

Epistle of Romans XII Chapter 4:8-25

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This is all part of trying to get through the whole Bible verse-by-verse with a study translation, so we can really understand the Scriptures. That's what it's all about, otherwise, you just end up 'playing religion' or you have study projects. I think it's important that while we're going through this that we look at the Greek, look at the Hebrew, taking it in-depth so we can put the whole Bible together and we can understand the Truth of God as best we can.

Romans 4:8: "Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin." That came because of repentance and turning to God and accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now we start a whole new section here, which has to do with Abraham and his faithfulness. In the imputing of faith to Abraham there were two different events under which this occurred.

1. Gen. 15—when the only thing he could do is believe God, when God said, 'Your seed shall be as the stars of heaven.'
2. Gen. 22—where he took his son out, as he was asked by God, to take him to one of the mountains of Moriah and there offer him for a burnt offering.

Rather than have a dispute with Paul and James over *works* and *no works* the incident that Paul gives was the one where there were *no works*. In the incidents given by James (James 2), it was required that he do something. It was a matter of different requirements, so rather than have a great theological battle like so many religionists do today: Paul was against works, and James was for works! In order to complete the second one there had to be works.

Verse 9: "Now then, *does* this blessedness *come* upon the circumcision *only*..."—"this blessedness' means two things:

1. you have imputed righteousness to you because ***you believe***
2. you do not have sin imputed to you because ***you repent***

This is the 'blessedness' that is being in *standing before God* in this position, which is called 'blessedness.'

"...or also upon the uncircumcision? For we are saying that **faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness**" (v 9).

This means that because he believed, it was counted to him for righteousness, which put him in ***right standing with God as righteous!*** That is the standing: *righteousness!* The operation to get you to that standing of righteousness is *justification!* So, ***when justification happens righteousness is imputed to you, then you are in that blessed standing before God,*** as Paul was bringing out.

Then the question becomes: Is it only for those who are circumcised? "...or also upon the uncircumcision?..."

Verse 10: "In what condition, therefore was it imputed?... [to Abraham] ...When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." We will see that there was quite a differential of time when this occurred.

Here is the promise that was made, Genesis 15:5: "And He [God] brought him [Abraham] 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 5-6).

However, this was not while he was in a condition of being circumcised, rather uncircumcised—great, very important thing! Abraham was 85-years-old.

Gen. 17—now Abraham is 99-years-old. So, that makes it 25 years from his calling! For 25 years Abraham:

- *walked* with God
- *talked* with God
- *obeyed* God
- *believed* God

Now comes the circumcision. We will see that the first covenant was for the *spiritual* sons; the second covenant (Gen. 15) was for the *physical* sons. So therefore, the token of this covenant was circumcision.

Genesis 17:1: "And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I *am* the Almighty God! Walk before Me and be perfect.'"

As we go through here, I want you to see how many of these things are very similar to the wording of the New Testament.

Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” We have the same requirement here.

Genesis 17:2: “And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.’ And Abram fell on his face. And God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations’” (vs 2-5).

- What’s important about the Word of God?
It’s true!
- What does that mean? *Never fails!*

In other words, if God says He’s going to do something, it is as good done! It’s going to happen! That’s very important for us to understand as we go along with this. God said, “...you shall be a father of many nations,” but Abraham hadn’t even had his son, yet! That’s not counting Ishmael, because Ishmael—as far as the children of promise are concerned—does not count!

Verse 6: “And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant...” (vs 6-7).

This is separate from the covenant in Gen. 15. All the covenants with Abraham come from Gen. 15. So, Gen. 17 is another covenant. Gen. 22 is a third covenant. Why does God have to make different covenants? Separate covenants? *Covenant law requires that once you make the covenant, you cannot add to or take away from!* However, you can make another covenant side-by-side. This is why we have another covenant agreement. This is important!

Verse 7: “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you. And I will give the land to you in which you are a sojourner, and to your seed after you, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God.’ And God said to Abraham, ‘And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you in their generations’” (vs 7-9).

Read and study Gen. 15, 17 & 22 and make the comparisons between these three covenants. I think you’ll find it very interesting.

Verse 10: “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after

you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a sign of the covenant **between Me and you**” (vs 10-11).

This established the *physical* covenant between God and Abraham’s descendents of Israel. You’ve heard many times that the covenant with Israel was a physical covenant. Physical requirements, letter of the Law-keeping, physical blessings, physical cursings. *No promise of eternal life!* The promise of eternal life came in Gen. 15 & 22! This is for the establishment of the physical nation of Israel and the covenant that would follow.

