

## **The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians**

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### **Chapter Six -**

#### **THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT COMES BY FAITH - AND NOT BY LAW OR BY WORKS**

Verse 1: **"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?"**

Paul is here referring to the preaching of the Gospel of grace which he himself had preached in Galatia. He preached JESUS CHRIST crucified . . . in fact, his message was singular:

**"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"**  
(Galatians 6:14; I Corinthians 2:2; see also 15:1-4).

Verse 2: **"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?"**

The believer receives the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT when he is saved. When one is born again, the HOLY GHOST immediately enters the heart (Romans 8:8-9; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 4:30; John 3:3, 5). The believers at Galatia knew what had happened in their lives. They knew the experience they had had, and Paul is asking them how it happened. Did the blessing they received come through Law-works, or by hearing and believing the Gospel of the grace of GOD?

The Galatians knew the answer, whether they admitted it or not. They knew that no person can be saved by turning over a new leaf, by doing the best he can, by practicing good works, or by joining the church. **"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD"** (Romans 10:17).

Paul asked these people, "Did you receive the experience you enjoyed (until the legalizers came along) by working - or by hearing? By doing - or by receiving? Through ritual - or through faith?" He seems to suggest this: "You Galatians know the answer!"

Verses 3 and 4: **"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain."**

There are tens of thousands of church members in America (and around the world) today who were saved by believing on the Lord JESUS CHRIST (putting their faith in the finished work of the Lamb of GOD), who are striving day by day to make themselves perfect in the flesh through the practice of religious dogmas, traditions of men, commandments of men, rules and regulations

laid down by churches and denominations. They are seeking to perfect themselves through the energy of the flesh; but sooner or later they learn to their sad regret that the flesh is no good . . . GOD gave it up in the Garden. He provided redemption for the Spirit, but to Adam the Lord said, **"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."**

Later, Isaiah thundered out, **"ALL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESSES ARE AS FILTHY RAGS!"** (Isaiah 64:6b).

- Regardless of how much good you may try to do,
- regardless of how much money you give,
- regardless of how clean you live,
- regardless of how perfect you become in your own sight. . .

Everything good that you do, everything good that you are, adds up to no better than filthy rags in the sight of GOD Almighty. But by simple faith in the shed Blood of JESUS CHRIST, you can instantaneously become as pure as the Blood of the Lamb.

This is the way the HOLY SPIRIT states it: **"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love . . . JESUS), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love . . . JESUS), I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love . . . JESUS), it profiteth me nothing"** (I Corinthians 13:1-3).

In other words, regardless of what I am, what I do, what I live or what I give, if I do not have the Lord JESUS CHRIST in my heart, then all of my living and giving adds up to one giant zero . . . one giant bundle of filthy rags. But in CHRIST, by faith in His finished work, I now am a son of GOD. I now am in CHRIST. I presently sit in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS. **"[I am] dead - and [my] life is hid with Christ in God.** I am justified by faith in His finished work - and to be justified in the sight of GOD is to be just as though I had never sinned.

When the Lord GOD looks at me, He sees the Blood of JESUS that covers me . . . He does not see poor, helpless, Oliver Greene; He sees the precious Blood of the LAMB of GOD.

"Hallelujah! What a Saviour! Who can take a poor, lost sinner - lift him from the miry clay and set him free!"

**"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"** (Isaiah 1:18).

Weary church member, frustrated religionist, cease your striving, enduring, working; this moment begin believing, trusting, resting . . . cast all your care upon JESUS. He is able to bear it . . . you are not!

Verse 5: **"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?"**

Paul does not name the person, nor intimate who it is, through which the Spirit is working miracles in Galatia. It is not important that we know the name. (One reason I know the Bible was written by GOD and not by man, is that many times when man would give names with honor and glory, the Spirit simply makes a statement without names.)

Notice the words again: **"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?"** The point here is that the Spirit is the One who works miracles and who has the power to do the impossible . . . not Law-works or man's ability through attempting to keep the Law. Miracles are wrought by faith - not by works.

America does not need more theological institutions in which to train preachers how to stand in the pulpit, raise and lower their arms, and prepare great messages to be read on Sunday morning. America needs more ministers, pastors and evangelists who will lose themselves long enough with JESUS to acquire the kind of faith He had when He cast out the demon in the boy who fell into the fire and into the water. This boy's father had brought him to the disciples, but they could not cure him. When JESUS rebuked the demon, he immediately came out, and the young man was made perfectly whole.

