

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

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Chapter Five -

PAUL DECLARES JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH WITHOUT LAW - WORKS

Paul declares that both Jews and Gentiles are on the same grounds, insofar as sin and salvation are concerned.

Verses 15 and 16: **"We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."**

Paul points out here that it is not a question of justification for the Gentiles any more than it is a question of justification for the Jew also, because Jews and Gentiles in this dispensation of grace are justified before GOD in the same way . . . by grace, through faith, plus nothing. It will be a happy day in the lives of some church people when they realize the difference between justification **"BEFORE GOD"** (Romans 4:2), which is by faith alone, which saves the sinner, causing him to become a Christian; and justification **"BEFORE MEN"** (James 2:14-26), which is by works and which gives the believer a testimony before his fellowman. Through good works he proves to his fellowman that living faith abides in his heart.

We are justified before GOD by naked faith; we are justified before men through good faithful works . . . stewardship. JESUS commanded, **"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."**

Works do not have anything to do with justification before GOD. We are justified by faith without the deeds of the Law: **"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"** (Romans 3:28). **"Not of works, lest any man should boast"** (Ephesians 2:9). **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Titus 3:5).

Jew or Gentile, by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified. Paul clearly states this again in Romans 3:20. Here he is saying to the Jews that if they hope to stand before GOD in peace, they too must come by grace through faith, and not by the works of the Law - or by the practice of Judaism.

Verse 17: **"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!"**

You will notice in Paul's writings that he many times asks a question, and then answers his own question immediately. In Paul's day it was customary for the Jews to speak of Gentiles as "**sinners.**" Of course, many times they were referred to as "dogs." Paul knew that some Jew - perhaps even Peter - was asking, "If we Jews turn from our religion and seek to be justified before GOD by faith in JESUS CHRIST alone, if we turn our backs upon the works of the Law, then will we not put ourselves in the same class with Gentile sinners? And if we do that, does that not make CHRIST the minister of sin? Would it not then be CHRIST who makes us sinners?" Paul answers, "**God forbid!**"

Verse 18: "**For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**"

Paul's reply to such a question as that of the preceding verse, is this: "It is not Christ who makes us sinners - it is we ourselves . . . because if, after seeking justification through the finished work of JESUS CHRIST, we again turn to the Law of Moses as if we were still unjustified sinners seeking to become justified by the works of the Law, we are then transgressors of the Law and therefore we make ourselves sinners . . . because sin is the transgression of GOD's Law." Read I John 3:4.

Never entertain the idea that Paul was against the Law of GOD. He testifies in Romans that the Law of GOD is holy and righteous. JESUS came, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill the Law - and what Paul was preaching is simply this: "In JESUS we are Law-keepers. In JESUS we satisfy the Law of GOD - but **ONLY IN JESUS**; because what the Law could not do, what the Law had never done, JESUS did in a body like unto your body and mine." No, Paul was not minimizing the holiness and the power of the Law. He was simply attempting to set straight the people who had been confused by the legalizers who had been commanding believers to practice Law-works to complete their salvation and to be able to keep their salvation. Paul was one hundred percent against mixing Law and Grace. Paul preached pure Grace, and **ONLY** pure Grace, for salvation.

Verse 19: "**For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.**"

Is the believer under Law? Is the Christian subject to the Law of Moses? In Paul's day, that question was already a burning issue. The Bible is crystal clear in giving the answer to the question, "Is the believer under the Law?" Paul answers: "**Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace**" (Romans 6:14). The believer is loosed and delivered from the Law (Romans 7:2). The believer is delivered from the Law (Romans 7:6). The Lord JESUS CHRIST is "**the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth**" (Romans 10:4). The Christian is free from the Law (Romans 8:2). And in our present Scripture (Galatians 2:19) the believer is "**DEAD TO THE LAW.**"

It may be that some of the Jews asked Paul, "When and where did you die?" The answer is found in our next verse:

Verse 20: "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.**"

Paul answers by saying, "I died when JESUS died on the Cross." When JESUS hung on the Cross, the passers-by saw only one man dying on a Cross; but GOD the Father saw more than one man. GOD saw more than a physical body. GOD saw the spiritual body, the mystical body - and that body is CHRIST. The church of the living GOD is the body of CHRIST. GOD looks upon the church as a body. JESUS is the Head; we born again believers are the members.

