

~ SO MANY THINGS IN VAIN....

GALATIANS 3:4 – 7

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~ Our Spiritual Safari entered the depths of doctrinal discourse in our previous report. Our subject is justification by faith; emphasis in Galatians on *FAITH!* In our previous two reports, Paul stated this doctrine to us in unmistakable, indisputable terms. Paul asked six questions of the Galatians, and we saw how their experience had led them horribly wrong. They have attempted to reason from experience to truth. Unwittingly, by doing so, they deny truth — and Paul called them foolish and bewitched. Paul mentions the Holy Spirit three times in the first five verses of this section of Scripture; and Paul tells them they did not receive the Holy Spirit by the law. See, the Spirit of God indwelling us is the evidence of our conversion, friends — not keeping the law.

**Romans 8:9** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ~*

**Ephesians 1:13** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise ~*

That's the evidence and true test of salvation, my friends. The Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is true; irrespective of our experiences. The Gospel is objective; it only pertains to what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross — period. Our experience will corroborate the Gospel to our understanding; and that's what Paul is teaching the Galatians. They came to Christ and the Spirit of God regenerated them; and not a single one denied that they received salvation by faith — not law. Paul challenges them by asking them if maybe they were mistaken about being saved! "*Vain*" means without purpose. The Galatians were quick to say they weren't vain. I hope you have prayed for understanding in what we are reading here. This is serious business, and it is highly important we nail it down correctly in our thinking....

***4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.***

***5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

~ Paul is the authority; make no mistake about that. The Judaeizers had already attacked him heavily — and had lost their argument. Remember, they had accused Paul of being a phony because he wasn't one of the original twelve everyone knew as apostles. Paul wasn't following Jesus during His earthly ministry, so, they attempted to discount his teaching. Interestingly, Paul was the one who had come into that country and preached the Gospel to them in the first place; and performed "*miracles*" among them. They wanted to take what they had been taught — and reinvent it — by adding leaven! Does that sound familiar in this modern day of ours?

Paul didn't perform miracles among the Galatians by the works of the law. Even asserting that notion is unworthy of thoughtful consideration; and everyone knew their accusation was malicious and untrue. The miracles came about by the hearing of faith. Paul was preaching Jesus Christ as the One Who died for their sins, was raised for their justification; and Paul is teaching that they are to place all of their trust in Jesus. *THAT* is the miraculous thing that had taken place — salvation. When Jesus said, "*...greater works you shall do*" in the Gospel of Mark, those "*greater things*" specifically mean they would preach the Gospel — and that others would be saved as a result. That's a miracle, friends.

The Galatian people had been regenerated; and that alone was evidence of Paul's apostleship. All of the apostles had *all* of the sign gifts, too, by the way. Paul could perform *all* of the miracles Jesus had performed. All apostles could heal the sick *and* raise the dead. That was the mark of an apostle at the time in which we are studying. Those apostles gave you and me the Word of God. We have a faith built upon Jesus Christ as the Foundation and Chief Corner Stone; but all of that Foundational work was done by the apostles and prophets of Israel. Their teaching, preaching and

writing were verified by the fact that they had the “*sign gifts*,” and we took up all the reasons that the apostles had the sign gifts in first Corinthians. Today, the sign gifts have disappeared with the original apostles, because the canons of Scripture are closed.

Paul didn’t come to the Galatian country as a Pharisee preaching the law. No, Paul was preaching Christ crucified; and His crucifixion was an experience they all knew very well. Something else they knew about was Abraham, so Paul brings Abraham up in an illustration and provides another lesson in Jewish history. Alright, moving forward, we begin a new section of Galatians, and we are later going to have an allegory involving Hagar, which will usher in the high-water mark of this entire epistle....

***6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.***

***7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.***

~ Well, verse six is a quote from Genesis chapter fifteen verse six. It is also quoted again in Romans chapter four verse three. Our Spiritual Safari finished Genesis a *LONG* time ago now – so, let’s briefly review Abraham’s justification by faith. Remember, the Mosaic law wasn’t yet given by God in Abraham’s day; Moses came along some four hundred years later. So, the law is a moot point during Abraham’s life. And even during the time of the law, compliance made no contribution to anyone’s salvation, of course.

Abraham believed the Lord God Almighty; El Elyon, El Shaddai, Yahweh Yireh, Yahweh Rapha, Yahweh Nissi, Yahweh Shalom, Yahweh Ro’i – That One! God counted it to Abraham for righteousness for believing Him. When Abraham returned from Egypt, and he and Lot had separated, then we have the first war recorded in Genesis chapter fourteen. Lot was taken captive, and Abraham went out and fought to rescue him. Abraham was entitled to everything he won in that war, according to the code of Hammurabi; but Abraham wouldn’t take anything from the kings of Gomorrah and Sodom. Abraham’s noble gesture said, “... *if I get rich, God will be the One Who did it.*”

Abraham looked to God — not to men; and not to his own self-ability, either. Oh, how I wish I could make this all *real* to you dear readers, so you would all walk with the faith Abraham had. When Abraham lived up to the light he had been given, God appeared to him. That, my friends, is exactly why so many church members know so little about the Bible; because God only reveals new and more light to us when we live up to the responsibility He has already given us. You might want to write that down. I receive messages from all over the world from people who want to wage controversy with me about my teachings. I don't waste my time on them anymore; I'm just not interested in their unlearned theories and misinformed philosophies. They don't live up to the light they have, and they never grow spiritually. God wants *YOU* to grow up; just as Abraham had to grow up.

Now, I suggest you read chapter fifteen of Genesis again at this point. Abraham wasn't running around shouting Christian clichés; no, Abraham spoke to God in a matter-of-fact statement. Abraham was unhappy with what was happening. God told Abraham Ishmael would not be the heir — period. And God wants us to talk to Him in a normal and natural way, also. Too many of us are super-duper saints who are perfectly pious in our dealing with God. Many people talk about how they accept this or that problem in their life — but they *DON'T* accept it — not at all. They're really in rebellion against God. We need to tell God about all of those things, friends — so that He can comfort us. Have you ever told God how you really feel about what He has allowed to happen to you in this life? Have you ever confessed your coldness and indifference in prayer? Moses went to God on that basis, too, you may recall.

God held Abraham by the hand, and told him to look up. It must have been very dark that night. See, Abraham was in darkness. With the naked eye, you could have likely seen more than five hundred thousand stars in a single glance. God said He would make Abraham's offspring more than the stars in the sky! Abraham couldn't even begin to count those stars so, that's where Abraham's thinking broke down to pure trust. This is all very expressive and picturesque as Abraham simply says, "*A-Men*" to God.

God placed Abraham in a deep sleep because Abraham isn't promising God anything. Abraham has nothing to promise. There was absolutely nothing left for Abraham to say to the Lord. God Himself is the only One making any promises now. God says He gave the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, to die for us — and if we believe on Him, we shall not perish, but have eternal life. Those who reject Christ shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them. What do you say to all of that? Do you believe God? If you are going to come to God, you are going to come *His* way — by faith. There's no other way — period. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. That's justification by faith ~

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