



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 24 Bewitched

Galatians 3:1-3, *O you dear idiots of Galatia, who saw Jesus Christ the crucified so plainly, who has been casting a spell over you? I will ask you one simple question: did you receive the Spirit of God by trying to keep the Law or by believing the message of the Gospel? Surely you can't be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances? Has all your painful experience brought you nowhere? I simply cannot believe it of you! Does God, who gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you, do these things because you have obeyed the Law or because you have believed the Gospel? Ask yourselves that.* (JB PHILLIPS)

What is the Bible?

It is the Word of God.

Every word is true!

Every word is pure!

Every Word is written revelation we have from God.

All 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament are all the revelation of God.

Revelation 22:19, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

What caused Paul to write this letter?

False teachers had come into that area and went from church to church proclaiming a false gospel.

Very early in Paul's ministry, he had established the churches, they are genuine believers, and they have had the influence of this great apostle and they are subject to false teaching.

Paul in the first two chapters, he defends his apostolic authority as the one called by Christ, taught by Christ, and sent by Christ.

In chapters 3 and 4 he clarifies the truth of the gospel. He goes to the very careful, thoughtful defense of the true gospel of grace alone.

What is the message of the false teachers?

They were saying that,

- ✓ grace was not enough,
- ✓ the cross is not enough, and
- ✓ the Holy Spirit is not enough.

In effect what God has brought is not enough. You cannot enter the kingdom of God, you cannot enter heaven unless you are circumcised and adhere to the law of Moses.

They were adding works to grace and works to faith.

Remember how Paul started this letter at the beginning without any commendation.

Galatians 1:6-9, *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

Paul begins the letter, pronouncing a curse, damnation, ‘*anathema*’, on anyone who preaches a false gospel.

Paul embraces the Trinity: **The Son, The Spirit, and The Father!**

By foolishly being bewitched by a false addition to the gospel, you have called into question the work of the Son.

Beginning in the Spirit now you are trying to perfect in your flesh by questioning the work of the Spirit.

Both these have been performed by the Father and thus your questioning the work of the Father.

Bewitched.

This is the only place it is used in the entire Bible.

The word “bewitched” from the Greek verb ‘**baskain’**.

The word means

to charm, or to fascinate in a misleading way.

It meant “to seek to do harm to someone by lies or deception or false promises.”

It is even related to magic spells and sorcery, and the evil eye, and demonic power.

This brings us into many serious questions to us:

Can a true Christian be bewitched?

Can a genuine believer be bewitched, a son of God, child of the Father, a soul in Christ, one who possesses the Holy Spirit, one who has been regenerated?

Can believers become bewitched?

Are we not the people of the truth?

We believe the truth, love the truth, embrace the truth, proclaim the truth, that can we not reject error?

Is not true that we have the Word of God, and we understand the Word, we have an anointing from God, the Holy Spirit teaches us all things?

Are we not the people of the truth?

Are we not the ones who know truth and reject error?

How is it possible for true believers to become bewitched?

Many in the churches in Galatia, true believers, were bewitched.

We know from this letter itself that they were true believers.

Galatians 3:26-27, *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

Galatians 3:29, *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

When apostle Paul came, they received the gospel that he preached, they fully embraced it and they were believers but now they have become bewitched.

True believers bewitched.

Galatians 4:9, *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?*

The Judaizers had said, "Salvation is in Christ, salvation is by grace and by faith, but also by works. You must be circumcised as prescribed in the law of Moses. You must maintain the

Mosaic ceremonies and laws.” Salvation then to the bewitchers was by grace and works.

Twice Paul says, “You are foolish,”

V 1, “You foolish Galatians”

V 3, “Are you so foolish?”

It is foolish to be bewitched by the false additions to the gospel.

Every warning in the New Testament, every warning about false teachers and false doctrine is an assumption that believers can be bewitched.

Every command to hold to the truth, guard the truth, rightly handle the word of truth is also based on the assumption of our susceptibility to bewitching.

So, we are safe to say, Yes, believers can be seduced into believing lies about the gospel.

Difference between bewitching and unbelieving.

What is not bewitching?

When someone says,

I don't believe in God,

I don't believe in the Bible.

I don't believe in Christ.

I don't believe in the gospel of grace.

I don't believe in the cross.

I don't believe in the resurrection.

This is not bewitching.

What is bewitching?

The bewitching comes from those who acknowledge the gospel, accept the gospel, and then add works to the gospel.

Apostle Paul warns the elders of Ephesians Church when he departs from them after three long years.

