

## The Circumcision Wars IX

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I need to make one correction from last time, I said that the Essenes, where we have the Cumron Caves, had a solar calendar—which they did—and that they got Sabbath sequence all mixed up. That was not correct. It was the Therapute.

The Therapute were the ones who got the Sabbath mixed up because they believed that the full moon was the first day of the month and then you count seven days to Sabbath. There's even one group today that does that. That's how you get it all mixed up, meaning that every month it comes on a different day of the week, especially when you have 31 days in our calendar today.

I want to review just a couple of things in Galatians 4:8: "Now on the one hand, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to those who are not gods by nature." Who wants to be gods, but are not gods by nature? *Satan the devil and the demons!* We saw that they were all wrapped up in paganism when we went through Acts 14 & 17. This 'knocks in a cocked hat' concerning those people who believe that the Galatians were returning to Judaism. It is true that they were returning to a form of Judaism, with all the works involved, but this is pagan Judaism.

Otherwise, why would you have the statement that 'you were in bondage to those things that are not gods by nature.' At least at that time many of the Jews had the right God, especially those in the area of Galilee and Judea. The ones in Alexandria, such as the Therapute, blended all kinds of paganism in with it. So, they just had a really weird set of beliefs that they followed.

Verse 9: "But on the other hand, after having known God—rather, after having been known by God—how *is it that* you are turning again... [What they were going back to was something they were *doing* before they were converted.] ...to the weak and impotent elements, to which you again desire to be in bondage?"

Those verses are two key things in understanding in what they were going to back to; it's a strange set of things that they were going back to: following Judaism and paganism at the same time. Most people do have a comprehension or understanding that a lot of Judaism *is* paganism.

Verse 10 is the key: "You are *of your own selves*..." This is a special form of the verb in the Greek, a middle voice verb, meaning you are the subject and you are also the object. "You are *of your own selves*... [not of God] ...observing days, and

months, and times and years."

This could not be the Sabbath Day, because Paul would have said *Sabbath*. How do we know he would have said *Sabbath*? Because we saw in Col. 2:16 where he said 'Let no one judge you in eating or drinking, or in respect of the Sabbath, New Moon or Feast days. So, if they were going back to the Sabbath, as the Protestants claim, then what he would say is, 'You are again observing the Sabbath.' But in observing days, what days would they observe? *As we saw in Acts 13 & 17 back to the pagan days of the Gentiles!* And then this strange form of Judaism that came out of Alexandria.

Remember, Apollos came from Alexandria. Philo was the main teacher in Alexandria, and also living at the time of Christ. I don't think he was alive at the time here in Gal. 4. But he believed kabalist soporific tree—the ten steps to God. Yes, he did believe in keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

There were so many sects of the Jews there in Alexandria that were all paganized; it was really just a terrible strange mixture. They were observing months. We don't observe months—do we? We keep the Sabbath; we keep the Holy Days. We don't observe times, and we saw in Deut. 18 that it says you're not 'to allow a observer of times to live.'

There are pagan years, as well as the jubilee and the land-rest years. However, the land-rest years and the jubilee only applied in the land of Israel. These people in Galatia were in Asia Minor. It could not have anything whatsoever to do with the land sabbath that the Jews had when they were in the land.

Verse 11: "I am afraid for you, lest somehow I have labored among you in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*, for I also *am* as you *are*: you have not wronged me in anything. Now, you know that at first I preached the Gospel to you in *the* weakness of the flesh; and the temptation—namely, my *trial* in my flesh—you despised not, nor rejected with contempt; rather, you received me as a **messenger** [Greek: 'angelos'] of God, *even* as Christ Jesus Himself. What then was your blessedness? For I bear you witness that, if *it were* possible, you would have plucked out your eyes *and given them to me*" (vs 11-15). Whatever affliction he had of his eyes at that time, it was really bad.

Verse 16: "Now then, in speaking the Truth to you, have I become your enemy?" How many times have we seen that happen. When you go talk to someone and they're going the way they

shouldn't go and you tell them the Truth, what happens? *You end up being their enemy!* Paul was worried about that.

Verse 17: "They are zealous after you, *but* not for good; rather, they desire to exclude you, in order that you may be zealous after them." That is following a man instead of Christ.

Verse 18: "Now, *it is* right to be zealous in a right *thing* at all times, and not only when I am present with you."

