

THE OLD WAY AND THE NEW WAY

Psalm 32:1-11; Galatians 3:1-20 / Psalm 33:1-22

I. Some Things Are Simply Foolish

A. Something is wrong when people tamper with the gospel. “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?” (GALATIANS 3:1) [foolish – a-wise; compare a-moral or a-theist]

B. Moses, who is often misunderstood, made the same point; God is the maker and purchaser of His people. “Do ye thus requite the LORD, O *foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee?* hath he not made thee, and established thee?” (DEUTERONOMY 32:6) [foolish – senseless or withered]

C. Faith is the only door into the house of God. “This only would I learn of you, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Are ye so foolish? *having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*” (GALATIANS 3:2-3)

D. At what point does the unchanging God change? “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” (GALATIANS 3:5)

II. Put the Way of Faith in Historical Context

A. Start with Abraham. “Even as *Abraham believed* God, and *it was accounted* to him for *righteousness.*” (GALATIANS 3:6)

B. There never has been a second way to heaven. “Know ye therefore that *they which are of faith*, the same *are the children of Abraham.*” (GALATIANS 3:7)

C. The form in which God has communicated grace has shifted from Abraham to his family and then to Israel and finally to the Universal Church, but the message has always been grace through faith. “And the *scripture, foreseeing* that God would justify the heathen

through faith, ***preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*** So then ***they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.***” (GALATIANS 3:8-9)

D. Scripture presents an EITHER-OR, not a BOTH-AND, choice. “For ***as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:*** for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that ***no man is justified by the law in the sight of God,*** it is evident: for, ***The just shall live by faith.***” (GALATIANS 3:10-11)

E. The substitutionary atonement is the only platform there ever was for salvation by faith. “***Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:*** for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: ***That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles*** through Jesus Christ; ***that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.***” (GALATIANS 3:13-14)

III. Do Not Neglect the Simple Truth

A. God warns against substituting a form of godliness for grace. “This know also, that ***in the last days*** perilous times shall come. For ***men shall be lovers of their own selves,*** covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ***unthankful, unholy,*** Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, ***despisers of those that are good,*** Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ***Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:*** from such turn away. For of this sort are ***they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,***” (2 TIMOTHY 3:1-6)

B. One tragic example of WORKS driving out GRACE is disrupting American religious life today. “***Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving*** of them which believe and know the truth.” (1 TIMOTHY 4:3)

C. The same chapter traces the origins of gospel compromise. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that ***in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*** Speaking lies in hypocrisy; ***having their conscience seared*** with a hot iron;” (1 TIMOTHY 4:1-2)

D. Precisely the opposite of this foolish confusion occurs when the Holy Spirit enters people. “Howbeit when he, the *Spirit of truth*, is come, he *will guide you into all truth*: for he shall not speak of himself; but *whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*: and he will shew you things to come.” (JOHN 16:13)

E. The OLD WAY is the sinful self-salvation of the old man; faith which makes all things new has always been the NEW WAY of grace. “If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye *put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt* according to the deceitful lusts; And *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*,” (EPHESIANS 4:21-23)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.
+ John Newton

+ Dr. Edwin P. Elliott