14

I. THE FOOLISH STATE OF MIND AND HEART

Galatians 3:1

The word we translate “bewitched” comes to us from the Greek word, “baskaino” meaning “to malign, i.e. (by extension); to fascinate.” This leads us to the connotation of casting of an evil spell. Scholarship tells us that the phrase “hath been evidently set forth” means “to show forth on a placard or billboard.” Paul is saying that the only way you could become so “foolish” is by a satanic influence used like a spell to draw you away from the truth, because you, of all people have had the Gospel of Jesus, with all the ramifications of what His death, burial and resurrection accomplished. Had Paul been using modern expressions, he might have said, “You did not receive this message on your little cell phone screen; you received it in a five story IMAX presentation in stereo surround sound!

II. THE ARGUMENT OF EXPERIENCE

Galatians 3:2-5

To become a Christian requires the act of faith. Paul asked the rhetorical question, “Did you keep the law through perfect acts of your imperfect flesh?” You know you have been brought to conversion through the miraculous gift of salvation. This was not a man-made attainment.

Will Rogers was asked to show his birth certificate before he took a ship across the Atlantic Ocean. He said he didn't have one. They said he had to have one in order to go. He inquired why and they answered, “Well, we've got to know you were born.” He humorously replied, “Well, I'm here, ain't I?” One of the great assurances of our faith is that knowledge that we are here! The argument of our own personal experience is valid.

III. THE ARGUMENT OF ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:6-18

Galatians 3:6 brings us back to Genesis 15:6 where it says, “And he (Abram) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” God goes on to

explain through Paul that we are following in the footsteps of Abraham by experiencing the same faith. Jesus said in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Abraham was saved by looking forward to the cross; we are saved by looking back to the cross. I Corinthians 1:18, 23a, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...But we preach Christ crucified...."

For those who decide that the law is your redeemer, you have fallen beyond being bewitched; you are beguiled and under a curse. Christ alone is our Redeemer. His very death on the cross means that he vicariously took the curse that He was not under, but rather we were under. Deuteronomy 21:23a: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;)...."

A most interesting point is now made by the Holy Spirit through the Hebrew scholar, Paul. He is pointing out that the means of salvation by faith was ratified as a legally binding will 430 years before the law was given. And the law given to Moses was not a means of justification. The law cannot disannul or make of none effect the covenant of faith! In John 5:24 Jesus promises, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Galatians 3:7 tells us, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." In Galatians 3:29 we read, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

IV. THE PERFECT LOVE DEMONSTRATED

Galatians 3:19-29

John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Before Moses climbed up Mount Sinai and received the Law, God in love had man's salvation in mind. The law did not invent sin, it defined transgression as sin. Romans 3:20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 7:7b: "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The law is given to show us just how lost we are.

Galatians 3:24 says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The word for "schoolmaster" is taken from the Greek word "paidagogos." This was a person, usually a Greek servant of a wealthy Roman. He would teach the son of his master with rigor, at times with the reinforcement rod. The paidagagos would follow the boy, keeping him in line. When the son became a citizen of Rome, he took the toga from his father (usually around age 16 or 17) and the boy would then be presented the rod by his paidagagos that had formerly been carried over the boy's head. For those years under this tutorship the boy learned math, history and manners. When he came of age, he no longer

had the extrinsic motivation of the paidagogos; he had the intrinsic motivation of who he was internally. He was a citizen performing civilly. Galatians 3:25: "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Now our standing is in Christ! Galatians 3:26, 27 instructs us, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Here's the way it works--Romans 8:3, 4: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you have been in our church for any length of time, you have heard me say many times, "Living the Christian life is not a difficulty; it is an impossibility. You cannot live this life without Christ." We have no ability in our flesh to please God as Romans 8:8 teaches us, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." We must be changed. II Corinthians 13:5b: "...Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Galatians 3:29 declares, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Romans 8:17a says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...."

God's goal in redemption is relationship. He loves us! James 2:23 tells us, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." So 430 years before the law was given, God had this amazing friendship with Abraham. He told Abraham in Genesis 22:2, "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." God would not permit Abraham to give his son as a sacrifice. "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb...." God directed Abraham to a ram (male lamb) caught in the thorn bush by his horns. The male lamb was taken and sacrificed in the place of Isaac, Abraham's son. Genesis 22:14 reads, "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." What would be seen on the mount? Here it is: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). And how did Abraham see Jesus? Abraham saw Jesus the same way John saw Jesus, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Because Abraham believed God and accepted the exchange of his son for God's son, he is called the Friend of God. God does not desire us to have relationship with the law; He wants us to have relationship with himself. And then we like Abraham can become God's friend. Jesus said, "...but I have called you friends..." (John 15:15b). The law brings us to Christ and it is Christ alone who gives us life--His life, eternal life.

Johnny Pope