

Sunday February 11th 2024
From Time to Time – Part 20

1). Ga 2:16 *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

We had seen last time that the ‘Gentile’ Christians within the churches of Galatia had been drawn away from the gospel that Paul had preached to them by false ‘Jewish’ brethren who were adding to Paul’s teaching that the salvation of the soul was to be accomplished through the physical act of circumcision and by keeping the Law of Moses. A message completely contrary to the gospel of glory. A message in effect that attempted to replace the inward transformation, the metamorphosis, by the work of the Spirit with an outward appearance of righteousness by a work of the flesh –

Ro 12;2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The transformation spoken of here in Romans Chapter 12, the Greek word ‘metamorphoo’, from which we get our English word ‘metamorphosis’, is to be brought about by the renewing of our mind. And we have seen many times, that the contrast is made between conformity to the world, an action that is entirely the work of the old man and the transformation brought about by the work of the Spirit with respect to the new man. One is always a work of the flesh and the other can only ever be a work of the Spirit.

a). And if we allow this work of the Spirit through bringing forth the wisdom from above to renew our mind then transformation, the

metamorphosis, is inevitable – Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on **the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him**, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

We see that we are transformed through the renewal of our mind in Romans and that the new man is renewed through ‘epignosis’ knowledge in Colossians. Both of these speak of the same thing, and both are ‘according to the image of Him’ who created us. With the creation spoken of in Colossians being our new creation in Christ. And being transformed in this way, something that can only happen after our new creation in Christ, ‘will prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God’ from Romans. And this proof will be shown at the Judgment Seat, when those transformed through the renewing of their mind, the renewing of the new man will receive the salvation of their souls, fulfilling God’s perfect will which He made known to us at the beginning of the Scriptures – Ge 1:26 *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion.....*

And the transforming work of the Spirit through the Word of the Kingdom, the gospel of the glory of Christ, the mystery given to Paul, the wisdom brought forth from above, is entirely a matter of faith to the saving of the soul and can have absolutely no connection with the flesh, the old man – Ro 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation [of the soul] for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”*

Those in the churches in Galatia then, were deceived into thinking that they could live, in their present resulting in life in the age to come,

apart from faith. And although circumcision and keeping the law might have the appearance of a righteous life, this righteousness could only ever be a form of self-righteousness, something that they had manufactured for themselves and could never be the righteousness that comes from God, that is only attainable by faith – Php 3:9.....*not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.....*

Jas 2:23 *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.*

It is God alone who accounts His righteousness to us as we have faith to the saving of the soul. Righteousness can never be attained by any action that is apart from having this faith. No matter how noble or self-sacrificial it may seem. And this is why we are told – Mt 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God **and His righteousness**.....*

And we know that what took place in Galatia was satanically inspired to stop those in that place from continuing to produce fruit for the Kingdom, to disqualify them from the race of the faith, being a facet of the outworking of the Parable of the Wheat and Tares and the Parable of the Leaven in Matthew Chapter 13. And the satanic connection with self-righteousness we can see once again in – 2 Co 11:13 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. [metaschematizo – a purely outward change that is deceitful] 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also **transform themselves** into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. [not according to their outward appearance]*

That which was purely a self-righteous outward appearance, generated by the old man, akin to wearing a mask, created the impression that the individual was a minister of righteousness, but it was in fact a deceptive self-righteousness designed to bring those already set at liberty back into bondage – Ga 4:8 *But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You [scrupulously and religiously] observe days and months and seasons and years. [And this would be with respect to the law] 11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*

What we are seeing here then is a return to observing the letter rather than the Spirit. And scrupulously adhering to the letter rather than the spiritual truth contained in it, can only ever be an action of the old man.

b). And to help us understand this we can look to something very familiar to us, the reason why we are here today. There was a time when we thought that so long as we ‘came to church’ on a Sunday God would be pleased with us. We saw it as a good work, a righteous act. And many of us would have religiously kept this observance. But as we now know that acts of righteousness can only be done by faith, by believing and acting upon that which God has said, we realize that we would have to see in the Scriptures where we are told to be ‘in church on a Sunday’ in order for our previous thinking to be correct. And of course, no such Scripture exists. So, ‘attending church’ on Sunday simply because it’s Sunday, can only be an act of self-righteousness as it is apart from faith. It is keeping the letter only.

