

Works of Law with the Faith of Jesus Christ

(Go To Meeting)

Michael Heiss—November 11, 2022

Good evening everyone! Tonight's subject is an old one and frankly it has plagued the Church of God for 2,000 years. It is just as difficult today as it was in the days of the Apostle Paul.

If you don't remember, Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and he ran into this problem a lot.

Galatians is the battleground epistle for this subject, and Paul was masterful in his writings. Paul was a rabbi and we're going to see his rabbinic expressions in here. They are beautifully done! Hopefully, you'll appreciate them.

Gal. 2—Paul is describing one of the meetings he had with the apostles in Jerusalem, he's writing?

Galatians 2:9: "And after recognizing the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John—those reputed to be pillars—gave to me and Barnabas *the* right hands of fellowship, *affirming* that we *should go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision."

So, here we have clear evidence that the Apostle Paul was the apostles to the Gentiles and he was dealing with them.

Galatians 1:1: "Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father, Who raised Him from *the* dead; and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia" (vs 1-2).

Galatia was designated area, and there were a number of congregations in Galatia. Paul also had churches in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi and Colossi. He made the rounds among the Gentiles. To use show-biz language: he took his 'show on the road' and he was on the road for quite some time! That in turn led to problems. Paul would train up the Church, get people baptized. They understood and he would leave and trouble would arise!

Verse 6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; **but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ**" (vs 6-7).

What was the main problem? *When Paul was meeting with Peter*—after the difficulty at Antioch—*notice what Paul writes:*

Galatians 2:15: "We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing

that a man is not justified by works of law, but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus..." (vs 15-16).

Here was Paul talking to Peter, and he's stating this to Peter. We see that **"...man is not justified by works of law, but through the faith of Jesus Christ..."**

Now look at what Paul has to say to the Galatians in chapter three. We're going to be spending a fair amount of time in the book of Galatians. Not all of it, but the lion's share.

Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you *into* not obeying the Truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified, was set forth in a written public proclamation? This only I desire to learn from you..." (vs 1-2).

Here is the rabbi coming out: a question for you my children... This is what he would do. So, he says, 'I have a question for you.'

"...did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by *the* hearing of faith?" (v 2).

We will discuss the term *works of law* later on.

Verse 3: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in *the* Spirit, are you now **being perfected in the flesh?**"

What's Paul talking about? *Circumcision!* *That's what he's talking about!* You've started out with the Spirit and now you're winding up with the flesh. Paul said, 'That's no good; that is not going to work at all!'

- Why would the Gentiles want circumcision?
- What would lead them to be circumcised?

Remember that in those days Gentiles were under the rule of the Romans and Greeks, and they worshipped their own city gods, state gods, national gods, what have you. Whole families were dedicated to a particular God. But that began to wear old.

So, by the time of the first century many of those Gentiles said, 'This is nothing, I don't feel anything. All I do is I go give these offerings and sacrifices, but there's no connection. Then somehow they came in contact with the Jews in the synagogue. There they learned about a God Who says, 'You shall love the Lord your God.' And that God made certain promises to them and said, 'I will be with you.'

This attracted them to the synagogue. Wherever Paul went, what would be the first place he would visit? *The synagogue!* In the synagogue you would have Jews along with a few Gentiles.

Well, Paul made his rounds, but the Judaizers in Judea knew about him and they were of the Pharisees, the part of the law, so they dogged him, and we'll see that:

Acts 15:1: "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.'"

In v 19 is where James is giving his sentence, explaining the reasoning for saying, 'Okay, the Gentiles don't have to be circumcised. They don't have to obey many of the rituals.

In v 20: "...abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* sexual immorality, and *from* what has been strangled and *from* blood." What was the reason?

Verse 21: "For from *the* generations of old, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him in the synagogues, being read every Sabbath Day."

Every Sabbath in the synagogues these Gentiles heard about Moses; they heard about the Law and they know that the Jews were circumcised. What happened, the Judaizers began to convince the Gentiles:

You started out good, you're in good shape. You accepted Jesus Christ, but now you have to keep the Law and be circumcised, Because *if not*, you're not going to enter the Kingdom of God, the world to come.