Verse 12: “And a son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with silver of any foreigner who *is* not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your silver, must be circumcised. And **My covenant shall be in your flesh...**” (vs 12-13).

It’s different from the covenant that is to be in your heart, completely different!

“...for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people—*for* he has broken My covenant” (vs 13-14). Then He gave the blessing to Sarah.

Verse 23: “And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his silver—every male among the men of Abraham’s house—and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins in the same day, even as God said to him. And Abraham *was* ninety-nine years old...” (vs 23-24). Inclusive counting—25 years from when he was called; that he:

- *loved* God
- *served* God
- *obeyed* God
- *believed* God

—and all of that was imputed as righteousness to him, for the very purpose that when we come to the New Testament covenant, that it can be imputed to those who are commonly called Gentiles and were never circumcised in the flesh, that they could have the same standing before God the Father and Jesus Christ without the requirement of physical circumcision. That’s why what we covered in Rom. 2 is so very, very important.

This was the whole point that Paul was making, Romans 4:11: “And *afterwards* he received *the* sign of circumcision, *as* a seal of the righteousness of the faith that **he had in the condition of uncircumcision...**”

Whatever God commanded him to do, or asked him to do, *he did!* And that's part of the righteousness.

"...that he might become *the* father of all those who believe, though they have not been circumcised, in order that the righteousness *of faith* might also be imputed to them" (v 11).

One very, very important thing to understand: When it came time to open the way for calling to eternal salvation, God opened it to all nations with the beginning of the New Testament Church. That's why a very few years after the Church started—which we know started the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)—by time we get to Acts 10 Cornelius is brought on the scene; a Gentile. Then it goes from there to all the other nations. So in effect, God was showing—as was revealed to Peter—that He was no respecter of persons. When it came time to offer eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, He offered it to all people at the same time! That's why the covenant with Israel was a physical covenant. No promise of eternal life; that was separate. This is what Paul is bringing out here.

Throughout the Israelite nation there is still the practice of circumcision, although it's becoming less and less of a majority thing now. Was it required for them to receive the blessings? What we are receiving now is the result of the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, more than what we would be receiving under what the Old Covenant would produce for those people who would be in a condition of circumcision. However, a lot of those who, in studying the Scriptures, saw that circumcision God honored went ahead and had circumcision for all the male children. *But it doesn't put a person in better standing with God because they are!* That's the whole lesson. Was Abraham in better standing with God after he was circumcised? Before he was circumcised? *or* Was it the same standing whether he was or not? So, Gen. 17 is a separate covenant for the physical nation of Israel.

For "...all those who believe, though they have not been circumcised, in order that the righteousness *of faith* might also be imputed to them." (v 11).

To believe God is greater than circumcision; to believe God causes you to do what God wants you to do without having to say, 'this is the law unto death if you don't do it.' You establish law with desire in the heart; that's the righteousness of faith.

"...and *that he* might become *the* father of *the* circumcision—not to those who are of the circumcision only, but also to those who walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham..." (vs

11-12).

Gen. 26:5 shows the obedience. If you're going to walk the way that Abraham did, you're going to obey. He 'obeyed My voice. kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws'

"...which he had during *his* uncircumcision. For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, *was not given* through law..." (vs 12-13)—*covenant and promise* equate; a covenant is always based upon a promise.

So, the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should become heir of the world expands from the land of Canaan to the north, to the south and to the east and west, but now it's understood to be the *whole world*. That's how it expands!

"...not *given* through law..." (v 13). In other words, there was not a law that was ever made which was told to Abraham, 'Abraham, keep this law and you will be heir of the whole world.' *NO! He had to believe God, because believing God is greater than law-keeping*—and there was no law made that it could be done.

"...rather, *it was* through *the* righteousness of faith; because if those of *the* law *be* the heirs, *then* faith is made void..." (vs 13-14).

Very important to understand: *You cannot accomplish and receive eternal life through works of law! Only in belief in Christ and faith in the sacrifice of Christ, and belief in God!* Are there people who keep the Sabbath, but don't believe in Christ? *Yes!* The whole history of the Jews, from the time of the beginning of the New Testament Church until now, is a testimony that eternal life cannot come through law! That does not mean that we are not required to keep the commandments of God.

If it were, "...*then* faith is made void, and the promise *is* made of no effect" (v 14). Can you take the promise of God and make the promise of God of no effect? *No way!* So, what he was doing was he was saying to the Jews, 'Look, I want you to understand something concerning law':

- law cannot accomplish the giving of eternal life
- law cannot accomplish what belief will accomplish

Verse 15: "For the Law works out wrath..." Why? *Because it defines the penalty for breaking the Law, which is sin!* That is wrath! That is punishment! "...because where no law is, *there is* no transgression" (v 15).

