

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"Falling from Grace"

Gal. 5:1-12

Introduction

1. The paths of error and vice are always downward, but decent is usually gradual. The final plunge into shipwreck can often be prevented. The prevention comes from one who views the danger and warns thereof!

2. It appears that Paul is acting as this warner of danger to the Galatians. Should they continue in this course of action recommended by the Judaizers, they would most certainly give up their Saviour. They would apostatize!

3. Beloved, we are in similar straits today. Without judging anyone's person, but warning about the dreadful spiritual confusion of our day - this is what so many well-meaning people do not see. It is this very matter which has exercised my heart for GBC. To compromise on the fundamental faith of our Lord Jesus is to terminate on a path which is fearful and utterly inconsistent with the Word of God.

4. Consider then, how Paul warns the Galatians of their need to trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation and to trust Him alone! Any other course, he argues, will lead to these unworthy ends:

1. LEGAL BONDAGE. v. 1.

The rites and ceremonies of the law could not provide freedom now nor in the future. The best they could do is engender a fearful slavery. Only in Christ is there freedom.

2. CHRIST REJECTION. v. 2.

Circumcision is a reference at one point of a whole system. To trust in it for eternal help would be de facto to declare that Christ will never profit you anything! How pointed was this barb to the Galatians (cf. 1:4).

3. LAW DEBTORSHIP, v. 3.

Should one area of the law be considered necessary, the whole would be also (cf. 3:10).

4. GRACE FAILURE, vv. 4-6

a. In faith, v.4. Grace cries: "Christ is sufficient." Law cries: "Christ is NOT sufficient." To fall from grace is to acknowledge that one cannot be saved on the merit of Christ alone. To fall is to drop from a higher level! Justification is by grace through faith!

b. In hope, v. 5. If the grace system is rejected, then the very hope of righteousness is obliterated. Note that this righteousness is thru the Spirit, out of faith, and is yet to be fully realized! Hallelujah.

c. In love, v. 6. Here is the moral dynamic for the argument of the apostle. Love is the vital atmosphere in which faith which is real will put forth its energy. Where there is union with Christ, the only thing that really counts is faith operating through love.

NOTE: To turn to a legal system for acceptance with God (now that Christ has been given), is to forfeit faith, hope, and love -- the Biblical triad which are indispensable!

5. GROWTH HINDERED, (vv. 7-10).

They were making progress. Legalism came in and thwarted this progress. Leaven is always evil in the Bible, so here, a small amount of this legalistic stand would result in total stunting of spiritual growth. Mark v. 8, for it declares that the Judaizers were not from God. He would judge such who teach false doctrines (v. 10).

6. GROSS UNOFFENSIVE, vv. 11.

Here is the crown jewel of Paul's argument in this section. To continue on the path they had

been advised to take, the very cross of Christ, which was a stigma, would no longer be such. To remove this would be to remove persecution and the removal of persecution for the sake of the cross is unthinkable. Beloved, the same issue is at stake today!

Conclusion:

Some take the last verse of this section as a reference by Paul to the mutilation of the flesh like heathen votaries. This may be. It seems, rather, that Paul says: the Judaizers would cut you off from all others (v. 4:17); I desire them to be excommunicated! The only way to deal with falsity is to get rid of it. It is the only way to preserve unity, both in doctrine and practise!

Oh beloved, the path of turning from the sufficiency of Christ is too fearful. Stop now and affirm His total adequacy!

NOTES