The disciples marveled and asked why they could not perform the miracle. JESUS told them, **"This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting"** (Matthew 17:14-21). Fasting is a lost art in the modern church. Instead of fasting, the average church can seat more people in the social hall than in the sanctuary. They have more soup suppers than they have prayer meetings. Fasting-and-praying is not practiced in most modern churches. Miracles of grace fall upon the people when great faith is exercised by spiritual leaders. Great faith can be acquired only by hearing the Word of GOD. The reason most preachers have so little faith is because they spend more time around the television and on the golf course than they spend alone with GOD studying His Word.

**"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"** (Romans 10:17). JESUS said, **"Have faith in God"** (Mark 11:22).

## **PAUL DECLARES THAT ABRAHAM WAS SAVED EXACTLY AS WE ARE**

Verses 6-9: **"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 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."**

The Jews honored Abraham very highly - and certainly they knew Abraham lived long before the Law of Moses. Therefore, Paul is pointing out to them the fact that Abraham was justified before Almighty GOD by faith. GOD spoke, Abraham heard; he believed - and GOD counted it to him as righteousness.

I think it would be time well spent to look briefly at the experience Abraham had with the Lord

GOD:

**"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).**

Please note: The Lord spoke to Abraham. His message was, **"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."** Abraham did not see GOD - he HEARD GOD - and he believed GOD.

**" . . . I will shew thee."**

**" . . . I will make of thee a great nation."**

**" . . . I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."**

**" . . . I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."**

Note: There are four "I will's":

1. **"I will shew thee."**

2. **"I will make of thee."**

3. **"I will bless thee."**

4. **"I will bless them that bless thee."**

It will be a happy day in your life and in mine when we stop dead still and recognize the fact that every spiritual blessing, from the beginning to the end, comes only through GOD; and that we can receive GOD's blessings only by faith. GOD honors faith, and faith alone.

Verse 4 tells us what Abraham did after he heard the message of GOD: **"SO ABRAM DEPARTED, AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN UNTO HIM."**

Abraham did exactly what the Lord GOD told him to do, exactly as the Lord told him to do it. He did not add to the Lord's message nor did he take from the message: **"So ABRAM DEPARTED, AS THE LORD HAD SPOKEN UNTO HIM."**

But today our religious leaders have become so wise, and have learned so much, that they cannot afford to take this old Book literally. They must revise it, and then revise the revision, to make it fit their ideas and tickle the ears of the crowd to whom they preach on Sunday morning. But beloved, GOD is neither dead nor asleep. GOD keeps books. One day the books will be opened - and GOD pity the modern crowd who are butchering the Gospel just as surely as these Judaizers and legalizers butchered the message delivered by Paul - the message of salvation by grace through faith plus nothing.

In speaking to the Jews, his brethren in the flesh, Paul asked, "How was Abraham saved? How was father Abraham kept? Was he kept by the Law? Certainly not . . . for Abraham knew nothing of the Law. Abraham lived four hundred years before the Law was given!" (Galatians

3:17). I can almost see Paul as he looks straight into the faces of his Jewish brethren and asks the second time, "How WAS our father Abraham saved and kept?" Then he answers his own question: "**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD - and it was accounted to him for righteousness**" (Galatians 3:6).

To the Romans Paul said, "**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**"

Please note in both of these passages (Galatians 3:6 and Romans 4:3) Paul said Abraham "**BELIEVED GOD.**" Paul did not say "Abraham believed ABOUT GOD," or that he "believed IN GOD"; Paul said, "**Abraham BELIEVED GOD!**"

There is a vast difference in believing about GOD and simply believing GOD. James 2:19 tells us, "**The devils also believe, and tremble.**" No one but a fool would say there is no GOD (Psalm 14:1). A man may believe a lot of wonderful things about GOD, and he may believe there IS a GOD - but unless he believes GOD he is just as lost as the heathen who has never heard about GOD.

What does it mean to believe GOD? The answer is found in Abraham's demonstration: GOD spoke to Abraham and simply commanded him to arise and leave his country and his father's house. GOD did not give him a roadmap, GOD did not tell him how many miles he should go, He did not tell him where to go; He simply told Abraham, "Get up and **get thee out . . . and I will shew thee!**"

GOD made Abraham a promise: He said, "**I will bless thee... I will make of thee a great nation... I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.**" Abraham simply moved out on the Word of GOD . . . he heard GOD, he believed Him, and he obeyed Him.

He had no roadmaps or blueprints. The only guarantee he had was GOD's promise. He believed GOD. To believe GOD is to accept His Word unconditionally; to trust His promise. To believe that GOD exists is not enough. To believe that GOD is good is not enough. To believe that GOD is holy is not enough.

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life"** (John 5:24).