They're just stating a simple fact. That's why there are always laws. That's why there needs to be repentance, because sin is the 'transgression of the Law.' It defines it. No law can give eternal life! *No law!* What if there was a law which read: 'If you keep the Sabbath perfect for one thousand Sabbaths in a row'—that would be basically a little over 20 years—you could receive eternal life.' What if a person kept 999 Sabbaths perfectly and died and come up to receive eternal life, and it was said, 'No, you missed one, sorry about that; you did not fulfill the law—no eternal life!' **Law just tells us what sin is!**

Verse 16: "For this reason... [this right standing with God] ...it is of faith, in order that it might be by grace..."

Now we're beginning to be introduced to grace. **Grace covers your whole standing before God!** Does any human being deserve to be held blameless? *No!* Does any human being deserve to be in right standing, himself? *No!*

- God does it by calling!
- God does it by choice!
- God does it by grace!

We're beginning to be introduced to grace.

"...to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed—not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all" (v 16).

Now Paul introduces something very profound that we're going to understand in Gal. 3. Abraham is the father of us all. What does this tell us? *Christianity began with Abraham!* Abraham is the forefather for what would follow with Christ. In-between Abraham and Christ we had the covenant with Israel, which would come up to the time of Christ. Why was that necessary? *To fulfill the promises in the flesh, and to have it enacted at the set time of God's plan!* So, he becomes the father of us all.

Verse 17: "(Exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.') before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; *and* who against hope believed in hope..." (vs 17-18).

Sometimes we get down to the nitty-gritty of things and everything is so bleak that there's nothing you can hope in, *except hope!* Do you understand what that means? If you have no job and you have no food and you have no clothes and you have no home (I'm using extreme measures here) and you're standing up before the firing squad, what is your only hope? *Hope in God!*

The Apostle John had something very similar to that. He was arrested, carted off to the Isle of Patmos, convicted, sentenced to death, to be boiled in oil. They got him all ready, dropped him in the boiling oil and the tradition is that God just expelled him right out of the boiling oil, just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

I imagine the Apostle John said the same thing that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said: 'Doesn't matter if you want to throw me into the boiling oil, throw me in, but God is able to protect me if it's His will.' That's what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego told Nebuchadnezzar. They said, 'We're not going to bow down to your idol.' *I'm going to throw you into the fiery furnace.* 'If God wants to, He can save us; if not we'll die.' That's hoping in hope!

What about Abraham? *Here he was 99-years-old and his wife was ten years younger!* Isaac was not a child of pre-menopause. There is no way except it be promise! But because he believed God, God did it! That's hoping in hope!

"...in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, 'So shall your seed be.' And he, not being weak in the faith..." (vs 18-19).

He had some doubts and hesitations and Sarah had her little 'laugh' session. Abraham also snickered a little bit, and God just told them 'nope, it's going to be.'

"...considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah's womb; and he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; for he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, **He is also able to do**" (vs 19-21).

You can also translate that just little bit differently. You can translate it '**had the power to perform.**' So, whatever God says, because if God is God, which He is; and God is true, which He is; whatever God says will happen, He was able to do!

Verse 22: "As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness." So, he had righteousness imputed to him on many occasions. *Yes, he did!*

Verse 23: "But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead; Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification" (vs 23-25).

Let's go back and do a word analysis here; let's go back to the first part of Rom. 4:

believed or believing:

- v 3—“...‘And Abraham **believed** God...”
- v 5—“But to the one who does not work, but **believes** in Him ...”
- v 11—“...that he might become *the* father of all those who **believe**...”

—that is the literal, precise translation; it's active, ongoing! In other words, when do you believe God? Only when you're in trouble, that He will rescue? *or* Do you believe Him **all the time** in all circumstances? *You are believing in an active, present tense, ongoing way!*

- v 17—“...Whom he **believed**...”
- v 18—“Who against hope **believed** in hope...”

I think that is one of the strongest, most encouraging thing that you can have: **believe in hope!** It's kind of like we've said before: **when all else fails, remember God loves you!** The world may hate you; everyone around may hate you. When it's all over and done, God loves you! That's why He's called you! That's **believing!** “...hope **believe** in hope...”

- v 24—“...to those who **believe** in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead.”

So, we've got six times *belief* is mentioned. That comes right along with *faith*. Believing is the verb form of faith. In the Hebrews *believe* means to *faithize*. Faith is the noun.

faith:

- v 5—“...his **faith** is reckoned for righteousness.”
- v 9—“...For we are saying that **faith** was imputed to Abraham for righteousness.”

