

Galatians Review

In chapters 1 and 2, Paul defended his apostleship and his gospel as both given to him directly by God. In chapters 3 and 4, Paul laid out the doctrine of justification through faith alone in Christ alone. He used scripture, everyday illustrations, and the Galatians' own personal experiences to make his case. In chapters 5 and 6 Paul expounded on the application of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. When God justifies us by His grace, through faith in Christ, we are made alive spiritually and God gives us his Spirit to dwell in us. We have a new spiritual birth. We live by the Spirit and we are to follow the Spirit and be in harmony with the Spirit. By doing this we will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit results in loving others and doing good to all whether that means restoring a brother caught in sin, bearing another's burden, giving to support the work of the church or tirelessly sowing good deeds with the hope of reaping eternal rewards. We need to be about the business of boasting in the cross of Christ and glorifying God alone.

Grace Alone

1:6 God called the Galatian believers "in the grace of Christ".

1:15 Paul was set apart before he was born and he was called by God's grace

2:21 Anyone who claims that they are justified by their own works nullifies the grace of God and makes Christ's death on the cross a vain / purposeless / ineffective act. Justification by works and justification by grace are mutually exclusive. Only one leads to eternal life and that is justification by God's grace alone. I don't know how Paul could have stated this principle any more clearly. This verse colors how I understand other Bible passages. I am not afraid of going before God's judgment seat and having God say, "you didn't give yourself enough credit for your own justification and you gave me too much credit. Give yourself a pat on the back." I just don't see that happening! On the other hand, I would be terrified to hear God say to me "why did you take credit for your own justification when you had nothing to do with it? Why did you rob me of the glory that was due to me?"

5:4 Those who seek to be justified by the law have "fallen away from grace".

6:18 Paul closed his letter with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

Faith Alone

2:16 We are justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.

3:2, 5 Paul asked the Galatians how they received the Spirit and how the Spirit worked miracles among them. It was a multiple choice question. A) By works of the law. B) by hearing with faith. Hopefully it was a rhetorical question. The Galatians should have all got the answer right, "B) by hearing with faith".

3:6 Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

3:7, 9 Those of faith are the sons of Abraham and they are blessed with Abraham, the man of faith.

3:8 God's plan to justify the Gentiles by faith was revealed to Abraham by the words, "in you shall all the nations be blessed."

3:11 "The just shall live by faith" quoted from Habakkuk 2:4.

3:12 The law is not of faith.

3:14 We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

3:26 All who are in Christ Jesus are sons of God through faith.

5:5 Through the Spirit by faith we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. We don't work for righteousness. We wait for righteousness.

5:6 In Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision count for anything. What matters is faith working through love. True faith is a faith that works.

Christ Alone

1:3,4 Jesus gave himself for our sins to deliver us.

2:16 Peter, Paul and other Jews believed in Christ in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law.

3:13,14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us by "hanging on a tree". As a result of Christ's work on the cross, the blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles and we receive the promised Spirit.

3:22 The promise, given to Abraham and his Seed, is given to those who believe by faith in Jesus Christ.

3:26 Being in Christ, we are sons of God.

3:29 If we are Christ's then we are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise.

5:1 For freedom Christ set us free.

6:14 Paul boasted in the cross of Christ alone.

6:18 The grace we have is from our Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:16, "and from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace".

According to the Scripture Alone

3:6 quoted Genesis 15:6, Abraham "believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness".

3:8 quoted Genesis 12:3, "In you shall all the nations be blessed".

3:10 quoted Deuteronomy 27:26, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law and do them".

3:11 quoted Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous shall live by faith".

3:12 quoted Leviticus 18:5, "He who does them [works of law] shall live by them".

3:13 quoted Deuteronomy 21:23, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree".

3:16 quoted Genesis 12:7, 13:15, 17:7, 24:7, "and to your offspring [seed]".

4:21-31 drew from Genesis 16:1-6 and Genesis 21:1-12 to show who are the true children of promise and who are children of slavery.

4:27 quoted Isaiah 54:1, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;..."

To God's Glory Alone

1:4, 5 To God be the glory for our deliverance from the present evil age.

6:13, 14 The Judaizers gloried in the flesh. Paul gloried in the cross of Christ.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone leaves no room for me to boast about what I did to "get saved". All glory is to God alone. If justification was by works then there might be room for boasting in what we have done. Justification through faith alone is based on Christ's work on the cross and God's grace toward us. Grace leaves no room for boasting. Grace means that we didn't earn it. We are only left to say, "To God be the glory."