

CLARITY MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

CLARITY TRUMPET

"It's Time for CLARITY!"

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

-First Corinthians 14:8, 9-

The **CURSE** of Galatianism

Christianity might have been just another brand of Judaism, or the world view of the western world might have been entirely pagan if the book of Galatians had never been written. It was the cornerstone of the Reformation. From its contents the teaching of salvation by grace alone became the dominant theme of the preaching of the Reformers. Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians probably did more to influence men of his day than any other single document.

The book of Galatians was inspired by God through the apostle Paul to refute certain errors that had crept into the churches of Galatia. Today we term these errors, Galatianism. What is Galatianism? According to Dr. C. I. Scofield, *"The Galatian error had two forms, both of which are refuted. The first is the teaching that obedience to the law is mingled with faith as the ground of the sinner's justification; the second, that the justified believer is made perfect by keeping the law."* (Scofield Reference Bible. Note on Theme of Galatians, page 1241).

The same ideas, or the same spirit of Galatianism, is quite prevalent today even among some evangelical Christians. It takes on many forms, but it comes down to the same basic principle: Is man saved or kept saved by the grace of God and not as the outcome of anything that he does of himself, or is man saved by grace *and* by something additional that he does?

As we study through the book of Galatians we find that it is a book of contrasts. God contrasts grace as opposed to law; He contrasts the flesh with the Spirit, truth versus error, faith versus works, bondage versus liberty; Paul, as an apostle of Christ, is contrasted to others who claim to be apostles; and the true Gospel as opposed to many, many counterfeits. In one very pertinent passage God says the following:

Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged

from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:2-4).

In the modern vernacular, Paul is saying that you cannot mingle salvation by Christ and salvation by something else. You cannot really trust Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation while at the same time looking to your law keeping, your ritualism, or your observance of the traditions of men. Either Christ saves completely or He doesn't save at all.

As a young boy attending church in my home town (Washington, D. C.), I understood from the preaching I heard that Jesus Christ was necessary for salvation. However, I did not comprehend that Jesus Christ was *enough*, that He Himself was *sufficient* for my salvation. I was unaware of the truth stated so well in Hebrews 1:3: *"... when he had by Himself purged our sins [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."* It is one of the basic errors of contemporary Christianity that Jesus Christ came to *help* us save ourselves. He did no such thing. He came to do *all* the saving when we trust in Him!

Perhaps some men who preach a form of Galatianism today are sincere. They may be attempting to motivate God's people to live righteous lives. They sometimes feel that if they can make others obey certain rules or regulations, or behave in a certain way, that a godly lifestyle will be the result. Unfortunately this is a wrong approach to both salvation and the Christian life. For instance, to tell nonbelievers that they must do certain things or keep a certain set of laws in order to be saved is as contrary to the Word of God and to grace as anything possibly could be. We cannot be saved by Moses' law any more than we can be saved or kept saved by any other law.

Notice these crystal clear statements from God's Word:

Knowing that a man is not justified (declared righteous) by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (Galatians 2:16).

I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain (Galatians 2:1).

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them" (Galatians 3:10-12).

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been given a law which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe (Galatians 3:21-22).

Not only is it wrong to emphasize man's work, effort or law keeping as a condition for salvation, but it is just as wrong to assume that the Christian life is made up of a bunch of *do's* and *don'ts*. Again, notice what the Word of God says:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3).

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). This verse does not say that if you stop satisfying the desires of the flesh you will be walking in the Spirit, but rather, it says just the opposite. As I am yielded to God's Spirit – though my own fleshly, sinful desires are ever with me – I will not be *fulfilling* them or *satisfying* those yearnings.

God's way of victory for the Christian is not by law keeping, but by the spontaneous yielded obedience to God, the Holy Spirit. This "walking in the Spirit" is sometimes referred to as walking by faith, or being filled with the Spirit, or living a godly life. It becomes a reality in the believer's life, not by trying to live by a list of rules, but by responding to the Spirit's leading as revealed in His Word, the Bible; obeying Him as His will is revealed through that same Word.

So, whether we are speaking of salvation or the Christian's life, Galatianism is not God's way. As a matter of fact, Galatianism in all of its many manifestations, is under God's curse. Why, you may ask, would God curse those who preach this

Galatianism? That He does curse such people is made clear in Galatians 1:6-9: *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you into the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. 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. 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.*

There may be many reasons why God curses the man, woman or angel who preaches another, or different, gospel (known as Galatianism). Here are a few.

Why God Curses Galatianism

- It is contrary to Scripture, making God a liar.
- It keeps the lost blinded to the truth.
- It confuses Christians so they are not able to witness effectively to the true Gospel.
- It makes Christ's death meaningless.
- It brings persecution to those who *do* stand for the Gospel of Christ.
- It turns people against the real saving Gospel message.
- It enslaves rather than setting free.

One last thought: There is an interesting parallel in Deuteronomy 27:18. Speaking of physical things, the Mosaic Law states: *Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road* [out of the way]. If such a strong consequence was mandated upon anyone who caused the physically blind to wander out of the way, how much greater God's judgment is upon those who cause *the spiritually blinded* to wander astray from His way of salvation? O, that we could be so Biblically clear on the importance of God's grace, both in salvation and in the Christian life, that we would never confuse people with our own ideas or opinions. As Paul said just before his death, we need to be "preaching the Word" – nothing more; nothing less, nothing else (II Timothy 4:2).

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Clarity Trumpet #35

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