

## Outline of the Book of Galatians

### Introduction:

The Galatian people were Gauls who had settled into the land in approximately 278 – 279 BC. In 25 BC, Galatia was proclaimed a Roman province. The apostle Paul and Barnabas had visited Galatia AD 45 – 48. Four churches were established at this time in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (cf. Acts 13:4 – 14:28 and map below).



### Time of Writing:

Galatians chapter 1 through 2 scans an earlier part of Paul's life when he had completed his tour of Galatia and had traveled to Jerusalem with Barnabas to discuss the issue of men teaching, "*except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved*" (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:1ff). It is generally accepted that the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 occurred in the year 50 AD. Clearly Paul wrote this epistle to the Galatians after 50 AD (some believe Paul wrote Galatians from Corinth during the second tour and others believe Paul wrote the epistle while in Ephesus during the third tour).

## Circumstances that Necessitated this Epistle:

The apostle Paul had preached in Galatia and established churches in four cities during the years of AD 45 – 48. Not long after these churches were established, Judaizing Christians began scattering through the area with their erroneous teachings. They denied Paul's apostleship and thereby discounted his teaching in the hearing of the Galatian brethren. The consequences of their work was so widespread that it prompted a conference in Jerusalem that was attended by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1ff). One of the primary functions of the meeting was to determine whether Paul's teachings were inspired and in agreement with the other apostles (cf. Gal. 2:7ff). These teachers were going about saying that Christians needed to keep the Mosaic Law (circumcision) and the Law of Christ together to be saved (cf. Acts 15:5). Paul was fearful that the Galatians were going to completely turn their back to truth and lose their souls due to these men's work (Gal. 4:11). At one time the Galatians considered themselves blessed to have heard Paul's message of salvation (Gal. 4:15), yet after the Judaizers got through with them, they considered Paul their enemy (Gal. 4:16). Paul said, '*you were running so well*' (what happened?) (Gal. 5:7). Paul had preached the gospel, and they received the message by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2). Consequently, the Galatians were baptized for the remission of their sins (Gal. 3:26). Yet now the Galatians were second guessing Paul because of the terrible things they were hearing about him. Paul wasted no time in writing the Galatians this epistle to counter the Judaizer's teaching.

The Judaizers had apparently said many derogatory things about Paul, his teaching, and his apostleship. Some were saying that Paul preached to gain the "*favor of men*" (Gal. 1:10). Some were saying that he "*lied*" about being an apostle (Gal. 1:20). Many were challenging his teaching as not being inspired. They said that Paul's teaching was different than what the other apostles were teaching (Gal. 2:2-10). Still some charged Paul with being inconsistent with his teaching on circumcision (cf. Gal. 5:11). These Judaizers were motivated to say bad things about Paul and teach another gospel because they did not want to be "*persecuted*" and neither did they want to see others persecuted (Gal. 6:12). Therefore, they sought to appease the Jews by teaching the Mosaic Law to Christians, and they sought to appease the Christians by exhibiting faith in Jesus (cf. Acts 15:5; Gal. 6:12). They sought peace at the cost of men's souls. The overall message of the Judaizers to other Christians was that the Mosaic Law must be kept (Acts 15:5), all must be circumcised (Gal. 6:13), and that all must keep the set Mosaic feasts and special days of worship (Gal. 4:10). Though these teachers taught these things, they did not do so themselves (Gal. 6:13). **The Judaizer's objective in life was to obtain peace with all men, whereas Paul's objective was justification through faith in Jesus Christ no matter the cost (Gal. 3:8-9).**

Apparently the Galatians had given these false teachers the right hand of fellowship and an ear to their doctrines (Gal. 1:6; 3:1; 5:2). The consequence of said acceptance was that they were severed from Christ and had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). Instead of trying to protect these false teachers, Paul labeled them as "*false brethren*" and spoke of the damage they were causing (Gal. 2:4). Paul said some were "*troubling*" (causing confusion) among the Galatians with a "*perverted gospel*" (a changed doctrine) (Gal. 1:6-7). These teachers had "*bewitched*" the Galatians (Gal. 3:1). The false teachers were "*zealously seeking you* (the Galatians) *in no good way*" (Gal. 4:17). These teachers "*hindered,*" "*troubled,*" and "*unsettled*" the Galatians by "*persuading*" them with false doctrines (Gal. 5:7-12).

