

Galatians 3:1–5 (LEB)	Galatians 3:1–5 (NIV)
<p>¹ O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed <i>as</i> having been crucified? ² I want only to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now trying to be made complete by the flesh? ⁴ Have you suffered so many <i>things</i> for nothing—if indeed also <i>it was</i> for nothing? ⁵ Therefore does the one who gives you the Spirit and who works miracles among you <i>do so</i> by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?</p>	<p>¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?</p>

Main Point:

You clearly experienced the Spirit as a result of hearing the gospel, how is it you're so foolish to turn to works of the law?

1. The implication of receiving the Spirit

a. The Old Testament - The dawning of the Messianic age and the restoration of Israel:

i. Isaiah 11:1-9

1. The coming ruler from the line of David, the Messiah is described in these verses as having the Spirit of the LORD resting on him, and as a result his reign is filled with righteousness, justice, and peace.

ii. Isaiah 32:9-20

1. The prophet announces impending judgment upon Jerusalem, and promises that it will last until “the Spirit is poured out on us from on high.”
2. Associated with this ending of judgment is the establishment of God’s just rule, blessing in the land, and righteousness and peace for all of God’s people.

iii. Isaiah 44:1-5

1. Following a description of judgment in the preceding passage, there is the image of a dry land, and the Lord pours out water on it – which is a picture of his Spirit and his blessing being poured out to the descendants of Israel. (notice the link between the blessing upon the seed and receiving the Spirit).
2. Fruitfulness ensues, and people are described as “taking the name of Israel” and saying “I belong to YHWH.” Many even believe that v.5 is actually a description of Gentiles coming into the people of God.

iv. Isaiah 61

1. This great depiction of the arrival of the Messianic age and the ensuing restoration of creation begins with the Servant's declaration that the Spirit of the Lord is upon him, and this anointing serves as his commission to bring the good news.
- v. Ezekiel 37:11-14
 1. This famous passage of the valley of dry bones, contains a picture of resurrection which is used to describe God's restoration of the people of Israel, and the culmination of it is that he will put his Spirit on them and they will live. The Spirit and the resurrection go hand in hand and this passage joins the imagery of the Spirit with the restoration of Israel.
- vi. Ezekiel 39:25-29
 1. In these verses, the LORD describes the restoration of Israel from judgment, and the culmination is that he will no longer hide his face, but will pour out his Spirit on the people of Israel.
- vii. Joel 2:18-32
 1. Here again, we see judgment and a call for repentance, followed by the promise of the LORD showing mercy.
 2. The imagery is that land abounds with fruitfulness and rejoicing, abundance and praising of the LORD.
 3. Following this redemption, the LORD will pour out his Spirit "on all flesh" with accompanying signs and wonders.
- b. The New Testament – The mission of Jesus and heirs in the Kingdom of God
 - i. Jesus
 1. Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35
 - a. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Matt. 3:16
 - a. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit for his mission
 3. Matt 12:28
 - a. Jesus' work casting out demons by the Spirit of God is a sign that the kingdom of God has arrived.
 - ii. Heirs of the Kingdom of God
 1. John 3:1-8
 - a. Only those who are born from above, that is, born of the Spirit are able to enter into the kingdom of God.
 2. Romans 8:16-17
 - a. The Spirit testifies that we are sons, and by implication, heirs
 3. Ephesians 1:11-14
 - a. The Spirit is the guarantee, or down-payment, of the inheritance which is to come.
 - iii. The arrival of the Spirit
 1. John 7:37-38

- a. Jesus spoke concerning the Spirit, who would come upon those who believe in him. Tellingly, John says “the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” The pouring out of the Spirit was dependent upon Jesus’ death and resurrection.
- 2. John 20:22
 - a. The resurrected Jesus appears to them and commissions them through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which we see poured out in Acts 2.
- 3. Acts 2
 - a. The Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples, and they begin to speak before the crowds gathered at Jerusalem with the miraculous gift of languages and understanding.
 - b. Peter announces that what they’re witnesses is no less than the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32
 - c. He calls upon the people to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit.
- 4. Acts 10:1-(44-48)
 - a. In Acts 10, Peter is brought to the Gentile god fearer Cornelius and preaches the gospel to him. It says, “while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.” This was evidenced by their speaking in tongues and extolling God. Peter concludes that they should be baptized into the Church, seeing that God has granted them the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Acts 11:15-18
 - a. To reinforce the point, Peter repeats to the Jews exactly his line of reasoning for counting them among the brethren. The conclusion is that “God has given the Gentiles repentance unto life.”
- 6. Acts 15:6-11
 - a. Here Peter testifies again, and make clear that “God made no distinction between them and us, but testified to their cleansed hearts by giving them the Holy Spirit.”
- c. The conclusion of the matter
 - i. The Gentiles are fellow heirs of the kingdom of God
 - ii. The Gentiles have been welcomed and justified, with the same status as Jews
 - iii. The new creation has begun to appear in the middle of history.

2. The means of receiving the Spirit

- a. Paul presses the issue with them – knowing you’ve received the Spirit, how did it happen?
- b. **Assumption 1: The Galatians have received the Spirit**
 - i. This is not a point in dispute. Paul considers the Galatians to be recipients of the Spirit.
- c. **Assumption 2: The Galatians can recognize that they have received the Spirit**

- i. He does not need to persuade them that they have already received the Spirit, but takes for granted that they will recognize that it has happened and how.
- d. Since all of the questions are clearly rhetorical, Paul asking them to interpret their experience in light of the story he's telling. You received the Spirit as a result of hearing and believing the message of the gospel, so how is it that you think you need to submit to Torah? Since the Spirit is the sign of sonship, the indication that you're an heir, why are you seeking what you already have through some other means?

3. The foolishness of the Galatians

- a. Having begun in the 'Spirit' (in both senses) are they now to be made complete by the 'flesh' (in both senses)? The whole objective is to participate in the age to come, the age of the Spirit, and to be delivered from this present evil age, the age of the flesh, and they have already experienced this and are now being tempted to turn to the flesh.

4. Some implications -

- a. **Beginning well does not guarantee finishing well, it is possible to be led astray**
- b. **Receiving the Spirit is the definitive 'evidence' of being an heir, and this comes through the message of the Gospel**
- c. **The reception of the Spirit begins the Christian life, and is not a subsequent phase of greater holiness**