What did Abraham believe? He believed what GOD said . . . GOD spoke, Abraham listened, and he believed. GOD has spoken to you and to me . . . we have His written Word, the verbally inspired Word of GOD; and through that Word GOD tells us that He so loved us He gave JESUS to die for us (John 3:16). He tells us that He did not send JESUS into the world to condemn the world, but that through Him the world might be saved (John 3:17). GOD further instructs us that if we believe on JESUS we are not condemned; but if we do not believe, we are already condemned (John 3:18).

- He tells us that "**we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God**" (Ephesians 2:8).

- He tells us not to boast about works (Ephesians 2:9).

- He tells us **"to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved"** (Acts 16:31).

GOD commands us to confess with our mouth the Lord JESUS, believe in our heart that GOD raised Him from the dead, and we shall surely be saved (Romans 10:9). GOD tells us that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13). He tells us that saving faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes only by the Word of GOD (Romans 10:17).

So, if we will read the Word of GOD, hear the Word of GOD, and BELIEVE the Word of GOD, He will accept us **"in the Beloved"** - righteous, holy, pure, sinless, undefiled, without spot or wrinkle, and we will immediately become a member of the bride of CHRIST, the body of CHRIST, of which JESUS is the Head (Ephesians 5:25-30).

GOD had promised Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Abraham had reached a ripe old age and so had Sarah - but GOD asked Abraham to believe the promise that even though he and his wife were both dead (from the standpoint of physical reproduction) He could miraculously and supernaturally give them a son.

**"Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women"** (Genesis 18:11). In the letter to the Hebrews, Paul tells us, **"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised"** (Hebrews 11:11).

What was true of Sarah was also true of Abraham. He had passed the years of fertility and was dead (from the standpoint of being able to produce children through natural avenues of reproduction). But we read, **"(Abraham) who against hope believed in hope, that he (Abraham) might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, HE WAS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness"** (Romans 4:18-22).

Here is the record: Abraham's body was dead, Sarah's body was dead, and it was imperative that GOD work a miracle or there could be no child through which all families of the earth could be blessed; but GOD had promised, and Abraham believed GOD. He believed that GOD was able to do what He had promised, even if it took a miracle. The birth of Isaac was as great a miracle as the birth of the Lord JESUS. Isaac was a type of the Lord JESUS - and through the seed of Abraham, in the fulness of time, JESUS was born . . . born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law (Galatians 4:4).

What was true in Abraham's day is true in our day. Salvation, justification, redemption . . . any blessing we receive from GOD must of necessity become ours through believing GOD (or, by faith). If we believe GOD, we have faith IN GOD.

**"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His SON. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the**

**witness in himself: HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT GOD HATH MADE HIM A LIAR; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His SON" (I John 5:9-10).**

Certainly these verses are crystal-clear, easily understood. Any person who will believe GOD concerning JESUS CHRIST will have the witness of GOD in his heart; but any person who hears the Gospel story of the death, burial, and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST and refuses to believe it, makes GOD a liar.

To hear the Gospel story and refuse to believe it is to label GOD a liar - there are no "if's, and's or maybe's" about it. It is clearly stated in the Scripture just quoted. GOD has no other plan, there is no other way, GOD has provided no other way because no other way COULD be provided. It had to be JESUS. It was imperative that He die. If He had not died, we would all die and burn in hell!

JESUS is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the strait gate, He is the one door, He is the author and the finisher of our faith. JESUS IS our salvation.

**"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:23-25). Therefore, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).**

Verse 10: **"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."**

The main words in this verse are, **"ALL THINGS."** If the sinner is to be justified by Law-works, let that sinner know that he must obey the Law (all of it) perfectly . . . in every minute detail. There can no part of it be broken . . . he must obey **"all things"** that are written in the Law, and he must obey them all of his life . . . **"FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL"** (James 2:10).

Certainly anyone who is reasonable would readily agree that salvation through this method would be utterly impossible. How could an imperfect man keep GOD's perfect, holy Law, without breaking one jot or one tittle?

Therefore, unless we are saved by GOD's grace (GOD's unmerited favor) through faith plus nothing, then face it - there is no salvation for us! Salvation must be of the Lord, totally and entirely of the Lord, entirely apart from man. Everything that man has ever touched, he has corrupted. GOD is not the author of corruption -- GOD is holy, and all of His works are holy. He accepts nothing less than holiness: **"holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."**

In verse 11 Paul thunders out: **"But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."**

The last part of that verse is recorded in GOD's holy Word no less than four times:

1. **"The just shall live by his faith"** (Habakkuk 2:4).
2. **"The just shall live by faith"** (Romans 1:17).
3. **"The just shall live by faith"** (Galatians 3:11).
4. **"Now the just shall live by faith"** (Hebrews 10:38).