That's interesting; if you *believe God*, God adds to you *faith!*

- v 11—“...as a seal of the righteousness of the **faith** that *he had* in the *condition* of uncircumcision...”
- v 12—“...those who are of the circumcision only, but also to those who walk in the footsteps of the **faith** of our father Abraham...”

You could almost give a whole sermon on *what does it mean to walk in the footsteps of our father Abraham?*

- v 13—“...rather, *it was* through *the* righteousness of **faith**”

- v 14—“Because if those of the law be *the* heirs, *then* **faith** has been made void...”
- v 16—“For this reason *it is* of **faith**... but also to the one who is of *the* **faith** of Abraham...”
- v 19—“And he, not being weak in **the** **faith**...”
- v 20—“...he was strengthened in the **faith**”

You put those all together, that actually gives you a formula of how to grow in faith and be strengthened in faith by believing in God. *Faith* ten times; six times *believe/believing*. Then we have *imputed* (you can do that yourself). Imputed means *it's given to you*; you have not earned it. It is given to you as a gift, because God wants you to have it. That's what's so important concerning your standing with God. It's not what you can do to make yourself right to God, because there's nothing you can do to make yourself right. But if you *believe* that God will forgive your sins, God *imputes* righteousness to you. ***By grace you have that standing before God!***

The distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision is profound, because it's showing that *true spirituality* is not based upon any physical characteristics, but based upon ***your belief!*** That involves your whole being. Whatever you believe as a person, that's what you're going to act upon. This ***belief comes from the heart.*** Not only when Christ comes, but what does Christ do in our lifetime for us? What is He more concerned about than anything else? ***Your heart!***

Revelation 2:23—Christ is talking about the false doctrines because of Jezebel, the false prophetess: “And I will kill her children with death; and **all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches the reins and hearts...**” That's what God is interested in. As you believe in your heart that's how you act, that's how you function.

“...and I will give to each of you according to your works” (v 23). It's very interesting when you put it all together.

In other words, from your heart—which you are motivated to do—that's what God is going to judge you on: what your motive was, not what your action was. Why? ***Because people can do apparently good things on the outside***, but what is their heart and their motive?

“...He “...searches *the* reins...” How does God test the heart? It's almost like there's a spiritual connection. That's called “...*the* reins...” That's how He looks upon us. That's why it's so very important.

I know in the difficulties that people have been going through, they have missed the whole thing concerning the love of God. If you do that, then you've missed the whole thing, regardless of what you're focusing on. If you're going to love God—and that's choice from your heart—everything that you do is based upon that. That's what God desires more than anything else. He wants you to keep the Sabbath. He wants you keep the Holy Days. He wants you do those things, but **He wants you to do it from the heart! He wants your converted heart!** That's what is being explained here in Rom. 4.

Let's look at a couple of other things that are very important for us to realize. Let's look at *believing* with some other Scriptures and see how this applies. Heb. 11:6 is a basic, fundamental thing. Has God ever revealed Himself to an atheist? I'm sure that in an extreme case, like Saul who became the Apostle Paul, God can reach down and call anyone. However, I'm talking in general here. If a person doesn't believe in God, is God going to reveal Himself to them? *No!* It's a fundamental thing.

Hebrews 11:6: “Now **without faith...** [the absence of faith] **...it is impossible to please God.** For it is **mandatory...** [it's a requirement] **...for the one who comes to God...** [notice who's doing the coming; you're coming to God] **...to believe that He exists...** [that He *is*] **...and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

What are we to seek? *God!* Many people have a 'religion' to seek 'a benefit.' Do you understand the difference?

(go to the next track)

If you're seeking a benefit, you're coming to God for *yourself!* That's right, selfishness resents. God, *I want.* In other words, you're coming to God with a condition. *Yes, you are!* Just like when Christ was on the cross, they said, 'If You come down off the cross we'll believe that you're the Son of God.' *Coming to God with a condition!* But you have to come to God and believe that He is, and you have to diligently seek Him. Why is that more important? *Because if you seek Him diligently and seek Him with a the whole heart, you'll find Him!* God wants you to understand Him!

What good would it do to receive all kinds of blessings and not know God? Would you be a better person? *No!* Chances are you'd be worse. It's the same way in prayer. You go in prayer and you have a long list. Prayer is to seek God; to love God! The list becomes secondary. Or you could put it another way, you can't go to God with a position or

a condition. You go to God with a position: 'Okay, God, I will believe You if *thus and such.*' You're taking a position. That's why when repentance comes it is unconditional. That's why when God grants repentance, it is from the heart, not just repenting of an action that you have done. You must seek Him! ***Seek with Him with all your heart, all your soul and all your being!*** That is the fundamental thing concerning belief and faith.