They began to give in, and Paul says, 'No, no, no!' Look at what he says to the Galatians:

Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you *into* not obeying the Truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified, was set forth in a written public proclamation? This only I desire to learn from you..." (vs 1-2).

Verse 3: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in *the* Spirit, are you now being perfected in *the* flesh?"

Galatians 5:2: "Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, 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).

What was his problem? *Circumcision was the gateway to the Old Covenant!* That was the problem! Paul is telling them *if they get circumcised because you think this is going to help you with*

God, you are totally throwing off Christ!

It is either by faith or by works of law. Circumcision is one of the *works of law*. And Paul says, *no, no, no, don't do this!* In fact, we're going to see that is his argument throughout the entire book of Galatians.

Jeremiah 31:31: "'Behold, the days come,' says the LORD, '**that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah**, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of Mine they broke, although I was a husband to them,' says the LORD; 'but this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,' says the LORD, 'I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall no more teach each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD"; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' says the LORD. 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more'" (vs 31-34).

Let's look at how Paul relates it in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 8:7: "For if the first *covenant* had been faultless, *then* no provision for a second *covenant* would have been made. But since He found fault with them, He says, "'Behold, *the* days are coming," says *the* Lord, "when **I will establish a New Covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... [the Old Covenant is going by the boards, completely dissolved] ...not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in *the* day that I took hold of their hand to lead them out of *the* land of Egypt because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them," says *the* Lord. "For this *is* the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days," says *the* Lord: "**I will give My laws into their minds, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they will be My people'" (vs 7-10).

How is God going to do that? *Through the Spirit!* Remember that Paul asked them, 'How did you get the Spirit?' —God's Holy Spirit!

We hopefully all have and are stirring up and are using. That Spirit is guiding and leading us. ***That's circumcision of the heart!*** We've read this before, but let's review it:

Deuteronomy 10:16: "Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked."

So, the only way we can achieve the

Kingdom is to have the heart to be circumcised. The Old Covenant didn't provide for that! Paul's whole argument is that:

If you are going to be physically circumcised, you're entering the Old Covenant. God is dissolving that! You've got to be with the New Covenant, or else Christ is of no effect at all, and your sins will not be forgiven!

Paul is almost pulling his hair out saying, 'no, no, no! Don't do that'

Galatians 5:2: "Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, 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. You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*... [circumcision in this case] ...you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ. You have fallen from grace!" (vs 2-4).

Verse 6: "Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love.*"

Paul is saying that circumcision by itself means nothing. Uncircumcision means nothing! ***It's the reason to become circumcised!***

I was descended from a Jewish family, so I was circumcised on the 8th day as prescribed in the Torah. I had my two sons circumcised on the 8th day. Why? To gain salvation? *No!* It was just to carry on the Jewish tradition, that was all.

Paul is saying, 'So, you're circumcised, who cares! You're not circumcised, who cares! ***But don't become circumcised to gain favor with God, because you are rejecting the New Covenant!***

Back to Gal. 3 talking about the Spirit and the promise.

Galatians 3:29: "And ***if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***"

What promise is that? Gen. 15—here God is talking to Abraham and saying, 'I will be your Shield, your Fortress, and help you.'

Genesis 15:3: "And Abram said, 'Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir.'"

Abram is feeling low; he does not have an heir, and he is deeply troubled by that. So, God to the rescue!

Verse 4: "And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your

own loins shall be your heir.' 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. And He accounted it to him for righteousness" (vs 4-6).

That was the promise! At some point Abram obviously told Sarai. Unfortunately, as we see, 'Sarai jumped the gun'! She was going to help God out a little bit.

Genesis 16:1: "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, did not bear him any children. And she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, and her name *was* Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, 'Behold now, the LORD has kept me from bearing. I pray you, go in to my maidservant. It may be that I may obtain children by her.' And Abram hearkened to the words of Sarai" (vs 1-2).

When you try to work things out *your way* sometimes 'stuff happens'!

Verse 3: "And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maidservant, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife (after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan). And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when ***Hagar saw that she had conceived, she looked upon her mistress with contempt***" (vs 3-4).

Ha! Ha! I gave Abram a child, not you!