Paul's remedy to the situation is given throughout the book. First, the Galatians were to test the doctrines of men to see whether they stood the test of the inspired revelation of God (Gal. 1:8-9). For an effective test to be run, the brethren needed to understand the difference between divine revelation and human reason. Paul lay claims to teaching divine revelation and then proved this by looking to his apostleship (Gal. 1:11-12). The Jerusalem conference was devastating to the false teachers of Galatia because the results unequivocally marked Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ who preached truth (cf. Gal. 2:2, 9 compared to Acts 15:24-27). Secondly, the Galatians were admonished to cast out those who sought them in no good way with their teaching (Gal. 4:17, 30) because such men were accursed (Gal. 1:6). Finally, Paul suggested to the Galatians that they crucify the flesh (Gal. 6:14) and walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Paul spent a considerable amount of this epistle explaining the fatal uselessness of attempting to follow any one part of the Mosaic Law with the expectation of getting one closer to God. To follow any part of the Mosaic Law is to be under a curse because no man could keep it perfectly, and when one failed, there was no remedy for the sin (Gal. 3:10). To follow the Mosaic Law is to be kept in ward as a prisoner (Gal. 3:22; 4:3). When one obeys the gospel, he is set free from the bondage of sin (Gal. 4:7). Paul explained to the Galatians that any system that did not represent Christ only held one in bondage to sin because the forgiveness of sins come through Christ

alone. Many in the religious world today are seeking their justification by means other than what Christ words reveal and are consequently held hostage to that system (whether it be Baptist faith, Methodist faith, etc.).

The lesson that you and I need to learn from the book of Galatians is that we must seek our salvation in the teachings of Christ alone. If someone brings another teaching, we should test it rather than receiving the man because he seems good. If the doctrines these men present to us do not represent Christ teaching, we should cast it away from us. Christians are always to live by the Spirit (God's instructions) rather than living by the flesh (man's ideas).

## Contents of Book:

### Chapter 1

#### I. Paul's Salutations to the Galatians (1:1-5):

- A. *"Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead), and all the brethren that are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:"* (1:1-2).
1. Paul found himself defending his apostleship among the Corinthians often (cf. I Cor. 9:1-2; II Cor. 11:4-5; 12:11-13) (see study # 1; Apostles).
  2. If Paul was writing Galatians from Corinth, he would be sending a greeting of fellowship from those brethren to the Galatian brethren (i.e., *"all the brethren that are with me"*).
  3. The word *"churches"* is plural as Paul had helped establish 4 (see map above).
- B. *"Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:3).
1. God's grace is directly associated with the gospel message of truth (cf. Titus 2:11-12).
  2. Peace with God would come to the Galatians through their obedience to His will. When one is forgiven of his sins, he is in fellowship with God and thereby in peace with Him (I Jn. 1:5-6).
- C. *"who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (1:4-5).
1. Grace and peace came to the Galatians only through the Savior's sacrifice on the cross for the remission of our sins. Blood would be the only means whereby men could be saved from sin (cf. Heb. 9:22). Christ's blood has the power to forgive the sins of every man that ever has or ever will live on this earth. God's will is that all would be delivered from the bondage of sin (II Pet. 3:9).
  2. Paul then broke out in a doxology of praise to Jehovah God when considering the salvation that is available through Christ.
  3. Interestingly, Paul began this epistle with the idea of the forgiveness of sins coming through Christ and His teaching alone. Throughout this study we will see that the Galatians had been persuaded to seek salvation by means of a mixture of Mosaic Law and Law of Christ. Paul's objective in this epistle was to convince the Galatians that salvation is in no other doctrine than that which Christ delivered to the apostles and prophets.

#### II. The Source of Paul's Gospel Message (1:6-10):

- A. *"I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ"* (1:6-7).
1. Paul quickly got to the reason he was writing this letter. He *"marvel(ed)"* (*thaumazo*) that the Galatians had fallen for another teaching. To *"marvel"* is to "be astonished, to look on with wonder and amazement, to wonder at; marvel" (LS 359). Paul was not marveling over the Galatians' faith but rather expressing amazement and shock that they had so *"quickly"* turned away from the teachings of Christ that he had established them in (cf. Acts 14:21-22). This gives us a hint as to the timing of the letter. The Galatian epistle could not have been written much longer after Paul's visit to Galatia and subsequent visit to Jerusalem in Acts 15.

