

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"Grace Versus Law"

Galatians 5:7-13a

Introduction

1. The argument of the Book of Galatians is patently clear: the salvation of a soul before the infinitely holy God is possible only through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord (Gal. 1:3-5).

2. To this point in the Book, it is evident that any system of works must be set aside in order to uphold a pure grace system (4:30, 31). Any other argument actually annuls the work of Jesus Christ and a grace system cannot be sustained (5:1-6).

3. In addition to what has been studied, the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write more about the conflict between law (a works system) and faith (a grace system). Study:-

1. CONCERNS vv. 7-9

a. About obedience v. 7

The imperfect tense "ye did run" notes the Galatians had been getting on in their grace system well. Now, however, some one cut in on them. The verb "hinder" refers to a military operation whereby things got broken up. The result of this incursion is stated clearly: not to be persuaded with regard to the Truth (of the Gospel of grace). Let's face it--it is serious enough not to know the Truth, yet how serious to know the Truth and then be persuaded to turn from it!

b. About calling v. 8

Concerning the state of affairs (v. 7), Paul writes that they just are not sourced in the One (God) Who is actively calling them (present tense). Failure to stick by the Truth is one thing, but now it must be realized that whatever yielding is being made is not the persuasion of God--it is derived elsewhere. Now that's plain! Any works system is not from God!

c. About leaven v. 9

Evil spreads surely and rapidly and must be opposed in its beginnings to be opposed successfully. Leaven is always considered a symbol of evil in the Bible. **Note:** 1) Leaven of Pharisees (hypocrisy) in Mt. 16:6-12. 2) Leaven of Sadducees (skepticism) in Mt. 16:12. 3) Leaven of Herod (worldliness) in Mark 8:15. 4) Malice and wickedness in 1 Cor. 5:6-8. 5) False teaching here.

2. CONFIDENCE v. 10

a. About the Lord

"In" the Lord, as for Paul, he (emphatic pronoun "I") was confident toward the Galatians. He was sure about the consummation of God's purposes for them.

b. About the Galatians

The verb "otherwise minded" means to think or "form a judgment." It is another expression of genuine confidence in the true faith of the Galatians (cf. Rom. 8:38).

c. About judgment

While the Galatians are expected to remain true, the one who was causing the Galatians trouble would ultimately bear his own judgment. Whoever this person(s) is, the just desserts of teaching the inadequacy of Jesus' Cross work would be meted out. The "wrath" side of the Gospel is rarely preached (cf. John 3:36).

3. CHARGES v. 11

a. About circumcision

The emphatic "I" is used here with the affectionate "brethren." Apparently, there were those who believed Paul practiced circumcision, but preached against it. The conditional clause is assumed to be true. If so, then certain questions arise.

b. About persecution

If Paul, in fact, taught circumcision, he would not be persecuted by the Judiazers, but he was! The particle "still" notes Paul endured problems to that hour. Now, apparently the Galatians professed to be relieved of persecution and yield to circumcision! So Paul turns the charge to a complaint against his readers.

c. About Cross offense

The whole scandal of the Cross of Christ would have been set at naught if Paul preached circumcision. But not so! The ignominy of the stake on which our glorious Lord was crucified remained. The gibbet of Calvary was still a stumbling block to the Jews and Paul upheld it firmly.

Conclusion Check it out carefully. To reject Christ as sufficient for all makes one's position utterly untenable. It means: 1) Disobedience to the Truth (v. 7). 2) Rejection of God's calling (v. 8). 3) Bringing in of an evil admixture (v. 9). 4) Questions Pauline persecution (v. 11). 5) Sets aside the Cross-scandal (v. 11). Now what? Consider Paul's wish prayerfully (v. 12). It has the same force as his previous conclusion (4:30). "Cast out" and "cut off" are not easily misunderstood concepts. The verbs represent God's view of any works system. So be it. Remember Eph. 2:8-10.