c). However, there is the Scriptural command for the church to come together, which we do traditionally on a Sunday, which IS the reason for us being here today. This is the Spirit rather than the letter Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in*

*order to stir up love and good works, 25 **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Considering or giving careful attention, to one another to stir up love and good works, and exhorting one another so much the more as we see the Day approaching is the reason we are here today and Wednesday and Thursday for that matter, because we have believed that which God has said to us through the Scriptures. Inevitably, this **MUST** be our motivation for getting out of bed on a Sunday morning. It is the reason that we set being here as a priority as we look at the demands of our week. And the reason why we don't look for an excuse not to be here. Those who lead out on Sundays stir us up and exhort us, the musicians stir us up and exhort us through the songs and the Scriptures they share. It happens through the teaching of the Word of Truth. And it should be happening as we arrive and before we leave. Every single one of us in this room today has the opportunity to act by faith by doing that which the verses from Hebrews tell us to do. And if we do that, the exercise of our faith becomes an act of righteousness, the righteousness that is from God that He accounts to us by faith, just as He did with Abraham. And should we choose not to practice that which the Hebrews verses teach us, then we must understand that anything we do that is apart from faith is worthless with respect to receiving the salvation of our souls.

d). And if we take this thought back to the Galatians once again and the self-righteous act of circumcision that the false Jewish brethren were requiring of them, that which was only the letter and not the Spirit, what do the Scriptures have to say about it? Ro 2:28 *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

Ro 7:5 *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.*
6 *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

And for ourselves in this, we should all be circumcised, as should all those in Galatia have been, but not the physical act as the false Jewish brethren professed, but what is taught by the Spirit through the physical act of circumcision as a metaphor for doing away with the man of flesh, the old man – Ro 8:13 *For, assuming that you are living **habitually** under the dominion of the sinful nature, [the old man] you are on the way to dying [at the Judgment Seat]. But, assuming that by the Spirit you are **habitually** putting to death the deeds of the body, [the circumcision of the heart] you will live [have life for the age].* 14 *For as many as are being **constantly** led by God's Spirit, these are sons of God.* 15 *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again with resulting fear, but you received the Spirit who places you as adult sons, by whom we cry out with deep emotion, Abba, [namely] Father. [Wuest Expanded Translation].*

Php 3:3 *For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.....*

2). And all of this will bring us back to the place we have been trying to get to for several weeks now, Saul and the Amalekites.

a). So, keeping all that we have looked at so far today in mind, let's remember God's instruction to Saul – 1 Sa 15:1 *Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.* 2 *Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.* 3 *Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not*

spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ”

And let's remember how Saul responded to God's instruction to him -
1 Sa 15:7 *And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

The end of v9 should remind us of something we have previously seen from the Book of Malachi – Mal 1: 6 *“A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’ 7 “You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil?.....13 You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it,” Says the LORD of hosts. “And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?” Says the LORD. 14 “But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished— For I am a great King,” Says the LORD of hosts, “And My name is to be feared among the nations.*

That seen at the end of 1 Samuel 15:9 and that seen concerning the actions of the priests of the Lord in Malachi Chapter 1, parallel one another exactly. The thought that is behind both sets of action is, ‘That which is of no value to me, I will give to the Lord’.

b). The Lord is our Father, and as the Spirit places us as sons with a view to being firstborn sons, so we cry out Abba, Father. And

as, not a Father, but THE Father in heaven, the Lord should be honored. And to take this back to our Sunday example, to offer what is worthless in the sight of the Lord is to walk through the doors on a Sunday morning apart from acting in accordance with the Scripturally mandated purpose for us doing so. Being here for the sake of being here rather than being here for the purpose that God has commanded us to gather together. The priests seen in Malachi did not show honor to the Lord but contempt. And Saul and those with him who attacked the Amalekites showed exactly the same contempt by rejecting the Word of the Lord.