We know the story, Sarai drove Hagar out, but the angel of the Lord convinced her to go back. Ishmael was born and he lived about 12-13 years and then God goes further and lands a bombshell on Abram; totally unexpected! *God is informing Abram of circumcision!*

Genesis 17:15: "And God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name *shall be* Sarah. And I will bless her, and give you a son also of her. Yes, I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother* of nations—kings of people shall be from her.' And ***Abraham fell upon his face and laughed*** and said in his heart, 'Shall a *child* be born to him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear?'.... [this is impossible] ...And Abraham said to God, 'Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!'" (vs 15-18).

Abraham still has his heart set on Ishmael, his firstborn son! That means a lot to him.

Verse 19: "And God said, 'Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed....'"

No ifs, ands or buts; God is declaring it. When God says something is going to happen, ***it's going to happen! There is not power in heaven or***

on earth that can stop Him!

“...And you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him” (v 19).

So, Isaac is going to be the seed, and we’re going to see a contesting in Gen. 21 that causes the eruption of Sarah. It is something I never realized why until this year. I’ve been puzzled over that since around 1961-62, and here we are in 2022. Finally I understand it.

Verse 20—*God says*: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

Don’t worry Abraham, I’m going to take care of Ishmael. He will be all right and I will make a great nation of him.

Verse 21: “**But I will establish My covenant with Isaac**, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time in the next year.”

Genesis 21:1: “And **the LORD visited Sarah** as He had said. And the LORD did to Sarah as He had spoken, for Sarah conceived and **bore Abraham a son** in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born to him (whom Sarah bore to him) Isaac. 4: And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac...” (vs 1-4).

Verse 8: “And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw **the son** of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) **mocking**” (vs 8-9). **What does it mean mocking?**

I should have seen this a long time ago, but I didn’t. You can understand what this word really means. It actually means in this context: *to contest, to challenge, to make light of!*

What Ishmael was doing is making light of Isaac being the seed; Ishmael was saying, ‘I’m the firstborn, I’m going to share in this.’

One of the ways we know that is, interestingly enough, every Friday morning I have a special hour long session with a Hebrew master. Right now we’re in a session where we’re reading large sections of Genesis and we’re going into Exodus in Hebrew and English.

This section we read today, this morning, so it’s fresh on my mind; really fresh on my mind. Fred has said sometimes that the New Testament is the

key that unlocks the Old Testament. Not always, but sometimes it does! This is one of those times:

Galatians 4:28: “Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are *the* children of promise. But as *it was* then, so also *it is* now: he who was born according to *the* flesh... [that’s Ishmael] ...**persecuted** him *who was born according to the* Spirit. Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the maidservant and her son...’” (vs 28-30).

What we (the Hebrew master and I) did this morning is we went through it and saw all the different places where this word *persecuted* is translated, and the projections.

Sure enough, in addition to ‘persecuted’ we have *contesting, challenging!* Often times a word and have three or four different meanings. The question is: What is the meaning in this context? Truly as I have said before and as I have been taught, *context is everything!*

Genesis 21:9: “And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (whom she had borne to Abraham) **mocking**. And she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this maidservant and her son...’” (vs 9-10).

The word *mocking* her is in the imperative, Sarah is commanding Abraham; she’s not just urging him, she’s says, ‘Get rid of this woman!’ *She is ordering him!*

My Hebrew master said, humorously, that months ago he was going over this with one of his female students and the student said, ‘Sarah wasn’t a very submissive wife, was she?’

Well, she was and she wasn’t! In some instances, Sarah was like a mama bear protecting her cub. I should have seen it, look at what it says here:

“...for the son of this maidservant shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac” (10).

There’s a clue right there. Ishmael says, ‘I have a right to be the seed, too. I’ve got the right to the promise.’

Sarah just blew her stack! She was madder than a wet hen! She was a rampaging bear!

Verse 11: “And the thing was very **grievous** in Abraham’s sight because of his son.”

Hebrew for *grievous* is ‘ra’ meaning *evil, calamitous, horrible, horrific!* Abraham was just beaten to a pulp! This is his firstborn son! Sarah is demanding that he get rid of his firstborn son!