2. The gospel message calls and “*he that called you in the grace of Christ*” can be none other than the Lord. Paul told the Thessalonian brethren that it was God that called them “*through our gospel*” (II Thess. 2:14).
  3. The Galatian brethren had quickly “*removed*” themselves from God’s gospel message “*unto a different gospel*” (*heteros*). The word *heteros* = “other than usual, different... other than should be... in another or a different way” (LS 320-321). The “*gospel*” message they now followed was ‘*different*’ that the gospel message they had learned from Paul. A contrast is set between the “*gospel of Christ*” and a “*different gospel.*” What was the cause of the Galatians’ shift in faith?
    - a. Paul tells us that there were some who had “*troubled*” the Galatians by “*perverting the gospel of Christ.*” To “*trouble*” (*tarasso*) = “to trouble the mind, confound, agitate, disturb, disquiet... to cause confusion” (LS 792). Note that teaching that contradicts the truth ‘troubles the mind and causes confusion’ (see study # 2: The effects of false teaching).
    - b. Not only did men speak troubling words, but in the process they “perverted” the gospel of Christ. To “*pervert*” (*metastrepho*) = “to turn about, turn round... to pervert, change, alter” (LS 504).
    - c. Clearly false teachers had preached a doctrine that contradicted the teachings of Christ, and its consequences were that the Galatians were ‘confused’ and ‘turned around’ regarding truth. The words indicate that the Galatians were left grasping for teachings to believe. They were not strong in the faith and allowed perverted teachings to confuse and turn them around. Paul set out to establish truth in their minds so that they would understand that there was no other set of instructions that are to be adhered to but the inspired teachings of Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 4:14).
- B.** “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema*” (1:8-9).
1. These verses demand that the Galatians and all others test the teachings of all men. To test there must be a standard to measure the teachings (I Jn. 4:1ff). The standard is God’s divine revelation. How then could the Galatians determine what was divine revelation and what was a perverted gospel? They could make their determination the same way we can today. The teachings of the apostles had to be separated from all other teachings of men (see study # 3; Test the Spirits).
  2. Those who taught a different gospel were to be viewed as an “*anathema*” i.e., “curse; anything devoted to evil” (LS 55). They were cursed because their doctrine brought a curse upon the adherent and caused them to be destroyed (see study # 2: The effects of false teaching). Jeremiah recorded God’s thoughts of the false prophets of his day saying, “*Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jehovah, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting: yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; neither do they profit this people at all, saith Jehovah*” (Jer. 23:32). These teachers are cursed because they cause God’s people to err, be troubled, and be removed from the gospel of truth. God is “*against*” all such troubling teachers.
  3. Note that Paul stated that even if “*an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you...*” The standard is set for divine inspiration, and the separation must be identified by the saint lest he be troubled and removed from truth. One may ask why the Mormon church and Islam are so popular today. Both of these religions lay claims to an angel telling one man a revelation that contradicts our Bibles, and many are being ‘troubled’ and ‘confused’ due to not being grounded in the truth.
  4. Now we see why it is important for Paul to establish his apostleship. Truth was preached by the apostles of Jesus Christ and pseudo doctrines were coming from others.
- C.** “*For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ*” (1:10).
1. Apparently some had charged Paul with being one who sought the “*favor of men*” with his teachings. Some of the Corinthians charged Paul with commending himself to the brethren

with his teachings (cf. II Cor. 3:1; 4:5; 5:12; 10:12; 13:3). Maybe Paul was trying to scam the brotherhood for money (cf. II Cor. 12:16-18). The Corinthians charged Paul with being deranged (II Cor. 5:13) and even stooped so low as to call him an idiot (II Cor. 11:5-6).

2. With the strong language before us, Paul now asked, ‘does it now sound like I am seeking the favor of men?’ Jesus had said that no man can serve two masters and be pleasing to God (Matt. 6:24). Paul served only Christ and taught the purity of divine revelation.

