

Belief or Bewitched?

Christian Liberty

Galatians 3:1-14

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Background:

- Reminder from last week: NT epistles as “occasional documents” – c.AD49
- The Judaizers problem a common human, not merely Jewish, issue of *justification*
- If “South Galatian Hypothesis” holds, then Galatians written just prior to Ac 15 Council, hence written on occasion of the problem before the ‘catholic’ answer
- Preface question: does justification matter to you...*really*?

Text:

- “Foolish...bewitched!” (vv.1-5) – including six overlapping questions :
Who bewitched you? / Did you receive the Spirit by law or faith? / Are you that foolish? /
Are you perfected by works? / Did you suffer in vain? / Did God send Spirit by law or faith?
- Contrast Abraham (v.6 // Romans 4:1-25) – with sidebar on James 2:24 etc
- Abraham’s genuine offspring (vv.7-9 // Romans 9:6-8)
- “Relying on the works of the Law → curse” (vv.10-12)
- “Christ redeemed us from Law’s curse (v.13; note Malachi 4:6)
- So: in Christ, Abraham’s blessing → non-Jewish peoples (v.14 // Genesis 12:3),
and specifically includes bestowing of the Spirit of God (per Joel 2:28-32)

For Us Today:

- Law = character of God; we need law, but cannot be justified (confirmed) by it
- For self-examination: what do I really want in life?
- Problem of self-reliance (including legalism): people want control, including in religion
- The dangerous freedom of grace (Romans 6:1-2)

Next week (7/15): Galatians 3:15-29 – Law Lived Right