I was listening to the radio, and I heard them saying that there's a whole new industry that they have. It's quite a powerful industry, which is the *motivational* industry. They come in to motivate people. They come into factories, and you heard of them: Zig Ziegler. I've gone to a Zig Ziegler thing, and it can be very motivating. But, they are saying, there are some people that you just can't motivate under any circumstances.

We're dealing in kind of thing like this, where Paul says that it is 'good to be zealous in a right thing always.' And what God has given us it ought to *motivate us*—especially since we have the full Bible and we have the knowledge of God that we have:

- to do more things that please God
- to help us grow in grace and knowledge
- to always be on top of things concerning
  - ✓ prayer
  - ✓ study
  - ✓ growing
  - ✓ overcoming

Paul said the same thing here in Philippians 2:12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both to will..." (vs 12-13). There's where you get the desire, the motivation: ***you go to God!*** Let's God's Spirit stir you up!

"...and to do according to *His* good pleasure. Do all things without complaints and disputes; so that you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights *in the* world" (vs 13-15).

What do we do when we need to be motivated? After all, we're living in the Laodicean age—are we not? In the Laodicean age, what do we have? *We have so many things, so many goods!*

I had to go to Target to buy some tapes and it was amazing! The store is full of everything. This is one little store in one little place. To see the way

the kids behave because they've grown up with all these things. They are such spoiled brats! They are so absolutely miserable! They demand this and whine for that. Betty works at Wal-mart and she sees them coming and going. I imagine that they really do a lot in just tearing up the store!

Anyway, I came around the corner to get the audio cassettes and here are two kids standing up in the little cart—this is a store that had the little carts. I remember Stephen fell from one when we were in Pasadena. He stood up and fell down and really knocked his head bad. I turned to the two kids—one must have been seven, so he's pretty big to be in—and I said 'sit down, you're going to hurt yourself, you're going to mash your head on the ground.'

Here's dad up there looking for things and he just looked over and kind of smiled, not a word, and went on his way. I thought to myself, 'Laodicean! Are we ever living in it!' This is the whole society! We also can fall victim to it because we living in it. We also have so many things that try and engage our mind, emotions and thoughts through radio, television, music, other people—everything like that. Sometimes you get to the point that you just want to go *click!* 'Stop the world, I want to get off!'

There are times we do need motivation! Here's what we do when we reach that point that we need to be motivated: *We go to God*, and we ask God to do this to us:

2-Timothy 1:6<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: "For this reason, I admonish you to ***stir up the gift of God*** that is in you by the laying on of my hands." Ask God to help you be more willing, more receptive, more zealous! After all that's a message to the Laodiceans—isn't it? ***Repent and be zealous!*** Showing just the thing that we are to do.

Here's how to do it, and here's what to remember, v 7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness." That's how to do it. Go to God; take the time to go to God in prayer and study. Ask God to stir you up so that you can be zealous in the right things all the time.

I think that if we could somehow truly, truly get the vision and grasp the total understanding as much as we can what God is doing for us in calling us, that we don't want to let anything interfere with that.

- no false doctrine as in the case of the Galatians
- no self-willedness from the point of view that we're just going to leave God and do our own thing

Some people have done that! Will God accept them back? *Yes, upon repentance!* But then who knows how much they have lost in the meantime? We find that same thing when people get in contact with us for the first time. They just don't know some of the things that we have. We start sending them things and many of them really respond! I've heard them say so many times, 'I have learned more than I have being in the Church for X number of years. If we can also do that in our lives and help other brethren do it, then it's going to help them.'

Galatians 4:28: "Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are *the* children of promise." We have the promise of the Holy Spirit and the promise that was given to Abraham when he was told to go out and 'look at the stars and count them if you can, so shall your seed be.' We are that spiritual seed, as the stars of heaven.

Verse 29: "But as *it was* then, so also *it is* now: he who was born according to *the* flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to *the* Spirit." At that time they had the persecution from the Jews. They had the persecution from the Gentiles. A lot of the persecution of the Gentiles was instigated by Jews stirring them up to make the in effective against the apostles. They had persecution.

Today our persecution is very limited. But if you live in a country like the Sudan, even nominal Christians are killed and sold into slavery by those of Islam in the Sudan. There are people being killed for the name of Christ, howbeit maybe not necessarily in all sincerity and in Truth. However, we do suffer different forms of persecution, and it comes from those who are carnal.