It wasn’t Sarah’s firstborn son, but it was his! So, what’s he going to do. To make sure that Abraham does get rid of his son, God decides to weigh in:

Verse 12: “And God said to Abraham, ‘Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the boy and because of your maidservant. **In all that Sarah has said to you, hearken to her words...**”

This is a command; this is not ‘please do what Sarah says.’ No! God says ‘**Do as she said!**’ in force!

If you’re a patriarch, as wonderful a patriarch Abraham was, when your wife and El Shaddai together are ganging up on you, what’s a prophet to do? How are you going to stand up to those two?

God said: “...for in Isaac your seed shall be called. And also, **I will make a nation of the son of the maidservant** because he *is* your seed” (vs 12-13).

God didn’t hate Ishmael; God loved him and He love Hagar. It’s just that Isaac was the ‘seed’ and not Ishmael.

Verse 14: “And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water...” —and sent her away!

There’s a wonderful story of Hagar putting Ishmael under a bush and she goes off because she didn’t want to see the boy die. Then it says that God ‘heard the lad’ where she was. And the angel of the Lord says—and it’s play on words, because Ishmael means *God hears*—God *ishmaeled* Ishmael. He heard! Didn’t hear Hagar, but God heard Ishmael.

Ishmael became a great archer and a mighty nation, the Arab people. Unfortunately, they still think that the seed is through them, so they are still fighting the Jews in Palestine because of that.

Verse 12: “And God said to Abraham, ‘...hearken to her words, for in Isaac your seed shall be called.”

God is saying Isaac is the one, not Ishmael! You will have a child through Isaac.

Genesis 17:20: “And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. **But I will establish My covenant with Isaac...**” (vs 20-21).

Now that we have Isaac as the one, we are now going to take a look at what we call *works of law*.

There is a good Jewish scholar—Dr. Mark Nanos—and heard a video interview of him as well as a course taught by him.

When you listen to him, it’s almost like listening to Fred, because they’re saying the same thing. As he went through he pointed out that Paul was not arguing against *the* Law of God, not at all! We’re talking about ‘*ergon nomo*’ and what he says is what ‘*ergon*’ means is *rite of passage, ritual, practice, custom*. ‘*nomos*’ is indeed *the norm*.

So, rites of custom culminating in ‘*ergon nomos*’ has nothing to do with Biblical Law. But circumcision has now become a work of law. Once upon a time it was a work of *the* Law, but physical circumcision has been superseded by spiritual circumcision. Therefore, physical circumcision has no effect.

Let’s look at a Biblical example of *a work of law* and *a work of the Law*. We read about Sarah, which she did bringing in Hagar; that would be a *work of law*. But it’s also in *the Law*, but God didn’t command it. God didn’t oppose it; He said nothing about it. God never criticized Sarah for it either.

The same thing happened with Leah and Rachel. If you will remember, Rachel was barren, so she said, ‘I’ll get my handmaid and have Jacob go into her. Leah decided to do the same thing, again: *a work of law*, because God didn’t command it! It was not part of *the* Law, although it is written in *the* Law.

Now let’s look at a case where there is something very similar, but in this case it truly was a *work of the Law*. We’re not going to spend a lot of time on it.

Deuteronomy 25:5: “If brothers live together and one of them dies and has no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry outside to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as a wife for himself, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.”

In the other examples we have the wife just on her own just saying ‘I don’t have nay kids, so therefore, you go into my husband may you can have children that way, and I can have those kids.

In this case there are two brothers, one marries but dies before any offspring, so God commands the other brother to go in and raise up seed. In this case it is a command of *the* Law. If this were in the Greek, this would be a *work of a law, in Sarah’s case*. In Deut. 25 it would be a work of *the* Law. That’s just to give us an example.

Paul gets very, very masterful here; Galatians 4:22^[transcriber’s correction]: “For it is written that Abraham had two sons: one by the maidservant, and one by the free *woman*. Now on the one hand, he who came from the maidservant was born according to the flesh; but on the other hand, he who came

from the free woman was born according to the promise” (vs 22-23).

Now look, both were born of the flesh. What is Paul doing here? He’s reasoning rabbinic logic.