Acts 20:29-30, *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

Satan is always, always assaulting the church with deception from inside the church and from the outside.

John writes in his letter.

3 John 1:4, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

2 John 1:9-11, *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.¹⁰ If anyone*

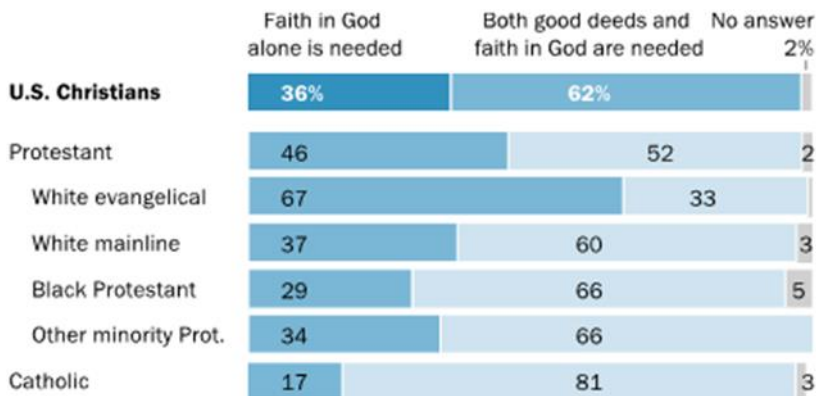
comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

We are warned again and again.

All those warnings, and all those commands to faithfulness assume that we can become bewitched.

U.S. Protestants divided over whether faith alone or faith plus good works are needed for eternal life

% of U.S. Christians who say ___ to get into heaven



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

"U.S. Protestants Are Not Defined by Reformation-Era Controversies 500 Years Later"

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Even today we can see major part of the Christian churches are bewitched. At the core, they may believe the true gospel, but they have allowed so many things to be added to the gospel or to corrupt the gospel that they are bewitched.

This is not just a problem among the congregation, but it is a problem in the pulpit.

Christian leaders and pastors in places of great influence to become themselves bewitched about the gospel, even the gospel that saved them.

The duty of the pastor is to,

- ✓ guard the truth,
- ✓ preach the truth,
- ✓ fight for the truth,
- ✓ contend for the truth, and
- ✓ protect his flock from the bewitching errors.

You can't even walk into a Christian bookstore and trust everything you find there.

As you are here, hearing these truths if I may ask you simple question will be able to answer?

Please pause for a moment and think!

How one can be a Christian?

What do you have to believe to be Christian?

Churches are full of bewitched people who are confused about the gospel.

Satan only has two approaches to bewitch the believers.

1. Snatch the gospel seed before it can go into the ground and be productive.

Matthew 13:19, *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.*

Satan comes and snatches the seed away before anybody can understand it. That's corrupting the gospel on the front end.

2. Sow Tares among Wheat.

Matthew 13:37-39, *He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

Once the gospel has taken root and believers begin to grow and flourish, then Satan's second approach is to sow tares among the wheat. False believers in a false gospel alongside true believers. That is corrupting the gospel on the back end.

Satan corrupts it on the front end by snatching it away, then he comes back, corrupting it on the back end by bringing into the church corrupt messages that produce corrupt tares among the wheat.

This what exactly happened in Galatia.

The Word had come through Apostle Paul and gone into the soil. The seed had brought about life and that life was flourishing and growing.

Satan shows up in the form of Jews from Jerusalem who come to demand that to be saved, forgiven, to enter the kingdom of God and brought to heaven, you must keep the Law of Moses of circumcision. This was sowing lies tares among the wheat. Paul does remind them about their wonderful beginning.

Galatians 4:13-15, *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*

Galatians 5:7-9, *You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?* ⁸*This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.* ⁹*A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*

We as WCF, this is the reason we expose the cult. Not to show that we are somebody or we are supreme or to show we are the only authoritative in the Gospel. Far from it!

We simply preach the Gospel! Irrespective what attack comes on our way.

So, we can conclude that believers can be bewitched!

A. Personal Experience with Jesus Christ.

If anyone says anytime that you can go to God except through Jesus Christ, then they are bewitched and those who follow them are bewitched.

Who has bewitched you?

The Judaizers did it by their words and their false teachings. Then Paul launches his argument.

How did you get to this point?

Look at the role Christ played.

V1, your experience started when Christ was proclaimed to you,

Before your spiritual eyes, Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed crucified.

The gospel came to you openly, clearly, powerfully, effectively, and publicly portrayed.

In the ancient world, there were no newspapers, TV, books and so when somebody had an announcement to make or a declaration to make, they would put it on a sign.

