

“The Failure of Faith”
Galatians 3:1-3

In the first two chapters, Paul has argued that his gospel is the true one. Now the question is: “What is Paul’s gospel?” In short, it is that justification (salvation), comes as the result of one’s faith in Christ, not as a result of trying to obey the law.

Galatians 3:1 “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”

Paul confronts their blurred vision of Jesus and His work for them. The strong words were well deserved. Paul used the ancient Greek word anoetos, which had the idea of someone who can think but fails to use their power of perception. [Matthew 7:15-26, 25:1-13](#)

“Foolish”: This refers not to lack of intelligence, but to lack of obedience Paul expresses his shock, surprise, and outrage at the Galatians’ defection. [Luke 24:25; 1 Timothy. 6:9; Titus 3:3.](#)

“Bewitched” means to cast an evil spell on someone. Charmed or misled by flattery and false promise. The term suggests an appeal to the emotions by the Judaizers. The Jewish false teachers were plaguing the Galatian churches. [Acts 20:29-30](#)

“before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth”, Paul’s preaching had publicly displayed the true gospel of Jesus Christ before the Galatians.

“hath been evidently set forth” The message of salvation had been set forth before the Galatians’ “eyes” (spiritual understanding), as on a billboard. They had clearly understood the gospel, now they were confused about it.

Paul is not calling these Galatians a fool but is saying that their actions are foolish. Foolish means to give the appearance of a fool. Paul reminds them that they have been blessed with the glorious Truth. [Titus 2:13](#)

“Crucified”: The crucifixion of Christ was a one-time historical fact with continuing results into eternity. Christ’s sacrificial death provides eternal payment for believer’s sins and does not need to be supplemented by any human works. [Hebrews 7:25,](#)

Paul had taught Jesus Christ and Him crucified. As we said before, Paul taught that Jesus fulfilled the law. He became the substitute for our sin. The law was fulfilled and all who believe live in the grace of God.

[Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

Galatians 3:2 “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”

“Received ye the Spirit”: The answer to Paul’s rhetorical question is obvious. The Galatians had received the Spirit when they were saved not through keeping the law, but through saving faith granted when hearing the gospel, [Romans. 10:17, Romans. 8:9; 1 Corinthians. 12:13; 1 John 3:24; 4:13,](#)

Paul states that they received the Spirit not “by the works of the law” but “by the hearing of faith” (as a result of their faith). [Romans 10:8-17,](#) Look with me, at [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)

Why would anyone who had known the Spirit of God go back to a fleshly religion of ordinances? The answer is so obvious in verse 2 The Spirit comes through faith, and not works.

Galatians 3:3 “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

Paul asked a second rhetorical question, again rebuking them for their foolishness. “Are ye so foolish”

“Begun in the Spirit ... by the flesh”: The notion that sinful, weak fallen human nature could improve on the saving work on the Holy Spirit was foolish to Paul. [Matthew. 26:41; Romans. 6:19,](#)

What a foolish thing to even consider giving up the freedom of the Spirit to go back into the bondage of the law. The flesh has nothing to offer, but suffering. Hope comes through the Spirit. [Galatians 5:5](#)