Verse 24: “Which things are allegorical, because these are the two covenants....]How does he figure that?] ...*The one from Mount Sinai, which is Hagar, is engendering bondage, because the Mount Sinai covenant is likened to Hagar in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem; and she is in bondage with her children*” (vs 24-25).

Mt. Sinai in league with, corresponding to Hagar and Egypt? God thundered the Law from Mt. Sinai! What connection does that have with Egypt? *It doesn’t!* But he’s giving an allegory; he’s not comparing Mt. Sinai as proof of God thundering His Law with Egypt and Pharaoh.

He’s looking above and beneath and Mt. Sinai is below, Egypt is below, so Paul is saying we are now comparing Isaac, born from the Spirit, the promise. Therefore, he is of the promise through the Spirit of faith. As Hagar is Mt. Sinai and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, she’s in bondage!

If that’s the case, then what mountain are we? Paul is saying it’s the one from Mt. Sinai. So, what’s the other one from, the spiritual one?

Verse 26: “But the Jerusalem above is free, which is *the* mother of us all.”

- Where is that? *The book of Hebrews!*
- You’ve heard of the oral law?

There’s good oral law and not so good oral law! But here’s an example of a positive in a sense of oral law. You won’t find this in any book of the Old Testament. Paul is talking about the giving of the Law at Sinai; the lightning, the thundering, the earth is quaking:

Hebrews 12:21: “And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, ‘I am greatly afraid and trembling.’”

You don’t find that being recorded in Exo., Lev., Num. and Deut. In fact, you don’t find it recorded anywhere in the Old Testament. This is an example to show us that there were certain facts and actions that were carried on down; they just weren’t written. This is not a bad part of the oral law, this informs us of how terrifying that sight really was. The Israelites were terrified!

Verse 22—*Paul writes to us: “But **you have come to Mount Zion**, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to *the* joyous festival gathering; and **to the Church of the Firstborn, registered in***

the Book of Life in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just who have been perfected” (vs 22-23)—*Jerusalem above!*

Not the physical Jerusalem below! That’s Paul’s whole point! If you go for physical circumcision, you’re going to the Old Covenant below, not the New Covenant, which is through faith in Christ, above! All the way through this is Paul’s argument in everything! He says it over and over again.

Whether he fully got through, we don’t really know, because we don’t have a real history of what happened to these various churches. Eventually, we do know what happened. They were taken over, but not by Jews. They were taken over by the arising Catholic Church. But this is very, very interesting. *Above*, that’s what Paul’s argument was!

Galatians 4:28: “Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are *the* children of promise.... [above] ...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. Nevertheless, what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the maidservant and her son; 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**” (vs 28-31)—*which is above!*

The maidservant is *below!* Don’t go below! Don’t go after physical circumcision! When you do that you come under the Old Covenant. You’re hitching your wagon to a falling star! ***Hitch your wagon to a rising star, the New Covenant that’s going to get us glory!***

One day there will be that resurrection, and we will be able to see our Father and Christ face-to-face; as it were eyeball to eyeball! ***What a glorious time that’s going to be! That’s the New Covenant through faith in Christ!***

Don’t go for the physical circumcision! Paul is almost pulling his hair out, because he’s trying to get that through. But, of course, it’s very, very difficult.

Galatians 5:2: “Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!”

You’ve rejected Him; you say He’s not good enough! *It’s not going to work!* It’s either all or nothing. It’s by hearing of faith, or it’s by works of law! Works of law can also pertain, for example, to certain rituals under the Old Covenant. That’s true, ***but the point is that works of law can never gain us right standing with God!***

God will never smile and say, ‘You’re so wonderful!’ There may be a few people who were truly righteous in that regard. One who comes to mind is *Job!* Remember that God couldn’t say anything bad against Job in terms of obedience. When He rose and said:

Have you seen My servant Job? Look at how righteous he is; there’s no one more righteous than My servant Job.

Satan said:

Yeah, yeah, that’s because You bless him. Give him to me and he’ll curse You!