We've suffered from those who have stayed behind in the various churches of God with their organizations. As Jim was saying the other day, different people get in contact with us and once they start receiving the sermons they don't understand how we are so vilified in these other churches. I guess we're really vilified. Well, okay, we're vilified! So, it happens!

Verse 30. Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the maidservant and her son... [God is going to take care of them] ...for in no way shall the son of the maidservant inherit *the promise* with the son of the free *woman*.' So then, brethren, we are not children of *the* maidservant, but of the free *woman*." (30-31).

Galatians 5—here is a place where there is a lot of difficulty that people have in trying to understand these verses. Galatians 5:1: "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free..." *from all forms of physical religion*.

1. Made us free from our sins by forgiving us
2. Made us free that we don't have to go back and do physical things to guarantee salvation

When we keep the Sabbath, we keep it by faith. By the way, it doesn't take very much faith to keep Sunday—just go to any church of your choice on the corner. But it takes faith to keep the Sabbath. It is a spiritual activity that we are in.

"...and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage" (v 1). Enforced circumcision, claiming you cannot be saved unless you're circumcised. We're coming back into the realm of more strict Judaism in Gal. 5.

Acts 15:1—there's a very important key in understanding what it said here: "Now, certain men who had come down from Judea were teaching the brethren, *saying*, 'Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" This is to proselytize or take a stranger who is not born in Israel and to physically circumcise him at whatever age he is if he comes into the Church.

There are some who teach that today. There is a group of Yahwehists down in Florida that absolutely insist that all the men must be circumcised or you can't be saved. What is taught here is that "... 'Unless you are circumcised... [it is obligatory.] ...after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"

Verse 2: "Therefore, after a great deal of strife and arguing with them by Paul and Barnabas..." I guess! I don't think we have ever seen any real knock down religious arguments. Paul wouldn't back down to anybody. Every time he went into the synagogue it ended up in a riot. There must have been some reason for what he said there.

"...the *brethren* appointed Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from among them, to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question. So then, after being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, *where* they reported the conversion of the Gentiles. And they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they came to Jerusalem, **they were welcomed by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all the things that God had done with them**" (vs 2-4).

Verse 5: "But there stood up certain of those who believed, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, saying, **'It is obligatory to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.'**"

When you first read that, if you keep the commandments of God, this sort of blows you away, because the Sabbath is in the Law of Moses—isn't it. And not having any other gods and all the other

Ten Commandments are in the Law of Moses.

This would look like, at first, that you don't have to keep anything concerning the Law of Moses out of the Old Testament. Well, we'll find that that's not so!

- What are we talking about?
- Who's interpretation of the Law of Moses?
- *The Pharisees' interpretation of the Law of Moses!*
- What did that include?
- *All of the traditions!*
- *All of the Jewish laws to go with!*

***This along with circumcision was the thing that was impacting the Church!***

Verse 6: "Then the apostles and the elders gathered together to see about this matter." Notice carefully who was excluded from this meeting; the ones who brought up the question, the Pharisees. From here on in through the rest of the book of Acts you do not see any activity of Pharisees within the Church.

Could it be that this is when the Pharisees left the apostles and formed their own group of believers who believed in all the customs of the Jews? Do we find such a group in history? *Yes, we do!* Those are called the *Nazarenes and the Ebionites!* Both of them—it's been recorded—kept all the customs of the Pharisees, though they believed in Christ.

I believe at this time there was a separation and all of the Pharisees—because they couldn't make any headway with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem—left. Then they go through and rehearse the whole matter and show that the way they said was a yoke of bondage.

Verse 8: "And God, Who knows the heart, bore witness to them *by* giving them the Holy Spirit, even as *He did* to us, and made no difference between us and them, *and* has purified their hearts through the faith. Now therefore, why do you tempt God by putting a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?... [the yoke of Judaism and all the laws that go with it] ...But by the grace of *the* Lord Jesus Christ we believe we shall be saved in the same manner as they also" (vs 8-11).

Let's understand what we're talking about here, Galatians 5:2: "Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised... [for justification and forgiveness of sin] ...Christ shall profit you nothing!" Absolutely profits you nothing! Also, let us see how that Judaism was not from God, though circumcision of Moses was. But the misapplication

of circumcision was not from God.

Does Satan come along and use the laws of God and misapply them? *Yes!* During the temptation of Jesus, remember what he said, 'You be the Son of man, turn these stones into bread.' Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.' Satan took Him to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said, 'If you will bow down and worship me, all will be Yours.' Jesus replied, 'Get you behind Me, Satan, you shall not tempt the Lord your God.'