## II. Paul Proved the Divine Origin of the Message he Preached (1:11-24):

A. *“For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1:11-12).

1. When Paul and Barnabas traveled to Galatia in the late AD 40s, the message they preached was no doubt confirmed as truth by the miracles they performed. The consequence of preaching a divine message was that four churches were established. Paul assured the Galatians that his preaching was *“not after man.”* Paul explained what he means by his teaching not being after men by saying that it was not *“received from man”* and neither was he *“taught”* the gospel message of salvation. Various doctrines come to men in one of two ways. Man either concocts an idea within his own head or he is taught it (cf. Jer. 23:16-17) (see study # 1; Apostles).
2. Paul now revealed the source of the message he preached to the Galatians; i.e., *“it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.”* The word *“revelation”* (*apokalupsis*) = “uncovered” (LS 99), “uncover; to reveal... to be set forth, announced” (Moulton 42). The gospel message was literally “announced” to Paul by Jesus Christ (this is a definition of divine revelation given by inspiration to the prophets and apostles). This being the case, Paul could boldly proclaim, *“the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord”* (I Cor. 14:37). Ezekiel too illustrated for us what it meant to speak by divine revelation as opposed to speaking one’s mind or what another man taught. Ezekiel recorded, *“And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me”* (2:1-2). Revelation occurred the moment the Holy Spirit entered into Ezekiel and delivered to him words (see study # 4; Inspiration of the Word of God).
  - a. The apostle Peter said, *“For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit”* (II Pet. 1:21).
  - b. Divine revelation is complete, and therefore there is no need or validity to one who would lay claims to speaking new revelations (cf. I Cor. 13:9ff; Jude 3).
3. Note the deity of Christ. Jesus was set in contrast to men. Jesus was not an “ordinary man.” Paul illustrated to his readers that Jesus was deity and that His message was of divine origin (see study # 5; The Deity of Christ).

B. *“For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jew’s religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it:”* (1:13).

1. Note another contrast between the *“Jews’ religion”* and the *“church of God.”* Paul preached a distinct message. That which he once defended is in contrast to that which he persecuted (vs. 13ff). The following texts prove that Paul, in no way, received or concocted his teachings from human means. Here we see that the church may be authoritatively termed *“church of God”* in our day.
2. Paul’s point: “Why would I want to make up a doctrine that contradicted what I firmly believed to be right in my former days?” Paul was so convinced that the idea of Christianity affronted the purpose of God that he *“persecuted”* and *“made havoc”* of the church of God.
  - a. Paul was responsible for persecuting Christians *“unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women”* (Acts 22:4).
  - b. Paul spoke of the pain that this caused him later in I Corinthians 15:9ff.

C. *“and I advanced in the Jews’ religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers”* (1:14).

1. The *“Jews’ religion”* would include the law and the *“traditions of my fathers.”* The word *“traditions”* (*paradosis*) = things handed down. The teachings of Christ are considered

- paradosis* at II Thess. 2:15. The teachings handed down were those of the “*fathers*.” The Pharisees accepted a separate teaching that was comprised of oral laws (not to be confused with the Law of Moses). These traditions of the fathers originated in the minds of men and not God (cf. Matt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3-5).
2. Paul (when Saul of Tarsus) had made greater progress in these areas than most of the men his own age due mostly his being “*more exceedingly zealous*” to learn (cf. Phil. 3:4-6).
- D. “*But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus*” (1:15-17).
1. “*The good pleasure of God*” indicates the sovereign choice of God. It was God’s choice to separate Paul from birth to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. The route Paul took to get to the point of an apostle took nothing away from God’s choice and sovereignty. Interestingly, God chose both Jeremiah and John the Baptist in the same manner (cf. Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:8-38).
  2. At the time of God’s choosing, He “*called me* (Paul) *through his grace*.” This may indicate Paul’s being called by the gospel message to become a Christian, and it may indicate his call to be an apostle. Paul’s objective, however, is not under question. Paul was called of God to “*preach him among the Gentiles*.” Paul had a specific objective and that was to go to the lost Gentiles and preach to them (cf. Acts 26:16-18).
  3. Note that Paul obeyed the Lord’s request (cf. Acts 26:19). Paul did not have to seek the counsel of any man after this incident. Paul stated, “*straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus*.” To “*confer*” (*prosanatithemi*) = “to put one’s self in free communication with, to confer with, upon, to propound as a matter of consideration” (Moulton 347). Flesh and blood is in contrast to the divine instructions Paul had received. He was told to preach unto the Gentiles, and this he did rather than going to check with others (even other apostles). He needed the approval of no man because God Himself had given the instructions.
    - a. After Paul obeyed the gospel (Ananias baptized him; Acts 9:17-19), he began immediately to preach that Jesus was the Son of God in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:20-22).
    - b. The Jews did not like to hear the things Paul was preaching and so made a plot to kill him (Acts 9:23-25). Apparently the governor of Damascus had desired to capture Paul (probably because of the stir he was causing with his teaching) (II Cor. 11:32). Galatians gives us details as to Paul’s travels from Damascus. Paul traveled to Arabia (no doubt to preach the gospel and escape the snares that had been set for him in Damascus). We are not told how long Paul remained in Arabia, yet we do know that he returned to Damascus before heading back to Jerusalem.
    - c. We must keep before us the purpose of such writing to the Galatians. They had been removed from the one true faith by another, and Paul was explaining that there was no other true teaching than that of Christ. That which he preached to the Galatians was of divine origin and no other teachings could save them.
- E. “*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother*” (1:18-19).
1. Three years were spent in and around Damascus and Arabia. After these years, Paul traveled back to Jerusalem and visited Cephas (Peter) (cf. Acts 9:26ff). Note that three years had passed, and Paul had been preaching the divine gospel message without the help or aid of any other apostles in Jerusalem.
  2. Here are further pieces to the “puzzle” of the book of Acts. We often find other bits of information regarding a particular subject in other parts of God’s word. Here in Galatians 1 we find that Paul had not gone down to Jerusalem to learn the gospel but rather to “*visit Cephas*.” The word “*visit*” (*historeo*) = “to inquire about one, to narrate what one has learned” (LS 385). Apparently Paul simply wanted to get to know Peter because he was a fellow apostle of Jesus Christ. The only thing we are told in Acts of this part of Paul’s life is that he tried to join

