

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"Fallen from Grace"

Galatians 5:1-6

Introduction

1. Let's face it. The Bible is the only text book which provides information provided by God Almighty. We make this important observation to assure ourselves that the Bible is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

2. Believing the Bible to be the Word of God, we have full confidence in its statements concerning life and death, heaven and hell, condemnation and salvation. In short, the Bible is the resource for every living soul who sincerely wants to establish a relationship with the one only true God.

3. With these premises, it is not surprising that we believe in dogmatics. The Bible alone has authoritative statements about the purity of God's redemption of sinful humanity. Men, by their own cunning, have devised various systems by which to be accepted by the holy God. God, however, dogmatically avers that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and His subsequent resurrection alone rescues sinful men (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). This is our great and wonderful good news to you today! Have you believed it for yourself yet? If not, do it NOW.

4. The Galatian believers (people who occupied modern Turkey in the days of the Apostle Paul i.e. mid 1st century), did believe that message. Then some people from Jerusalem came to them and apparently endeavored to teach them the inadequacy of the perfect work of Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul the Apostle was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this letter of Galatians to them to defend the adequacy of Jesus Christ. You must read Galatians 1:1-4:31 to get his full argument.

5. The immediate context of Galatians 5:1-6, however, is the incredible allegory of Galatians 4:21-31. Using Hagar and Ishmael (cf. Gen. 16, 17) and Sarah and Isaac (cf. Gen. 17, 21) as representatives of law (man's work system) and grace (God's faith system) respectively, the Bible affirms that redemption is by grace through faith alone. Any works system is to be "cast out" (4:30). With this as background, look at what this all provokes:-

1. COMMANDS (to obey) v. 1.

Two imperatives are employed:

a. Stand fast

This is a present tense, hence, "keep on standing." Where? In the "liberty" wherein Christ made you "free" (aorist verb). Since Christ is adequate, stand!

b. Be not entangled

This is a present tense, but negative. To forsake the freedom provided by Christ is to take a "yoke of bondage." Any works system is just that!

2. CONSIDERATIONS

If one denies the adequacy of the work of Christ (in His death, burial, and resurrection) and turns to the law (i.e. a works system) then these four considerations obtain:-

a. Christ profits nothing v. 2

"Behold" is an attention getter. "I" is emphatic as is "Paul." Under inspiration, Paul declares that if one is circumcised (adds some work as if Christ is inadequate) then Christ's work profits nothing. It is Christ for all or Christ not at all!

b. Debtor to whole law v. 3

It is not possible to pick and choose. You either accept an all grace system or an all works system. It is not possible to divide the "law" into moral and "ceremonial" as if to accept the one and reject the other. If you believe one part is necessary, then the whole is. The bottom line is this: either the work of Christ is adequate or it is not!

c. Christ is of no effect v. 4

The verb employed here is aorist passive. It is really forceful. The moment anyone turns to a works system, he then and there is severed from Christ. There is no middle ground. Either Christ is sufficient for all or not at all. To seek to be accepted with God by what you do, in effect cuts you off from Christ as God's only way to be accepted (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

d. Fallen from grace v. 4

This phrase has been mistakenly interpreted to mean that a saved person can somehow get unsaved. That's like saying a born person can get unborn. Impossible! The meaning is clear: to turn from Christ (grace and faith) to a works system is to fall out of the sphere of grace into the law sphere.

Conclusion

So where does this bring us? Two times the word "for" is used. These indicate where we are: 1. We wait for the hope of righteousness v. 5. Whether the word "spirit" means the human spirit as opposed to the flesh or the Holy Spirit by Whom a believer is quickened is not a major question. The point here is that the child of God waits for the realization of the hope of righteousness "out" of faith and not "out" of works (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5). We are called to believe what God says. The verb "wait for" is used elsewhere (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil 3:20). It really means to "stick out the neck." 2. We have faith which works through love v. 6. Whether a person is circumcised or not (i.e. is involved in a works system) is really important. The big issue is faith whose work is love. This is the same as saying, faith that issues in works. A faith that doesn't work is dead. Not faith plus works, but a working faith (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9 with 10).

An appropriate question is -- are you a "we." Do you (we) wait for the hope of righteousness act of faith? Do you (we) have faith whose work is love?