Let's come to the Gospel of John and do just a little bit of survey. Here's a classical example of seeking something, having a position, to come to God as a condition.

John 6:11—the feeding of the 5,000; this is quite a thing: “And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting; and in like manner the small fish, as much as they desired. And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather together the fragments that are left over, so that nothing may be lost.' Then they gathered *them* together, filling twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. Now, when the men saw the miracle that Jesus had done, they said, 'Of a truth, this is the Prophet Who was to come into the world'” (vs 11-14).

They were looking for the Messiah at that time. When they say this, they said, 'Man, He's it!'

Verse 15: “Because Jesus perceived that they were about to come and seize Him, so that they might make Him king...” They had a political position now; they had a Champion Who would feed them. That's what they were after.

“...He withdrew again to a mountain by Himself alone” (v 15). They couldn't find Him; later they found Him. He had gone up on the mountain and went down across the sea.

Verse 25: “And after finding Him *on* the other side of the sea, they said to Him, 'Rabbi, when did You come here?' Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly I say to you, **you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles...** [that is to believe that He was the Son of God] **...but because you ate the bread and were satisfied**” (vs 25-26). They had a condition: food.

Then Jesus gives them the lesson, v 27: “Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed.' Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?'” (vs 27-28). They wanted a pronouncement.

What would that be? *Like a law!* If you give a pronouncement, it's like a law. *Do this! Do that! Do the other thing!* People want to do good things to receive good things. But that has nothing to do with conversion. That has nothing to do with loving God. That has nothing to do with worshipping God.

Verse 29: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.'"

In other words, believe on Christ. That is a greater requirement than a physical thing. This ties right in, this is absolutely no different, with Abraham. God took him abroad and said, 'Look at all the stars, if you're able to number them so shall your seed be.' And Abraham *believed* God! This is what Jesus is saying!

Verse 30: "Therefore, they said to Him, 'What sign will You perform, that we may see *it* and believe You? What work will You do?... [they came on and said, 'Gotcha!'] ...Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, as it is written... [quoted Scripture] ...'He gave them bread to eat *that came down* from heaven.'" Then Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven; but My Father gives you the true Bread from heaven.... [He completely shifts away from the physical thing to the spiritual thing immediately. They couldn't understand that.] ...For the bread of God is He Who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Therefore, they said to Him, 'Lord, give this bread to us always.' Jesus said to them..." (vs 35).

Now He really confounded them. The reason is to make it spiritually discernable for those who seek a position. Those who have a condition will never understand it. Those who are seeking God and believing God will understand it; that's why He gave it this way.

Verse 35: "Jesus said to them, 'I AM the Bread of Life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time. But *as* I said to you, you also have seen Me, yet, you do not believe'" (vs 35-36).

So, when you have a petitioner seek a position, you're not seeking God; you're not believing God! There it is right there from what Jesus said. Something else that happens with belief that cannot come by law, which is the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37 "Now, in the last day, the great *day* of the Feast, Jesus stood and called out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, **as the Scripture has**

said... [the benefit and blessing of belief] ...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in Him would soon receive; for *the* Holy Spirit was not yet *given* because Jesus was not yet glorified." (vs 37-39). There comes the blessing and the benefit.

Which is greater, the Holy Spirit, which leads to eternal life, that you receive because you believe; or to have physical food given to you even for the rest of your life until you die, but you never receive eternal life? There's no comparison. That's why **no law** can give eternal life. It has to be based on *faith and belief!* That alone comes from God! We can't go to God and demand it. God won't give it that way.

Sidebar: I got a call from a man who read John 10:22: "Now it was winter, and the Feast of Dedication was taking place at Jerusalem." Everyone looks at that and thinks that was the dedication of the temple after it was dedicated from the 'abomination made desolate' by Antiochus Epiphanies during the days of the Maccabees, from which the Jews have the practice of Hanukkah or Festival of Lights.

This man asked me: Could this not also be the dedication which came from the time of Ezra when the second temple was really dedicated? Which is also in winter in the month of Adar? I said I never thought of that until he brought it up. So, I looked it up and thought it's very possible. But a lot of people turn here and say that Jesus kept Hanukkah, so therefore, we should keep Hanukkah. Well, what if it's the other dedication? We don't know, it doesn't tell us.

Verse 23: "And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews encircled Him and said to Him, 'How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered them, 'I have told you, **but you do not believe.** The works that I am doing in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. But **you do not believe** because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; and no one shall take them out of My hand'" (vs 23-28).