What did Paul say?

1 Corinthians 2:2, *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

What does it mean?

He preached not just the physical crucifixion of Christ, but the theology of the death of Christ, the soteriology of the death of Christ, the gospel bound up in the death of Christ.

So, in effect Paul was saying that,

- This was openly declared to you.
- I preached the gospel to you.
- You embraced me like I was an angel.
- You embraced me as if I was Christ Himself.
- Jesus was nailed to the cross.

It isn't just that you saw the physical reality of His death. You understood that it was a substitutionary sacrifice for you.

You understood that He was dying in your place, that your sins were imputed to Him, so that His righteousness could be imputed to you.

You understood the gospel of salvation.

I preached Christ to you, crucified to you, and therefore, risen again. That reality you believed and miraculously you were transformed.

Result: all those churches in Galatia.

Now how can you go back to the Law?

Are you saying that the cross was unnecessary?

Are you saying that you must save yourself?

Are you saying that the cross was insufficient?

Or the death of Christ was a partial provision?

You have to make up the rest by your works?

If you are saying that, you are blaspheming the Christ of the cross. But that's what a works system does. When it requires something from you, then it's not all of Christ. You have assaulted Christ."

The cross lacks nothing.

Hebrews 7:25, *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

Salvation is by grace alone! through faith alone! and not by works.

If you bring works in Christ will be of no benefit to you.

Galatians 5:2 &4, *Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.*

⁴You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Anyone who adds works to salvation blasphemes the sufficiency of the cross work of Jesus Christ.

Why would they do that?

They had a clear view of the cross and all its saving elements.

They knew from personal experience, they put their trust in the crucified and risen Christ, they were transformed. They knew justification was by grace through faith in a crucified Christ, because they had done it and received it. They had that experience.

Was that experience in vain?

Now somehow it was portrayed that some kind of false feeling, an illusion, something that never really happened until you get circumcised, and keep the rituals and the ceremonies.

What could Judaizers or what could anybody else add to Christ's work on the cross?

Answer: Nothing.

Please don't be bewitched.

B. Experience with Holy Spirit.

They not only had personal experience with faith in the crucified Christ, they had personal experience with the Holy Spirit.

V 2, *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Did you receive the Spirit?

Yes, they have, because everyone who believes receives the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9, *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

Holy Spirit lives in every believer!

You are the temple of the Spirit of God. He dwells in all of us.

We all have received the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in our life.

He is the life of God in us.

He comes in, transforms us and we become new creations. Everything becomes new.

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

Answer: By faith.

The moment you believed, you received the Spirit.

There was no prerequisite condition. There was no requirement that you should do this to receive the Holy Spirit.

In my personal opinion that is another bewitching lie that we could see in our days in the church. Some people say that you can be a Christian without the Holy Spirit once you attain some level of spirituality then you can have the Holy Spirit.

Every believer has the Holy Spirit.

So, the work of Christ was a finished work, not requiring anything from the Law. Coming of the Holy Spirit to a believer was a complete work, not requiring anything from the Law either.

V3, *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

In other words, "Is the work of Christ only partial and you have to add the important part?"

Is the presence of the Holy Spirit only partial and you must add the important part?

- ✓ Christ's work is complete,
- ✓ The Holy Spirit's presence is complete,

The Law adds nothing to the work of Christ or to the work of the Holy Spirit.

C. The Father who provides

Did you experience Christ for nothing?

Did you experience the Holy Spirit for nothing?

V 5, *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Jesus said that when He goes to the Father then the Holy Spirit will come.

Luke 11:13, *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

John 14:16, *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—*

John 14:26, *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

The Father is the one who provides you with the Spirit.

Did God save you because of something you did?

Did God come and miraculously transform you because of something you did, or simply by the hearing with faith?

- ✓ *The Son did a complete work.*
- ✓ *The Spirit did a complete work.*
- ✓ *The Father did a complete work.*

Nothing is left out for you to do.

You didn't receive salvation

or the Holy Spirit

or regeneration

by anything you did, but it was the full and perfect work of Christ, the Spirit, and of the Father.

When anybody comes along and adds anything, it is a bewitching.

Foolish people follow that bewitching, many of them true believers who have neither the spiritual reason or the heart devotion to hold them tightly to the truth.

My prayer for everyone of you that God will grant you that strength so that you will be able to

- ✓ guard the truth,
- ✓ preach the truth,
- ✓ fight for the truth,
- ✓ contend for the truth, and
- ✓ protect others from the bewitching errors.