Then Satan took Him on the pinnacle and quoted Psa. 95 and said, 'Cast Yourself down from here, for it is written that you shall not dash Your foot against a stone. He will uphold you in His angles' hands.' Jesus replied, 'Get you behind Me, Satan.'

So, we have a group of Jews that fit into exactly the same category. Let's notice that they were the Jews who also, in their own way, believed in Christ. What we're going to see is that everything in the New Testament times is not black and white. There were many mixtures of many things in-between.

John 8:23: "And He said to them... [during the day portion of the Last Great Day] ...'You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM... [Greek: 'ego eimi' which is I AM, I AM] ...you shall die in your sins.' Then they said to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'The one that I said to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world.' *But* they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him.' As He spoke these things, **many believed in Him**" (vs 23-30). Let's see what happens from here on out.

Verse 31: "Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples.'"

- What happened to these people after the crucifixion and resurrection who professed that they believed in Jesus?
- Where did they go?
- What did they teach?

Verse 32: “And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.” Isn’t this what we’re talking about? ***Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free!*** Yes, indeed!

Verse 33: “They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s seed... [and also circumcised] ...and have never been in bondage to anyone. What do You mean by saying, “You shall become free?”’” They were in bondage. Weren’t they to Rome? Wasn’t Rome the occupying power there? *Yes!*

Verse 34: “Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin. And the servant does not live in the house forever; *but* the Son lives forever. Therefore, if the Son shall set you free, you shall truly be free’” (vs 34-36). This is what Paul is referring to in Gal. 5.

Verse 37: “I know that you are Abraham’s seed... [yes, and circumcised] ...**but you are seeking to kill Me, because My words do not enter into your minds. I speak the things that I have seen from My Father, and you do the things that you have seen from your father.**” (vs 37-38). Now the tension really grows.

Verse 39: “They answered and said to Him, ‘Our father is Abraham.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.’” What is the great and notable work of Abraham? *He believed God!*

Verse 40: “But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the Truth to you...” The same thing Paul was talking about; Paul said, ‘If I speak the Truth to you, do I make myself your enemy? Is that really true? We have exactly the same principle here—don’t we?’

Jesus is saying, ‘I’m speaking the Truth to you, but you seek to kill me. But the Truth “...which I have heard from God; Abraham did not do this. **You are doing the works of your father.**’.... (vs 40-41). Then they said to Him... [I want you to understand that these are Jews who profess belief in Christ. To believe in Christ the way they did was very superficial. This is really something! This is the second time He’s used *your father*—which is not Abraham.

“...Then they said to Him, ‘We have not been born of fornication. We have one Father, *and that is God.*’ Therefore, Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why don’t you understand My speech? Because you cannot *bear* to hear My words’” (VS 41-43). In other words, you’re stopping your ears and not listening!

Notice those who profess belief in Christ, v 44: “**You are of your father the devil...**” Do we have people today who profess belief in Christ who are of their father the devil? *Yes!* All those religions in the world that do not love God and keep His commandments, that take His name, that preach His name and add on all of their traditions, and all of the things that they have, regardless of what denomination or church it is in the world. They are not of God!

They are “...of [their] father the devil, and the lusts of your father **you desire to practice.** He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it” (v 44). This is what we are dealing with in Gal. 5; the exact same thing.

Verse 45: “And because I speak the Truth, you do not believe Me.” Isn’t that interesting? They believed *in* Him, but they didn’t *believe Him, what He said!*] ...Which *one* of you can convict Me of sin? But if I speak *the* Truth, why don’t you believe Me? The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God” (vs 45-47). Boy! Did He stir up a tempest! Just like Paul is doing in Gal. 5.

Now you’ll understand Galatians 5:2 even more: “Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised... [For salvation for justification] ...Christ shall profit you nothing! Again, I am personally testifying to every man who is being circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (vs 2-3).

You cannot do the whole law! {see sermon series: *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* (specifically: *Administration of Death*). It also shows you cannot do the whole law. You cannot do the whole law of the letter of the law of everything that is contained in the Old Testament.

- What are we to do?
- How are we to keep them today?

*We are to keep them*

- in the spirit
- in the intent
- not just in the letter

—and all the laws having to do with the priesthood have been fulfilled with the priesthood of Christ. All the laws that have to do with the sacrifices have been fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ. All the laws that have to do with the death penalty, God has not given that to the Church, but it remains with the sovereign nation wherever the Church is in the world. All of those laws cannot be done!