If you get down and discouraged and think all is lost and there's no hope and you can't even hope in hope, turn right here and claim this promise. No one, not even you—you could if you rejected God—can take yourself away from Christ if you love Him, if you believe Him; *never happen!*

Verse 29: "My Father, Who has given *them*

to Me, is greater than all; and no one has the power to seize *them* from My Father's hand. I and the Father are one.' Then the Jews again picked up stones so that they might stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'Many good works I have showed you from My Father. For which of them are you about to stone Me?' The Jews answered Him, saying, 'We will not stone You for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, are making Yourself God'" (vs 29-33). That's the whole thing today of Judaism against Christianity!

Verse 34: "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are **gods**'"?.... [They change that to 'judges.' It doesn't mean *judges*. It means *gods*—*elohim*!] ...If He called them gods, to whom the Word of God came' (and the Scriptures cannot be broken)" (vs 34-35). That's a profound verse; it's something to always understand. You may transgress a law, but you can't break the Scriptures.

Verse 36: "*Why* do you say *of Him* Whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am *the* Son of God?'.... [He made it clear!] ...If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me. But if I do, even if you do not believe Me, **believe the works**; so that you may perceive and may believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.' Then they again sought to take Him..." (vs 34-39).

Those are pretty strong words. When you compare the lack of believe and so forth. He even says, "...**believe the works**; so that you may perceive and may believe that the Father..." and that's the first step that 'you may believe Me.' That's what people need to do in their lives, too.

Here's part of the spiritual blessing that comes from belief, from faith:

Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him."

Brethren, we need that more than ever before, especially now in the times we're living in and all the things we have to fight against; with all the false doctrines and so forth.

Verse 18: "*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened... [by the Spirit of God] ...in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling..." There we go beyond just hoping in hope. Now that we **know** what the hope of His calling is.

"...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (v 18). It's going to be something!

I'm viewing these doctrinal wars and spiritual battles a little differently now. Sometimes you can get exhausted by them. I know I do! So many false doctrines, so many false ideas coming along. It just sort of wears you to a nub.

You need to look at it this way; look at the other side of the coin: Since there are so many forces against true Christianity and what we are learning, doing, practicing and believing has got to be worth an awful lot. I mean, if eternal life didn't amount to very much, do you think Satan would be that active trying to deceive, trying to take away, throw every kind of thing at you? *No!* Look at it the other way around, it's got to be important! It's got to be so that we understand the Truth, believe the Truth and live by the Truth. There's one thing about Truth, Truth is re-provable and *re-provable* and **re-provable**, because there is no lie of the Truth. That is what is so great, brethren! So, the inheritance is going to be something!

Verse 19: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us **who believe**... [there again, that is present tense: *who are believing*] ...according to the inner working of His mighty power"—which then is the Holy Spirit of God within us!

Now, let's go look at another aspect of this, the spiritual and physical applications of Romans 4:17: "(Exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.')...." What does the fullness of that sentence mean? When do you suppose that this would reach its fullest point? *After the Millennium! After the 100-year White Throne Judgment period, and the bringing of New Jerusalem to the earth and there are the nations that are saved!* That's going to be something! That is going to be phenomenal!

Let's look at two different sections of this: the physical nation of Israel, who was to help bring the Word of God to the world. That was one of their profound missions.

Exodus 19:4: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians..." That was pretty awesome! You go back and read everything that was done.

"...and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel" (vs 4-6).

In that then is the preliminary overview of the whole covenant that God established with Israel.

They were to be a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation. If they did that, just think how much better off the world would have been. They didn't do that.

Let's come down to the time of Christ, and let's see what Jesus said. This was the beginning of the ending of that covenant with Israel. Let's see what He warned the successors of that kingdom: the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 21:42: "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures...'" Isn't that interesting? I would have to say that most theologians never read the Scriptures. The Jews here, as theologians, never read the Scriptures. They claimed authority over them, but they never read them.

"...*The Stone that the builders rejected, this has become the Head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes?*" Because of this, I say to you... [the Scribes, Pharisees and chief priests] ...the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you... [that's what was proposed in Exo. 19; they did not do it] ...and it shall be given to a nation *that produces the fruits of it*" (vs 42-43).

Who was that nation? *That is the Church of God!* We will be a mighty nation of kings and priests (Rev. 20), to serve with Christ as kings and priests? *Yes!*

Verse 44: "And the one who falls on this Stone shall be broken; but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

I want you to think of the Scripture that says, 'the Scripture can't be broken.' Heaven and earth shall pass, but 'My words shall not pass.'