himself to the disciples in Jerusalem and many were fearful of him because of his previous reputation of persecuting Christians (cf. Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-21).

3. These two verses infer that Paul came to Jerusalem to get to know Peter. Paul met up with Barnabas and was then introduced to the other apostles (Acts 9:27). The meeting was not for the purpose of teaching Paul but rather to confirm, in the minds of the other apostles, Paul's apostleship.
  4. James the Lord's brother was not an apostle. He is mentioned here simply as a spiritually minded individual that Paul met (cf. Acts 12:17; 15:13) (James became a pillar in the church). Clearly Jesus had earthly brothers and sister from his parents (Joseph and Mary) (cf. Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).
- F. *"Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they glorified God in me"* (1:20-24).
1. Paul affirmed that his trip to Jerusalem three years after having obeyed the gospel and preaching the forgiveness of sins through Christ was no lie. Again, he received his message from the Lord and not any man.
  2. Paul left Jerusalem due to threats against his life (Acts 9:29-30). Acts 9 reveals Paul's travels to Tarsus, and this coincides with the above mentioned trip to Syria and Cilicia. Note that Paul's work was independent of the other apostles. He did not need them to tutor him or teach him how to be an apostle and what to teach because the Lord directed him.
  3. Note the contrast between the churches (group of people) in general and the "*churches of Judaea which were in Christ.*" There are many churches today that exist but few are they that are "*in Christ.*" Those in Christ are those who have been baptized for the remission of sins (Gal. 3:27) and are thereby in fellowship with the Lord due to having their sins washed away (cf. I Jn. 2:5-6) (see study # 6; The church as God would Have It). How did Paul know that there were churches in Judea that were "*in Christ?*" The inference is clear; he made said judgment based on his knowledge of those brethren. Not only can we judge a man to be in the faith or out of the faith, (cf. I Jn. 4:10) but we can judge a church as well (cf. this passage)! (see study # 7; The Christian's Judgment [can we judge a church to be sound or unfaithful? If Paul did it than we certainly can; Phil. 4:9]).
  4. People did not know Paul at this time. The only thing they knew was that his past was not in plumb with what he was presently. Something changed in Paul. He once persecuted the way that he now represented.

## Synopsis of chapter 1

Galatians chapter one reveals the circumstances among the Galatian churches. Apparently false teachers had come to the churches of Galatia and were received by the brethren. There were two areas of damaging work that these men did. First, they had spread seeds of doubt among the Galatian brethren as to whether or not Paul was a true apostle (Gal. 1:10, 20). Secondly, they began teaching a "*perverted gospel*" that "*troubled*" (caused confusion) among the Galatian saints (Gal. 1:6-7). Paul's remedy for the situation was twofold as well. First, Paul set out to prove his apostleship due to all agreeing that the apostles represented divine revelation (Gal. 1:15ff). Secondly, Paul suggested that the brethren test any and all doctrines that were brought to them (Gal. 1:8-9).

