

GALATIANS: IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING LEGALISM

Part IV: The Use Of Scripture To Counter Legalistic Beliefs

(Galatians 3:6-4:11)

I. Introduction

- A. Those who hold to legalistic views believe many Biblical ideas! That makes legalism difficult to counter!
- B. However, Scripture itself can be used to show the inconsistencies of religious legalism as follows:

II. The Use Of Scripture To Counter Legalistic Beliefs, Galatians 3:6-4:11)

- A. The wrong Gospel pushed by legalists at Galatia was that one must **not only believe** in Christ, **but also be circumcised as a Jew** to be saved, Gal. 1:8-9 with 5:2.
- B. This error came from an intense belief that Moses' **Law** in **Scripture** was to be kept!
- C. To counter the misuse of Moses' writings, Paul used the authorities that the **legalists themselves would recognize** -- the writings of **Moses himself** and the truths of prophets **under the Law!**
 - 1. Paul proved from **Moses'** book, Genesis, that Abraham was justified by faith **without** the **Law**, 3:6-9:
 - a. Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 in Gal. 3:6 to show that Abraham was justified by God through faith.
 - b. Paul's Gen. 15:6 quote is taken from a text which is **four generations BEFORE** the **Law**, v. 13ff!
 - c. Paul's quote is taken from **Moses'** book of Genesis, the one author the Judaizers most honored!
 - d. Powerfully, Paul concludes that Abraham's blessing is by faith **without the Law**, Gal. 3:8-9!
 - 2. Additionally, Paul used another argument from the **Law itself** and from a prophet **under the Law!**
 - a. Moses' Law put any Jew under a curse if he failed to keep **any single part of it**, Gal. 3:10 with Deuteronomy 27:26! But since one cannot keep the entire Law, everyone is condemned by it!
 - b. Besides, the prophet, Habakkuk (2:4) taught that one lives by faith, not by the Law, Gal. 3:11.
 - c. The Law also taught that one had to **do** its precepts rather than just **believe** it, Gal. 3:12; Lev.18:5!
 - d. Since the Law itself and prophetic writings under the Law never imply justification by the Law, but only by faith apart from law, Paul argues that one is justified by faith alone in Jesus, Gal. 3:13-15.
 - e. The purpose of the Law, then, was to point us to Christ. Paul labors this point in Gal. 3:16-4:8.
 - f. Thus, Paul shows that to teach justification by faith plus circumcision was to make God's people return to inferior, pre-salvation elementals after having reached their goal in Christ! (Gal. 3:9-11)

Lesson: Legalism, being a man-made and thus errant system, inevitably contradicts itself with Scripture! We can thus use Scripture itself to expose its error for our edification!

Illustration: Jehovah's Witnesses in The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, p. 13 state: "If a religion really accepts the Bible as God's Word, it is not going to use certain parts of it and reject other parts . . . (it) must agree in all its details with the Bible." But on page 52, speaking of Christ's resurrection, it reads: "He was not given human life again . . . Forty days after his resurrection he appeared visibly . . . in materialized bodies." However, Luke 24:39-41 records Jesus showing the scars in His hands and feet from the crucifixion and his ability to eat earthly food to pro ve that He'd risen in the same body in which he had suffered and died! For him not to have been in that same human body would have made this appearance a lie! This group violates its own claim to reflect all of the Scripture! It thus errs!

Illustration: The Book of Mormon (1981 ed.) states in its Introduction: "The Book of Mormon . . . contains, as does the Bible, the fullness of the everlasting gospel." According to 3 Nephi 27:16 in that book, the gospel is: "whoso repenteth and is baptized . . . and endureth to the end . . . will I hold guiltless . . . when I . . . judge the world." Yet, Paul says that salvation is by faith alone, Eph. 2:8-9, and not even an angel (like the Mormon angel, Moroni) can change it, Gal. 1:8-9! The Book of Mormon thus exposes its own inconsistency with Scripture. It thus errs!