But if you be circumcised and you demand salvation through circumcision, then you are a debtor to do the whole law. In other words, you have a task that is absolutely impossible to do; it cannot be done! That's why you can't take the things of the old Covenant and superimpose it upon the New Covenant.

Verse 4: "You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*, you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect... [spiritual benefit] ...from Christ. **You have fallen from grace!**" Perfect example is the Catholics today. If you sin, you go to the priest and confess your sins. First thing that's wrong! *You should confess them to God!* That is a work of law, going to a priest because the Catholic Church says to go to the priest. I don't know what the Orthodox do, but I would assume that it's similar to it.

Then the priest will say, 'I will forgive your sins but you have penance to do. Your penance is that you do so many 'hail Marys' and so many 'our fathers.' Make sure that you attend mass every Sunday for two months. Then your sins are forgiven.' *That is justification by law!*

What was happening here was that they were coming along and saying that you need to be circumcised, because you can't receive salvation without it. And 'Oh, by the way, here are these other laws of Judaism that you have to keep.' Judaism has laws of justification. They look to works. If you have a lot of good works your account in heaven is really good. The ultimate goal is to have more good works than bad works. Then you'll enter into heaven and the Jews believe in going to heaven, by the way.

(go to the next track)

If you're seeking to be justified by means of law, we could do the same thing here in the Church of God if we wanted to enact laws. Whenever you do that you also enter into the danger of trying to outdo God. God's laws and commandments, His ways, mercy and forgiveness through Christ is the way. We don't add to it and we don't take from it.

But if we said, 'I see you haven't been attending Church for a long time, where have you been? What have you been doing? By the way, I've also looked at your financial record for the Church and what have you been doing with your tithes, your offerings. I tell you what you need to do, the only way you're going to get yourself squared around is to repent to God, of course. But you need to attend Sabbath services every Sabbath for a year, and you'd better make sure that you bring me your pay-stub every week so that I know that you're tithing properly.'

The Mormons almost do that. At the end of the year they have a reconciliation with the bishop where they have to take in their income taxes and sit down and have a conference with the bishop. If you haven't paid the tithes that the bishop thinks you ought to pay, *you pay!* That is a *work of law*. You have fallen from grace and Christ is of no benefit to you.

Here's the way it should be, v 5: "For we through *the Spirit* are waiting for *the hope* of righteousness by faith... [which is Christ in us, the character of God, the right standing of God by faith] ...because **in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision;** rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love*" (vs 5-6).

Let's see where he expresses it just a little bit differently, 1-Corinthians 7:18: "Was anyone called being circumcised? Do not let him be uncircumcised.... [The reverse of it; can you imagine that?] ...Was anyone called in uncircumcision? Do not let him be circumcised. *For* circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; **rather, the keeping of God's commandments is essential**" (vs 18-19).

Galatians 5:6: "...circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; **rather, it is the inner working of faith through love.**" That is what is the important thing. Then you will be keeping the commandments—won't you? It takes faith to keep the commandments in the spirit. That's quite a thing!

### **Kinds of Faith:**

#### **1. God's own faith in you, the substance of the Holy Spirit**

Let's look at the kind of faith that we are to have; Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ... [through baptism] ...yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." This faith is a *spiritual* faith, which is Christ's own faith that He imparts to you because you believe Him and you love Him. This kind of faith is a spiritual aspect of the Holy Spirit. It is the gift, and the gift of the Spirit includes faith.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith is *the substance*..." 'Hupostasis'—it is a spiritual substance that God gives you and implants in your mind. It stays there as you grow in faith and knowledge; it will leave you if you become negligent, just like God's Spirit will leave you.

"...of *things* hoped for..." This is the kind of faith that requires belief. None of us has seen Christ crucified—have we? *No!* As a matter of fact we're almost 2,000 years removed—aren't we? But we

believe because God said so! That's what is important. That's the faith of Christ in us! It is the "...substance of *things* hoped for..." We are hoping for eternal life—aren't we? *Yes!* We're not like the apostles who were able to see Christ for 40 days and 40 nights after His resurrection. Peter, James and John saw Christ transfigured before them on the Mt. of Transfiguration. They knew that there was going to be eternal life.

- We have their report!
- We have their writings!
- We *believe* though we don't see!
- We hope though we don't have it!