Verse 45: "Now, after hearing His parables, the chief priests and the Pharisees knew that He was speaking about them.... [now they had a political consequence to watch out for] ...And they sought to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet" (vs 45-46).

Let's see how that shifted from Israel to the Church and now the application to what will then be the Church resurrected, or the true spiritual nation of Israel when Christ returns. Notice the parallel of what I just read in Matt. 21.

1-Peter 2:6: "For this reason it says in the Scripture, 'Behold, I place in Zion *the Cornerstone*, chosen *and* precious; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.' The preciousness *is* to you, therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey, *the Stone that the builders rejected* has become *the Head of the corner*, and a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense; *especially* to those

who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, unto which *unbelief* they also were appointed. But you *are* a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation, a people for a possession *of God*, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people, but now *are the* people of God; who had not received mercy, but now have received mercy" (vs 6-10).

That's something! There is the complete shifting of it, from the nation of Israel. Now you understand why Paul said, 'circumcision avails nothing.' We're going to learn even more why it avails nothing.

When we read through this it will make it so much more understandable for you. With the things we've covered up to this point:

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?... [for all to read] ...This only I desire to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by *the* hearing of faith?" (vs 1-2)—*by the calling; by repenting!* How did we receive the Spirit of God? *That's how we received it!*

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

That is the whole problem with all of these heresies and things that are coming along today. 'We're now going to have something new. We're now going to have something different.' Physical means; carnal means!

Verse 4: "Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it *has been* in vain?" If you are relying on *works of law*, then it was indeed in vain!

Verse 5: "Therefore, *consider this*: He Who is supplying the Spirit to you, and Who is working deeds of power among you, *is He doing it* by works of law or by *the* hearing of faith?"—because you believe God; you hear His Word; you believe His Word.

Verse 6: "*It is exactly as it is written*: 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness.'" There is the crossover from Romans to Galatians right there! ***Belief!*** *Not a work.*

Verse 7: "Because of this, *you should* understand that those who *are* of faith are the *true* sons of Abraham." Now we are into that spiritual nation of Abraham.

Verse 8: "Now *in* the Scriptures, God seeing

in advance that He would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'

True New Testament Christianity goes back to Abraham! Once you understand that, you will understand the great problems of trying to mix in Judaism, Catholicism or Protestantism in with it—or Muslimism or Hinduism—whatever you want to try and mix in with it. It goes back to Abraham.

Verse 9: "It is for this reason that those who are of faith are being blessed with the believing Abraham."

That's quite interesting the way that he put it. Abraham was already dead, but he had this in the present tense form showing that all during Abraham's life—after he was called—he was believing! This is an example for us to be believing.

Verse 10: "For as many as are *relying* on works of law are under a curse, because it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that have been written in the Book of the Law to do them.'"

Now then, let's answer that question: What does it mean? Protestants say that we are delivered from the law. What does Paul write? Are you delivered from the requirement to keep law? or Are you delivered from the curse? *The curse is transgression!* Now then, the New Covenant does not have the same requirements of the Old Covenant. *There's no temple!* If you want to go back and do the things of the Old Covenant, you must have a temple. Can you have a temple? *No! There's not one!* So, you're cursed if you try to do the things that are under that, because you can't do that.

Same way with all of the washings, all of the oblations, all of the works of law. That's why the New Covenant is based upon belief. Now it is spiritually applied. Another thing that's important: according to the Old Covenant you could not keep the Passover out of the land of Israel, so therefore, if you took the Passover outside the land of Israel you would be cursed! But the Old Covenant Passover has one meaning; the New Covenant Passover has another meaning. This is why he's saying it.

What else would bring a curse? *If you didn't do all the traditions, and all the added things!* In other words, if you are going to follow Judaism—which is what he's saying here as we found in Gal. 2—you must do every single law that the Jews have—*period!* You can't do that. And if you break one—which you're going to—you're going to be under a curse, so therefore, if you're under a curse how are you going to get out from underneath it?

Only through Christ! He's delivered us from the curse of the law!

Verse 11: "Therefore, *it is* evident that no one is being justified before God by *means of works of law*; because *it is written*, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

- believe God
- believe Christ
- keep His laws and commandments from the heart
- believe that the sacrifice of Christ covers all your sins
- believe that you stand before God blameless, which you do

When you get to feeling really low, understand that God has you before Him as blameless! Not without sin, but blameless!

Verse 12: "Now then, the law is not based on faith..." No it isn't! In order to define everything, there must be a law for everything, and this is the whole curse of all law! Be it Judaism! Be it American law! Look at how many laws have been added from the Constitution. I mean, you've got laws, statutes, ordinances, regulation—book after book after book. This is what it's talking about here. Then you have those judges who get it all mixed up even more. Then you don't know.

