

Poor Galatians!

They've been dead for nearly 2000 years and still people are calling them 'foolish', 'stupid' and 'senseless'. What these people don't realise is, the reasons which misled the Galatians are the same reasons which mislead people today. We judge the Galatians as stupid and yet we still make the same mistakes ourselves!

The representatives of the temple were very well dressed people and the Galatians were probably convinced more by their clothing, than what they actually said to them:

"They look like men of God, so they must know what they are talking about!"

They probably felt convicted to comply with tradition and the old covenant law; when these representatives talked about Abraham keeping the covenant of God, with the act of circumcision. They may have figured, "Well, why not do both?" The trouble is, once we start believing or trusting someone, if we don't know 'the Truth' we won't know when to stop trusting them! Paul was rightly distressed by the ease at which they were misled.

This still happens today because people generally don't know the Word of God, and don't make an effort to educate themselves through reading their Bibles, relying instead on 'experts' for interpretation. Are you a Galatian? God reveals Himself through the scriptures. God also promises to answer our questions too!

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (Jam 1:5)

We are fooled by the outward appearance, of something or someone. With our mind we think that if the outward looks good, the inward must be good too. Eve was conned by Satan because what she saw looked good:

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." (Gen 3:6)

Advertisers know that if they can make us stare at an item long enough we will want it, and will buy it, regardless of whether we will use it or not!

Rodriguez said, "A monkey in silk, is a monkey no less"!

We all know the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover", but do we listen? No!

A corrupt person generally dresses as well as, or better than a honest person, and will not hesitate to enrich himself when given the opportunity. We tell people that they must dress smartly and be presentable. People judge each other by what they see and first impression.

Samuel was sent by the Lord to anoint David to be king, but he didn't know what David looked like.

So Samuel did what the Lord said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice. So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!" But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1Sa 16:4-7)

So what is this book of Galatians all about? The evils of the law? The deception of the ignorant? People use this book of Galatians to try and prove that the laws of God have been replaced by grace! They make statements like, 'We are not under the law'.

I shall try to explain my view with the following example:

If a 'law of National service' is passed, which compels youths aged between 18 and 25 to go and serve their country for a period of three years, most of the youth will naturally not want to go. Now say there is also a letter of exemption, which can be given to a person, enabling them to carry on with their normal lives and not having to do the National service.

- 1) This letter of exemption would be worthless to a person, if there was no 'law of National service' or if the person was 25 or older as this law requires nothing from them. However this same letter of exemption is very valuable to a person who is younger than 25. The age of the person (the condition which determines whether they are accepted or rejected by the law) determines how valuable this letter is to the individual.
- 2) The law is not the problem for the affected individual, it is the condition the person sin (their age), which determines whether the person is affected by the law or not. The letter of grace frees them (a person in the wrong condition) from the curse of the law (three years National service), not from the law which is legal and binding to all the people of that country.

Sin, sickness, disease and the permanent separation from God, are the curses of God's law. Christians who are righteous are free from the curses of the law, they will be saved from the second death, in the Lord's day of judgment. There will also be righteous people who will be living when the Lord God comes again for judgment day and they will never experience death.

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen 2:8-9)

Two trees representing two choices to Adam and Eve, the consequence being life or death. These two trees have the power of being able to change the condition of the person as a whole, body and spirit. Eating the fruit of the tree of life makes a mortal person immortal. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, would give the person who consumed its fruit, the knowledge of good and evil; but they also would be changed from immortal, without the knowledge of sin - sinless, to mortal with the knowledge of sin - sinful.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:16-17)

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" (Gen 3:2-3)

So Adam and Eve both understood the condition of the law and never touched or ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and lived happily ever after in the presence of the Lord their God? Not! Just as children and adolescents test their parents, Eve unfortunately decided to put God's law to the test. Now mankind has the knowledge of good and evil, is sinful and is ruled by Death. But the bad situation got worse still!

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:19)

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (Gen 6:3)

So now man has to go to work for his bread, and later will only live for 120 years, the lintel of his body!

Fear is also introduced between man and the rest of creation.

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs." (Gen 9:1-3)

God tells Noah about judgment day, and the second law, that 'the life is in the blood'.

"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man." (Gen 9:4-5)

God demands a reckoning from Abraham requesting the sacrifice of Abraham's son for whom he had waited till he was 100 years of age and loved him greatly. Abraham prophesies to his son demonstrating his trust and faith in God, regarding the lamb for the sacrifice by fire. *But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. (Gen 22:7-8)*

God provides the lamb, in answer to Abraham's obedience, fulfilling his prophecy and providing the substitute for the salvation of Abraham's son. *But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. (Gen 22:11-13)*

The Israelites are introduced to the concept of a blood sacrifice to cover sin, remission of sin - grace is purchased through the shedding of the blood of an innocent lamb. *'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.'* *'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'* (Exo 12:5-8, 13)

The law of blood sacrifice for the covering of sins is introduced to the Hebrew people through Moses. *"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the Lord."* *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."* *"... he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.' "* (Lev 17:6, 11, 13-14)

"See I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go in to possess." (Deu 30:15-16)

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them." (Deu 30:19-20)

Now you shall say to this people, Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." (Jer 21:8)

"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." (Deu 10:16)

"And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." (Deu 30:6)

We don't circumcise our flesh in faith anymore, we circumcise our hearts. When we repent and are spiritually reborn, the desires of our hearts are no longer, 'what I want', the selfish attitude; our desire becomes a selfless, 'to do what God expects from me', with a genuine 'living to help others' attitude.

God's ten commandment law was written in stone with His finger. All these laws are still valid today. The handwritten laws on washings and sacrifices etc. have been replaced, nailed to the cross with Jesus. His perfect sacrifice was the end of man's blood sacrifices for sin, because Jesus was sinless and took all of mankind's sin on Himself.

He paid the price for our sin, past, present and future, dying on our behalf. Salvation for our lives is obtained when we repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness; acknowledge Jesus Christ is the Son of God; acknowledge His sacrifice on the cross and then His blood covers our personal sins. This is a personal commitment and being a Christian is about having a relationship with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ supported by the comforter, His Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Grace is not a license to sin, we are still held accountable for all our works.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1Jo 2:1-6)

However, the final shedding of lifeblood to cover sin will take place in the future, and the sinful bodies will be burnt, in the final sin offering by fire. All the wicked people, the wicked angels, Sin and Death will be throw into that fire on that day of reckoning. That is how sin will be purged from this Universe, to restore mankind to God, righteous again. As it was in the beginning, when everything the Lord God made was good.

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:10-15)

The question facing you is : Do you choose life or death?

In the day of reckoning, Judgement Day, will you offer your own lifeblood for your sins; or will your sins be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, The Son of God, who sacrificed His life and shed His lifeblood for your redemption?

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