In I Corinthians 12:13, Paul declares, "**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.**"

Writing to the believers at Ephesus, Paul said, "**For we are members of His body, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES.**"

Writing to the believers in Colosse, Paul said, "**And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.**"

CHRIST is the head of the church; we are members of His body. Colossians 3:3: "**Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**" As GOD looked down upon Mount Calvary and saw the Lord JESUS dying on the Cross, He saw not only the head of the body, but GOD saw the entire body - complete, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27). He saw the glorious church that He purchased with His own Blood. GOD lives in the eternal present. He knows the end in the beginning; and He saw in CHRIST the church . . . complete, without spot, the holy church that will be displayed in the heavenlies throughout eternity (Ephesians 2:7).

"**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will**" (Ephesians 1:3-5).

That is the meaning of the words of Paul, "**For I through the Law am dead to the Law**" He died when JESUS died on the Cross. Paul, by grace, was in CHRIST as He hung on the Cross, and what happened to JESUS on the Cross happened to Paul since he was in CHRIST. What happened to Paul happened to every born again believer from then until this day, and to every believer from this day until the church is completed and caught up to meet JESUS in the air.

"**WHEREFORE, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law BY THE BODY OF CHRIST**" (Romans 7:4).

The Law could do no more - it had no more authority over Paul. Certainly the Law holds nothing against a dead man - ("**I... am dead to the Law . . . I am crucified with Christ**"). If a person commits murder, the state tries him as a criminal, the judge sentences him to die in the gas chamber, and the sentence is carried out.

When the corpse of the murderer is removed from the gas chamber . . . when the body is buried . . . the courts hold nothing against the dead man. He paid the supreme penalty of death. JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, paid the penalty for sin ("**The wages of sin is death**"). JESUS died

for sinners. He knew no sin (II Corinthians 5:21). He was the sinless, spotless, Son of GOD. He willingly died on the Cross, that we might be saved, and all believers died with Him because in reality all believers were in Him when He laid down His life on the Cross. But that is not all: When JESUS was pronounced dead, Joseph of Arimathea went with Nicodemus to Pilate and asked for His body, in order that they might bury Him. The record is found in Matthew 27:58-60:

"He went to Pilate, and begged the body of JESUS. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock."

Beloved, notice the word "**BODY**." Please notice that word is used three times in the account we have just read. The "**body**" of JESUS was begged for burial, Pilate surrendered the "**body**," they wrapped the "**body**" in clean cloth, they buried it in Joseph's new tomb.

We born again believers are crucified, buried, and risen with JESUS. What He experienced, we experienced with Him:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

Yes, born again believers are crucified with CHRIST, buried with CHRIST in the baptism of His death. (Certainly Paul is not referring to the water in the River Jordan nor to the water in a baptistry. The baptism referred to in this scripture is the baptism of which JESUS spoke when He said, "**I have a baptism to be baptized with.**")

When JESUS came out of that tomb, every member of the New Testament church came out with Him . . . that is, we were raised from the dead along with the Head of the church:

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:8-11).

Hear these precious words:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD" (Colossians 3:1-3).

But that is not all.

Hear this:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we

were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS" (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Positionally, we born again believers sit with JESUS in heavenly places - now. Our Head is in Heaven, the Body to which we belong is in Heaven, the Foundation of the New Testament church is in Heaven. Our citizenship is in Heaven. We sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS. What a wonderful position! It is tragic that so many professing Christians do not understand the marvel and the miracle of the grace of GOD. They have been misled by modern legalizers who put them under commandments.

They worry, they struggle, they work, they toil, they strive, they endure . . . in an effort to keep saved! They are trying desperately to "make it in." True believers are already "in" . . . we are SEATED WITH JESUS "IN HEAVENLY PLACES . . . We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us . . ." (Romans 8:3-4).

"FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH" (Romans 10:4).