c). In both instances contempt was shown to the Lord by not faithfully following His instructions, by following the man of the flesh and not the man of the spirit. And just to be here on Sunday without any thought as to why the Scripture says we should be here would show contempt on our part as well.

d). We will remember what took place when Samuel confronted Saul with respect to his response to the Lord's instruction to him –
*1 Sa 15:19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." [self-righteousness on Saul's part] 22 So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." 24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because **I feared the people and obeyed their voice.***

We should note two things from these verses with regard to how the Lord saw Saul's actions that we can apply to anyone who does the same. Not obeying the voice of the Lord is seen as rebellion. And to know what the Lord has said and stubbornly choose not to do it is seen as iniquity and idolatry.

e). And in conjunction with this, let's note again the end of v24, 'I feared the people and obeyed their voice'. This is exactly what we had seen last time that Aaron had done in the golden calf incident and what Peter and others with him had done when Jewish brethren came from James.

d). Saul's statement at the end of v24 is filled with pathos. But we, being wise, should not feel sorry for him but focus instead on what the Scripture says because we would know for sure, from the Scripture, that we are to fear the Lord and obey His voice, irrespective of the circumstances we might find ourselves in – Pr 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.*

Pr 15:32 *He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding. 33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.*

Pr 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.*

Jer 7:23 *But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'*

And with these things in mind, let's take to heart what God has said through Samuel, *"Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and*

*sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams.*

Just to walk through the door on Sunday morning as a religious observance would equate with the 'sacrifice' spoken of by Samuel, but to do that which is the Scriptural purpose for us coming together would be to obey, it would be to fear the Lord and obey His voice. And should we do so, the Lord would have 'great delight' in us –

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

And to go back to the Book of Malachi for a moment - Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, [stir up love and good works and exhort one another as we gather together] And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*

3). And perhaps we should consider, that to 'seek the Lord' is to seek His righteousness, the righteousness that comes by faith, the very thing we are to seek first along with His Kingdom. Perhaps we should think of it this way, we cannot seek first His Kingdom apart from seeking His righteousness. We will not have a position of rulership in His Kingdom without having received His righteousness. We cannot have His righteousness apart from faith to the saving of the soul. And faith to the saving of the soul will only come as we fear the Lord and obey His voice, as we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, as we cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

a). And this choice that we have between following the Spirit or the flesh, allowing the preeminence of the old man or the new is at the heart of what the Spirit would teach us through the type of Saul and the Amalekites. And as we continue with the events of Saul's life, let's establish what is pictured for us through the Amalekites.

b). The Amalekites are clearly antithetical to God and His purposes, hence the need for them to be utterly destroyed. And the connection between the destruction of the Amalekites and Saul continuing as king is unmissable. If Saul would utterly destroy the Amalekites, then he would remain as king, but because he chose not to do so the kingdom was taken from him.

c). And so, what we would learn here at a foundational level through the type is that with regality in view, someone must be utterly destroyed. And if this someone is utterly destroyed, then rulership will follow but if we choose, like Saul, not to do so then the Kingdom will be lost to us.

d). And Saul choosing to spare Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the Amalekites' animals because of fear of the people and the greater need that he had that the people should accept him rather than God accepting him, gives us the direct connection between the Amalekites and the old man, the man of the flesh.

e). Again then, just so that we are clear, the Amalekites form a type of the old man, the man of flesh, that part of us that is antithetical to God. And we know the instruction given to us concerning the old man as we have already seen it earlier in today's study – Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh [spare Agag] you will die [the Kingdom will be taken from you]; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body [utterly destroy Amalek], you will live [reign with Christ in the Kingdom].*

*Col 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, [disobedient sons of God]** 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

And a very graphic rendering of that seen in v6 can be found in the type in – 1 Sa 15:32 *Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said,*

“Surely the bitterness of death is past.” 33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Mt 24:48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Let’s not forget – Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We will have to continue with this next time if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.