Habakkuk states the fact that the man who humbles himself before GOD, the man who trusts in GOD, the man who looks to GOD, the man who leans upon GOD, is the man who is blessed by GOD. There may be woes all around, judgments without, vexation and heartbreak within, fears beside, famine before, disaster behind - but in spite of it all, the man who lives with GOD lives through it all in peace! Please read carefully Habakkuk 3:17-19.

In his letter to the believers at Rome, Paul emphasizes again and again that the Gospel reveals the righteousness of faith . . . the righteousness which GOD alone imputed to faith. CHRIST, who is the righteousness of GOD, is put to the account of faith. Please read carefully Romans 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, and 22. Also read Romans 10:6-10. Also Galatians 3:6. Righteousness is an objective state in which man is placed by the divine act of a holy GOD.

According to the Apostle Paul, the righteousness of GOD embraces two bestowals of grace. The recipient of GOD's marvelous grace stands before GOD as if he had never committed any evil, as if he had always accomplished all the good GOD could expect from him. Face it: GOD's grace provides for the sinner, and brings to the sinner GOD's holiness - because it was the Blood of GOD that flowed through the veins of JESUS.

GOD purchased the church with His own Blood. To the Romans, Paul stated: **"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH"** (Romans 1:16-17).

The meaning of the statement **"from faith to faith"** is not from one degree of faith to another; but what Paul is pointing out here is the fact that GOD blesses the believer on the principle of faith. GOD offers justification to the unbeliever on the ground of faith, not on the ground of works. We are justified by faith, and **"the just"** shall live on the principle of faith - or, BY faith, in the finished work of the Lord JESUS.

Writing to the saints in Galatia, Paul contrasts faith and CHRIST with Law and works. The words for **"faith"** in the Greek occur twenty-seven times in Galatians. Faith expresses itself in confidence toward GOD. Faith looks away from self to GOD. Faith is committal to GOD. Faith is separation from self to Himself. Faith is communion with GOD, content to rest in the promises laid down in His precious Word.

There is no way around it, there is no need to argue: According to the teachings of the Word of GOD and the preaching of the minister ordained of GOD and given to the Gentiles, we are saved by faith, we are kept by faith, we are rewarded according to our faith - and every blessing



received from Almighty GOD must be accepted by faith.

Every work performed that will bring reward at the end of life's journey must be a work of faith. We read, "**Whatsoever is not of faith is sin**" (Romans 14:23b).

Verse 12: "**And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.**" What Paul is setting forth here is the fact that it is a question of doing or believing. He quotes here from Leviticus 18:5. What he is saying is simply this: If we seek salvation by the Law, then of necessity we must do all that the Law requires because GOD accepts nothing less than perfection in holiness, and certainly it is impossible for any finite person to keep the holy Law of an infinite GOD.

The Law was not given to save anyone. The Law is a schoolmaster; by the Law is the knowledge of sin. By the deeds of the Law there shall be no flesh justified. How can a sinner perfectly obey the Law of GOD? The Gospel (the Good News) says - not "DO and live" but "BELIEVE and live!" After we are born again, we work, we do, we live, we sacrifice . . . but we do these things because we love JESUS - not to merit His love or His mercy.

We work for JESUS because we love Him. We serve Him because of deep appreciation in our hearts for the salvation He so graciously provided and so freely gives when we believe on His precious name. GOD help us not to be so foolish as to think we can please GOD in the flesh. Only ONE ever heard GOD say, "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!**" Those words were spoken by GOD the Father, of the Lord JESUS when He was baptized, and again on the Mount of Transfiguration. The only way you and I can please GOD the Father is to believe on His SON, the Lord JESUS CHRIST! and when we believe on the Lord JESUS CHRIST we are "**accepted in the Beloved,**" our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, we are placed in the body of CHRIST through the baptism of the HOLY SPIRIT (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

We are sealed by the precious HOLY GHOST until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). We are led by the HOLY SPIRIT into the paths of right living (Romans 8:14; Psalm 23). Therefore, if you, precious friend, want to be in that number when the saints go marching in, it is absolutely imperative that you set yourself aside, recognize the fact that you are totally depraved, hopelessly lost, past redemption so far as your own effort and merit is concerned. You must recognize that you are dead in trespasses and in sin, and by faith literally fling yourself at the feet of JESUS. Look up into His face with the eye of faith, reach out with the hand of faith, and receive the gift of GOD . . . JESUS CHRIST, His only begotten Son:

**"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:12-13).

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