The Law of Moses demanded death as the righteous penalty for all sin. The Law executed its sentence and claimed its demand upon Paul in the person of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Lamb of GOD, the substitute for sinners . . . He who died on the Cross on Golgotha's hill.

GOD reckoned Paul in CHRIST - and put Paul to death in CHRIST when CHRIST died on the Cross for Paul. JESUS represented Paul on the Cross. JESUS also represented YOU, if you are a believer - and He wants to represent every sinner who may read these lines. If you are lost, JESUS is seeking you through this message. If you will believe on JESUS He will justify you before GOD, because JESUS is the "**propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world**" (I John 2:2).

Paul declares, "**We thus judge (reckon) that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again**" (II Corinthians 5:14-15).

Therefore, according to GOD's reckoning at Calvary, we died in the Lord JESUS; but we did not remain dead. We arose from the dead when GOD raised up CHRIST from the dead, and we (believers) who died in CHRIST were also brought to life in CHRIST, because He is life: "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life**" (John 14:6). We believers were quickened together with CHRIST (Ephesians 2:5).

Therefore, we were crucified with CHRIST, we were raised with CHRIST, we now live in CHRIST because He is our life.

Since **"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,"** and **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"** and **"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"** and since that Word was JESUS, the only begotten Son of GOD, and since He died on the Cross, and if we believe in Him we become a member of His body, **"of his flesh, and of his bones,"** we can say that we live **"by faith, (THE faith), of the Son of God."**

What I have said is simply this: It is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). It is you in CHRIST, the hope of Heaven (Colossians 3:3). **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus";** so, the only position that makes you eligible to stand before a holy GOD is that of being in CHRIST by faith.

When we accept His finished work, we receive everything purchased through His finished work; because it is CHRIST in you - and CHRIST is a person. You do not receive JESUS "in parts" or on the "installment plan." He is a personality, and when you receive JESUS, you receive all of Him. When you are born again you are completely born again. We are not saved in parts, a little at a time; we are saved when JESUS enters the heart by faith.

When Paul died in CHRIST, Paul met all the righteous requirements and commands of the Law. From that moment forward, he was forever delivered from the penalty of the Law. The Law had put Paul to death - but it was not the Law that brought him back to life. The Law was neither the means of his life, nor was the Law the rule of his life. The Law was **"done away"** in CHRIST JESUS (II Corinthians 3:11).

That is the reason Paul said, **"The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me!"**

Verse 21: **"I do not frustrate the grace of GOD: for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain."**

What Paul is saying in this verse is simply this:

"If a man could have been saved by obeying the Law . . . if a man could attain righteousness on his own merits through keeping the Law, then certainly there was no need for JESUS to die on the Cross!" JESUS died because of man's utter inability to save himself. The death of JESUS was an imperative on behalf of man. The natural man cannot know GOD, cannot understand GOD, and cannot receive GOD. No man can come to GOD except the Spirit draw him (John 6:44) and the instrument through which the Spirit convicts, convinces, and draws, is the Word of GOD. The Word of GOD is CHRIST, because it was the Word that became flesh and tabernacled among us. The natural man cannot please GOD (Romans 8:8-9); therefore it was imperative that JESUS take a body, and in that body do for man what man could never have done for himself.

You precious people who mix Law and Grace, who thunder out long and loud that we must keep the Law and live by the commandments, hear these solemn words:

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered by us,

written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of GOD; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: **FOR THE LETTER KILLETH, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE.** But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; **WHICH GLORY WAS TO BE DONE AWAY:** How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: **But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ."**

O Beloved, can you not see the clear truth set forth here?

"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, THERE IS LIBERTY. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD" (II Corinthians 3:3-18).

Here Paul is saying to us that the believer is not transformed into the image of CHRIST by the works (or practices) of the Law; but by the HOLY GHOST abiding in his bosom. It is the Spirit that giveth life, not the letter of the Law; because the letter of the Law killeth . . . it is the ministration of death . . . the ministration of condemnation. But the Spirit quickeneth us together with Christ . . . and every born again believer possesses the Holy Ghost! (Romans 8:9)

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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