And God did! God knew that there was one thing that was wrong with Job, but it had nothing to do with obedience to the Law. It had to do with the fact that ***Job never gave God any credit!*** Job took the credit for himself:

I’m so righteous, if I could just get God here and get a mediator and that mediator will see that I’m right!

Well, in physical obedience that would be true. But that’s not good enough! You have to have the Spirit, and that’s what Job didn’t have. That’s why God worked on him.

Another couple who may come close could be Zacharias and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist! It says in Luke 1 that ***they were walking in the Law of the Lord blameless!*** That’s pretty perfect from my vantage point!

Spiritually they weren’t perfect—nobody was—because they didn’t have God’s Spirit. But in terms of the physical aspects of the Law, in obedience to everything that God commanded, it says ***they were blameless!***

- How many Zacharias’ have there been?
- How many Job’s have there been?
- *Very, very few!*

Nevertheless, that’s the point!

Galatians 5:4: “You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*, you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ...” ***That’s the whole point again!***

If you’re going after circumcision, you’re going after the Old Covenant, and grace and faith are meaningless. They have no effect! Don’t do it!

“...You have fallen from grace! For we through *the Spirit* are waiting for *the hope of righteousness by faith*” (vs 4-5).

That is the whole point of the book of Galatians. It is the whole point of Paul. He talks

about *works of law* and you can find it throughout Galatians. But remember, most of the time it’s talking about rituals, the customs that have nothing to do with God’s Ten Commandment or His statutes.

It can overlap a bit with certain rituals about the temple and tabernacle. Yes, these are rituals, that is correct. They can be considered *works of law*. But ***IF*** we want the Kingdom ***THEN*** it has to be by faith, not by *works of law!* ***That is a challenge! It is a challenge for us;*** it was for Paul and the Galatians. How are you going to gain the Kingdom?

- By works of law?

OR

- By the hearing of faith?
- Which is it?

IF you go the circumcision route—works of law—and even though today we don’t go by physical circumcision, some of us—I’ve seen it—need to do this and that, learn this and that, really learn this and that. I’m going to get it and show that...

NO! That’s good, but Paul wrote:

Ephesians 2:8: “For ***by grace you have been saved through faith***, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus... [being called]: ...***unto the good works*** that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 8-10).

So, we have to make sure that we don’t put the cart before the horse. The horse is *faith in Christ, the Spirit carving out sin and getting rid of it!* ***Circumcising the heart!*** ***That’s what’s going to move the cart!*** The cart is the *good works* that we’re supposed to be doing! But we’ll never be able to do those good works ***unless we have the faith of Christ in us!*** Not just our faith in Christ, ***but the faith of Christ in us working through the Spirit so we can develop more faith!***

That’s the way we gain entrance into the Kingdom of God, *the world to come forever and ever!* What’s it going to be? ***That’s our challenge!***

- How do we approach it?
- Are we going to gain the Kingdom by works of law

OR

- By faith in Christ?

May it never be by *works of law*. If it is, ***we will never get there!***

It has to be by the faith of Jesus Christ within us, with His Spirit circumcising the heart, leading us to righteousness! That will enable Christ

to say to us upon the resurrection: **Well done, you good and loyal servant!** *Only through the faith in Christ! Not by works of law!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 2:9
- 2) Galatians 1:1-2, 6-7
- 3) Galatians 2:15-16
- 4) Galatians 3:1-3
- 5) Acts 15:1, 20-21
- 6) Galatians 3:1-3
- 7) Galatians 5:2-3
- 8) Jeremiah 31:31-34
- 9) Hebrews 8:7-10
- 10) Deuteronomy 10:16
- 11) Galatians 5:2-4, 6
- 12) Galatians 3:29
- 13) Genesis 15:3-6
- 14) Genesis 16:1-4
- 15) Genesis 17:15-21
- 16) Genesis 21:1-4, 8-9
- 17) Galatians 4:28-30
- 18) Genesis 21:9-14, 12
- 19) Genesis 17:20-21
- 20) Deuteronomy 25:5
- 21) Galatians 4:22-26
- 22) Hebrews 12:21-23
- 23) Galatians 4:28-31
- 24) Galatians 5:2, 4-5
- 25) Ephesians 2:8-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 15:19
- Luke 1

MH:bo

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