"...*the* substance of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen" (v 1). That's why it's very important to know and understand that you have God's Spirit.

If you're living in the Laodicean age, in the trough of Laodiceanism, *stir it up!* Let's see something else that's very important showing that this is *the faith of God*. We have to have our part; we have to have our belief, but then that belief and faith has to be strengthened with the power and Spirit of God so that it becomes full fledged spiritual faith.

Mark 11:20—after the cursing of the fig tree: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 20-22). The real Greek means *have God's faith*. In other words, the faith that comes from God. \

Verse 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea'..." This is what you would call the ultimate of belief, but what is harder to move than a mountain? A mountain is pretty hard to move. Try it shovel by shovel. What is harder to move? *The carnal mind!* Was it almost like moving a mountain when God called Saul and knocked him off his donkey when he was on his way to Damascus? *Yes!*

"...and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say" (vs 23). That's why if there is something we need from God, we keep asking. It says:

- 'Seek'—*keep on seeking and you will find!*
- 'Knock'—*keep on asking and you shall receive!*

Sometimes we have to long-suffering in our asking, especially if it's depending upon another person's actions. God is not going to make the

choice for that individual, and we can't make the choices for individuals that we are praying for. But in other things, God says that He will answer. 'Whatsoever you ask in My name, I will do.' Of course that has to be according to God's will. God will do it! Not doubt about it!

Verse 24: "For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be given to you." Don't say—when you get done praying—I wonder if God's going to answer the prayer? NO! Already lost it.

Condition, v 25: "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive..." All of us want to have our sins forgiven—don't we? *Yes, indeed!* Well then, you're duty-bound to forgive others.

"...so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses" (vs 25-26). In order to have the faith of Christ, that's the first one.

## 2. Believe just because God says so:

If God says so, it's true! This is where you don't have any require action to do. You believe!

- God is true!
- God cannot lie!
- God is love!
- God will do what He says!

When you stop and think about it, Abraham never saw any of these things completely fulfilled. He had his son Isaac. I think he was still alive for two years when Jacob was born. Notice what God promised him.

Genesis 15:5: "And He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' And **he believed in the LORD**.... [because God said so] ...And He accounted it to him for righteousness" (vs 5-6). If you believe God and believe His Word, you are put in right standing with Him. That's what this righteousness is about.

The first faith is God's own faith in you, the substance of the Holy Spirit. The second faith is believe, because God said so, no action to do.

## 3. Faith that God commands you to do

Faith that requires action, Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your

son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.” (vs 1-2). You know the story.

Abraham rose, took two lads with him, he took Isaac, the wood, the coals and went out three days to where they were supposed to be. Abraham told the two lad ‘stay back here, Isaac and I are going up on the mountain and we’re going to offer sacrifice to God.’

As they’re going up the mountain with the wood on their back. Isaac says to his father, ‘I see the coals, I see the wood, where is the sacrifice?’ What did Abraham say? *Son, God will provide the sacrifice!* They got up there, made the altar of stones, took Isaac and bound him, laid him on the altar and reached down to get the knife and then....

This is the faith that affected the whole world, v 11: “And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for **now I know that you fear God...**” (vs 11-12)—after all those years of walking with God. Growing and overcoming is really a longer-term process when you understand it.

“...seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And, behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, ‘**By Myself have I sworn,**’ says the LORD...” (vs 12-16). God always tells the truth; He doesn’t need to swear.

In courts today, you go to court and swear—or in our case we’re told not to swear by Christ, we affirm. God did not need to do that; His Word is sufficient. This is a profound act that he did.

“...‘**By Myself have I sworn,**’ says the LORD... [This is a profound act that he did. He’s swearing by His very existence, by everything that He is] ...‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens...” (vs 16-17). That’s all the spiritual seed of Abraham; we are part of this blessing right here.

Notice that this is not conditional on what the children do. That’s why when you come to the

covenant with Israel. It’s a separate covenant and He gives the commandments, the blessings; and cursings for disobedience. But He will not go back on His Word!

As far as works are concerned, did any of the children earn it? *No!* Because of their behavior, do they necessarily deserve it? *No!* But God promised it to Abraham, so *it is!* Abraham took action that God commanded him to do.

- 1) God’s faith!
- 2) Believing because God said so!
- 3) Doing what God says because you believe Him and you fulfill the action that He requires!