"...but, 'The man who practices these things shall live in them'" (v 12). There's nothing wrong with that if you're living within them. However, it doesn't keep you from sinning. If you keep the Sabbath wonderfully this week, but you 'blow it' next week.... It's not based on faith.

Verse 13: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us..." Think about that; let this sink deep into your heart and your mind as you come to the Passover time. The Creator, Who was perfect and Holy and righteous altogether, became a human being, never sinned, became a curse. He said, 'Ok, the way that I'm going to redeem mankind is I redeem them from the curse that I put upon them because of sin, and I take it myself.'

- Is that not just? *Yes, it is!*
- Is that not righteous? *Yes, it is!*
- Does God understand? *Yes, He does!*

"...(for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')... [that's why He was crucified] ... in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, *and* that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (vs 13-14). Based on that we have to remain in the faith. This is all what he's leading up to. Very important thing for us to understand:

Verse 15: “Brethren (I am speaking from a human perspective), even when a man’s covenant has been ratified, no one nullifies *it*, or adds a codicil to it.”

What is a ‘codicil’? *A legal attachment!* That’s what it means in the Greek. We’ll understand the difference between a testament and a will; a covenant and a testamental will:

- **Covenant**—once it’s made no one can add to or take from. It’s enforced immediately, based upon your promise to perform.
- **Will**—being a testamental will—is not in effect until the person dies and can be changed at any time up to that person’s death; or the person can nullify it himself. Not so, a covenant.

A covenant you make, it stands, you cannot change it, you cannot alter it, you cannot add to it—especially the covenant with God. This is what we’re dealing with here. We’re going to compare that between the promise given to Abraham and the Law given to Israel later. This is the whole heart and core and dispute of Protestantism. No man is going to do that; no one can! Not even the Maker! Not even the maker of a covenant can change it. He can make another agreement alongside it, but it doesn’t change what was given originally.

Verse 16: “Now, to Abraham and to his Seed were the promises spoken. He does not say, ‘and to *your* seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘and to your Seed,’ which is Christ.” We will see the parallel with Isaac when we get to that.

Verse 17: “Now this I say, *that the* covenant... [with Abraham] ...ratified beforehand by God to Christ—... [there was a covenant made by God to Christ. Most people don’t realize that] ...cannot be annulled by the Law, which was *given* four hundred and thirty years later, so as to make the promise of no effect.”

The law given at Sinai cannot change the promise given to Abraham, because the promise given to Abraham is *prima-facie*; that means it’s the primary source of the covenant down to Christ and with us. Nothing can change that! The Law was given, but that didn’t change the promise. The promise here in this case is the covenant.

Verse 17: “Now this I say, *that the* covenant ratified beforehand by God to Christ cannot be annulled by the Law, which was *given* four hundred and thirty years later, so as to make the promise of no effect.”

- What was the promise? *That your seed*

shall be as the stars of heaven!

- What are the stars of heaven?
- What do they symbolize? *They symbolized glorified spirit beings resurrected from the dead!*

The righteous shall shine as the stars of heaven—that was the promise!

Verse 18: “For if the inheritance *is* by law...”—which was 430 years later; now you’ve changed the conditions. You cannot change the conditions of a covenant.

“...*it is* no longer by promise. But God granted *it* to Abraham by promise” (v 18).

If you understand this part of Galatians, you understand the most complicated theological questions, which have divided Protestantism for 400 years. It is complicated, I know that, but if you can understand it—which I’ll try and make it as understandable as I can—then you understand more than the Protestants.

Verse 19: “Why then the Law?... [the giving of the Law to Israel] ...It was placed alongside *the promises*... [It didn’t change the promise, but ‘was placed alongside’ it] ...for the purpose of *defining* transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom *the* promise was made... [it was only going to come down to Christ] ...having been ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator.”

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 4:8-10
- 2) Genesis 15:5-6
- 3) Genesis 17:1
- 4) Matthew 5:48
- 5) Genesis 17:14, 23-24
- 6) Romans 4:11-25
- 7) Revelation 2:23
- 8) Hebrews 11:6
- 9) John 6:11-15, 25-36
- 10) John 7:37-39
- 11) John 10:22-39
- 12) Ephesians 1:17-19
- 13) Romans 4:17
- 14) Exodus 19:4-6
- 15) Matthew 21:42-46
- 16) 1 Peter 2:6-10
- 17) Galatians 3:1-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 22
- Romans 2
- Acts 2, 10

- Genesis 26:5
- Revelation 20
- Galatians 2

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