

## Chapter 18

# WALK IN THE SPIRIT

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-18)*

Throughout our studies we have observed fundamental truths in the Scriptures which will enable us to understand the portion of Scripture before us. An understanding of these truths is necessary, because there has been much written and spoken regarding this Scripture that does not fit the overall truth of the Word of God. For example, many regard the *walk in the Spirit* to be a special enduement for special people, wrought by many hours in prayer and fasting, pleading for the enabling of God and the *filling of the Spirit*.

We do not mean to minimize the importance of prayer in the life of the believer, nor do we mean to minimize the value of a life dedicated to the Lord. Rather we mean to establish the truth that the *walk in the Spirit* is not extraordinary, in the sense that few have this capability. The Scripture says, *The just shall live by faith*. The walk of faith is a walk in the Spirit, because *All*

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*Scripture is given by inspiration of [the Spirit of] God.* Thus the walk in the Spirit is a walk according to the truth of the Word of God and is available to all in this age who have been saved by grace through faith. It is not a charismatic experience, nor is it something mystical or extra-spiritual, but is meant to be the normal life of every believer.

An essential truth that must be considered relative to a walk in the Spirit is the judicial reckoning of God. Judicial reckoning declares certain things to be true in the life of a believer by reason of the Person and work of Christ. Therefore it is an essential part of the every-day walk of the believer. We have such a view of Abraham and Sarah recorded in the fourth chapter of the book of Romans:

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:19-25)

This view is not a contradiction of the historical view of Abraham and Sarah, recorded in the book of Genesis (where they both laughed at the prospect of having a son, but before the pregnancy, they both came to believe God's promise), but is God's judicial view by right of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and the new covenant. This covenant was put into effect for all believers of all ages by Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection from the dead.

Our Lord said, *I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.* This is true irrespective of the age, or covenant relationship under which believers have lived their lives. This is clearly seen in the Old Testament believers recorded in the eleventh chapter

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of the book of Hebrews. This sampling includes some believers who lived before the law and others who lived under the law. In the Old Testament they are viewed in their particular covenant relationships, and their sins and shortcomings are clearly seen; but in the New Testament, after the fulfillment of the terms of the new covenant were fulfilled by Christ, they are viewed by the terms of that covenant:

Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Hebrews (10:15-18)

Thus, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, it is evident that the new covenant promised by Jeremiah has been put into effect for all believers of all ages, and only that which was done (and has been done) by faith can be remembered: since *whatsoever is not of faith is sin* and *their sins and iniquities will I remember against them no more*. Consequently there are no sins of Old Testament saints recorded anywhere in the New Testament.

Federal headship is an essential part of the doctrine of salvation. It is the basis upon which Adam's sin was charged to the entire human family. It is also the basis upon which Christ can stand in the stead of those who believe. It should be noted that the acts of a federal head can be applied to those who lived before or after their federal head. In Hebrews chapter seven, this is seen in Levi: *And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him*. Thus the federal application of the new covenant to Old Testament saints in the New Testament has been commonly missed by many theologians, but is nevertheless absolutely true according to the testimony of Hebrews

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chapters ten and eleven.

It should be understood that in the over-all scope of things, God's judicial reckoning did not alter covenant responsibilities in the ages in which those covenants were in force. For example, the nation of Israel had a covenant responsibility to observe the law. Whenever a Jew failed under the law, he had the covenant responsibility to bring the appropriate sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle, or later to the temple in Jerusalem, and offer it there by faith. This sacrifice could not take away sin, but faith in the One Who was represented by the sacrifice could.

Consequently Paul wrote:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized [i.e., the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is outwardly portrayed in water baptism] into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one [both believing Jews and Gentiles] in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:24-29)

Even though the new covenant was not fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ in Abraham's lifetime, its blessings were promised in the Abrahamic covenant. Thus Paul wrote:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of [the] promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having

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slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:8-22, emphasis mine)

All of these benefits were hidden in shadows and types in the Old Testament, but were manifested to the saints (i. e., of the Old Testament) when Jesus *led captivity captive and gave gifts to men*. It was then that He gave the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit to individuals within the visible body of Christ, and He also gave the baptism of the Spirit to those who were held captive in Paradise. By this act, our Lord made them complete in Him by His Holy Spirit. Consequently, in the Old Testament, or in the New:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism [in the Holy Spirit], one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

These facts declare the immutability and exactness of our Lord's statement in the great commission recorded in the book of Mark:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized [by the Holy Spirit] shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16)

Given the fact that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, that God is immutable, that He cannot lie, the *walk in the Spirit* is a walk according to all of the Word of God, rightly divided. Consequently any supposed *walk in the Spirit* must be examined by the position of those who make such a claim: do they walk according to the revealed Word of God? Therefore it must, of necessity, be a walk in the full understanding of the Person and of the work of our Lord Jesus

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Christ. Further Paul stated in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans:

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:5-11)

We must, once again, call upon some of the principles we have previously learned to gain the import of the above Scriptures. For example, if we apply to the word *flesh* only the overt sins that a man may commit, we will indeed miss much of the force of Paul's argument to the Romans.

In our studies in the third chapter of Galatians we learned that the word *flesh* was used by Paul to describe the Galatians' attempts at law-keeping for justification before God. Thus the *flesh* was used to describe an activity that most men would regard as good. Now if we apply this understanding to the text before us, we will learn that attempts at law-keeping are not a part of the *walk in the Spirit*, but are a clear manifestation of the *flesh*. Consequently a free translation of a portion of the above text is:

For they that are after the law do mind the things of the law; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be legally minded is death [because no flesh can be justified before God by the deeds of the law]; but to be spiritually minded [i.e., through grace and faith] is life and peace. Because the legal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God [though it thinks it is, but is not because it always fails in performance], neither indeed can be. So then they that are legally minded [attempting to justify themselves before God] cannot please God [because: The just shall live by faith, and law is not of faith].

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This being true, the walk in the Spirit is a walk according to the truth of the Word of God, according to the judicial reckoning of God and not according to the law and the self-justifying schemes of man. This being true, Paul instructed the Galatians, *ye cannot do the things that ye would*; or stated in another way, there is no way to fulfill the Word of God by human determination, but by the submission of the will of man to the will of God.

For example, God promised Abraham a son through *whom all of the families of the earth would be blessed*; but when this son was not produced by his union with his wife Sarai, at her instigation, Abraham did what *he would*. He went into Hagar and produced a son with her. This was not the son of God's promise, but was the son of the flesh. Then, some thirteen years later, God told Abraham he and Sarah would have a son in the next year, but rather than rejoicing, he cried, *O, that Ishmael might live before Thee!* This was the wail of the flesh.

Nevertheless God made it clear to him that His promise would be fulfilled in Isaac and not in Ishmael. It was then that Abraham's mind was changed and he aligned himself with the promise of God. At the appropriate time and in accordance with the will and power of God, Abraham and Sarah produced Isaac.

In both of these cases human instrumentality were used. In the first case we have the flesh operating with the high and holy motive of fulfilling the promise of God to produce the son of God's promise, for the glory of the flesh. In the second case we have the operation of the Spirit. Abraham and Sarah were brought to the end of themselves and their abilities. By faith they cast themselves upon the revealed will of God, for God's performance of His will in His time. Thus they were changed completely unto God, so that, that which was impotent and barren was made

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to produce by the Word of God and the quickening power of the Spirit of God.

This is the walk in the Spirit that is available to every believer. It is a walk in accordance with the power and purpose of God as revealed by the Word of God. Thus to be led of the Spirit is to be led of the Word of God.