“...I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens... [the spiritual seed] ...and as the sand which is upon the seashore.... [the physical seed] ...And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (vs 17-18).

James bring out this point concerning faith and belief in God. This is why it is here that faith works with love. That’s what the Apostle Paul is talking about here in Galatians: ‘rather the inner working of faith through love.’

Let’s see that there are times when action needs to be taken, James 2:14: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?” you can’t be saved without faith. Absolutely true! But ***faith without action is not faith!***

Verse 15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it? **In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself.** But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and ***I will prove my faith to you through my works***” (vs 15-18). It’s no big deal to believe in God! God expects everyone to believe that there is a God!

Verse 19: “Do you believe that God is one? You do well to *believe this*. Even the demons believe—and tremble *in fear*.” In other words, if someone says, ‘I believe in God’ and does absolutely nothing about it they’re in the same category as the demons!

Verse 20: “But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?... [notice how draws on this example of



Abraham]: ...Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected?" (vs 20-22). That is when there is action to be done.

If God says, 'Remember to keep the Sabbath'—because He made it Holy—the faith that you exhibit in that is you keep it! Take any of the commandments of God and apply it.

Verse 23: "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Now Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness'..." What James does here is he pulls all the way back to Gen. 15 and brings the completion of that faith forward to Gen. 22. It was perfected.

"...and he was called a friend of God" (v 23). What does Christ call you? *He calls you friends!* He said, 'I no longer call you servants, I call you My friends!' A friend lays his life down for his friends.

Verse 24: "You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." This is what it means *The inner-working of faith through love!*

Galatians 5:7: "You were running well. Who hindered you, *persuading you* not to obey the Truth? This persuasion *is not coming* from Him who calls you" (vs 7-8). In other words, it's not from Christ, but it's from men!

Verse 9: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." A great spiritual principle that is true in an individual life, in a group life, in a Church structure. Look at what we have seen with the Church of God. Look at the Catholic Church and all the religions of the world as they're growing to the full in Babylon the Great. It started out with a little leaven; a little change of doctrine, then they added the *traditions of the fathers* and the philosophies of the pagans and united that with the so-called belief in the Bible.

Now look at the whole ungodly system that is out there. Remember that also in your life: *a little leaven leavens the whole lump!*

Verse 10: "I am persuaded concerning you in *the* Lord that you will be otherwise minded; and he who troubles you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be." That is true! I've seen down through the years that whenever someone starts on a false doctrine, a little leaven leavens the whole lump and God judges them.

Verse 11: "But I, brethren, if I still proclaim circumcision..." Some of them said, 'you wait, maybe Paul hasn't told you yet, but he's going to

come and tell you that you need to be circumcised. Why don't you get circumcised now so when he comes around you can tell him that you've been circumcised. He'll be happy to hear that. He's going to say that you ought to. After all, he was a Pharisee. He's out there making proselytes. He knows that the final step in being a proselyte is to be circumcised so you are a full citizen of the nation of the Jews.'

Paul says, "...if I still proclaim circumcision why am I yet being persecuted? Then the offense of the cross has been taken away. I would *that* they would even make themselves eunuchs... [Cut themselves off (*KJV*). If you do that, you are a eunuch.] ...—those who are throwing you into confusion" (v 11-12). Of course, God is not the author of confusion (1-Cor. 14:33<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>).

Verse 13: "For you have been called unto freedom, brethren; only do not *use* this freedom for an occasion to the flesh; rather, serve one another with love." That's the whole reason why the Church has been reduced down to small groups, that we get the lesson to love God and love each other. That's the whole thing.

Verse 14: "For the whole law is fulfilled in *this commandment*: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Sometimes that gets really hard.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 4:8-18
- 2) Philippians 2:12-15
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:6-7
- 4) Galatians 4:28-31
- 5) Galatians 5:1
- 6) Acts 15:1-6, 8-11
- 7) Galatians 5:2
- 8) John 8:23-47
- 9) Galatians 5:2-6
- 10) 1 Corinthians 7:18-19
- 11) Galatians 5:6
- 12) Galatians 2:20
- 13) Hebrews 11:1
- 14) Mark 11:20-26
- 15) Genesis 15:5-6
- 16) Genesis 20:1-2, 11-18
- 17) James 2:14-24
- 18) Galatians 5:7-14

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 14; 17
- Colossians 2:16
- Acts 13
- Psalm 95
- 1 Corinthians 14:33

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Transcribed: 12-14-12