## Chapter 2

### **Paul's Progression without the Aid of other Apostles (for date explanation look at outline of chapter 2):**

1. Saul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus (37 AD) (Acts 9:3).
2. Ananias baptized Saul into Christ in Damascus (Acts 9:18).
3. Saul began immediately to "*proclaim Jesus as the Son of God*" in the area synagogues (Acts 9:20).
4. Saul remained in the region of Damascus preaching for three years without the aid of other apostles (Gal. 1:16-18) (37 – 40 AD).
5. After three years preaching in Arabia and Damascus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem to visit Peter. While in Jerusalem, Paul met James (the Lord's brother). At no time did any apostle take Paul aside and teach him what to do and say in regards to the gospel (Gal. 1:18-20).
6. From Jerusalem, Paul traveled into Syria and Cilicia preaching the gospel (1:21-22). Apparently six years passed between Paul's first visit to Jerusalem as an apostle and the first tour of preaching.
  - a. Barnabas and Paul took funds to needy saints in Judea (Acts 11:27ff).
  - b. Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark took first tour of preaching (Acts 13:4 – 14:28) (AD 46 – 49).
  - c. Paul spent 1½ years in Antioch before traveling down to Jerusalem to participate in the Jerusalem conference.

Paul's point was that he did not receive his teachings from other men, nor did he dream it up in his own head. Paul's preaching was the content of "*revelation*" (cf. Gal. 1:11-12). The Galatian Christians were guilty of falling away from divine truth as they followed "*another or different gospel*" (Gal. 1:6-7).

### **I. Paul and the other Apostles of Jesus Christ Stood for the Same Truths (2:1-10):**

- A. "*Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me*" (2:1).
  1. It seems apparent that the fourteen years are in reference to Paul's conversion. It is generally accepted that the Jerusalem conference (the primary subject of Galatians 2) of Acts 15 occurred during the year 51 AD. This being so, Paul would have been converted in the year 37 AD. See the above time line.
  2. The purpose of Paul, Barnabas, and Titus' visit to Jerusalem is outlined in Acts 15 (The Jerusalem Conference). The similarities between Acts 15 and Galatians two cannot be ignored. They are clearly talking about the same event.
- B. "*And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preached among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain*" (2:2).
  1. At the point of fourteen years after Paul's conversion, he was at Antioch of Syria. Paul's use of the word "*up*" is in relation to elevation rather than direction. Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch of Syria (note Luke's use of elevation rather than direction at Acts 15:1-2).
  2. Paul pointed out that he did not go to Jerusalem on this occasion because he needed to be taught the gospel by the other apostles. Paul's compulsion for going to Jerusalem was "*revelation*" (i.e., "uncover; to reveal... to be set forth, announced" (Moulton 42)). The Lord announced to Paul that he must go to Jerusalem.
  3. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he "*laid before them the gospel.*" As we compare this statement with Acts 15:4-5, (read) it becomes apparent that Paul and his message was on trial. This verse helps us understand that Paul was now moving from proving that his message was independent from the other apostles (a fact that established his personal apostleship) to the fact that the message was equivalent to the other apostles i.e., he was not preaching something different than the other apostles) (see study # 1; Apostles [consistent message]). Paul presented his message (the gospel) to the entire church in Judea (cf. Acts 15:4) and then "*privately before them where were of repute.*"
    - a. Aside from the public proclamation of the gospel to the church, a private meeting was held with the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:6). The word "*repute*"

- (*dokeo*) = “to be thought or reputed so and so... men who are held to be something, men of repute” (LS 207). Paul depicted the elders and apostles in the early church as being held in high esteem and reputation (see study # 8; The Elders).
- b. Sometimes the elders of the local church must convene privately to discuss matters and make judgments. When their judgment is passed, it must be respected and followed as it represents truth. The elders, as Paul has said, are of “*repute*.”
4. Lastly, in relation to Paul laying the gospel that he had been preaching before the church in Jerusalem and privately before the elders and apostles, Paul stated, “*lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.*”
    - a. Clearly the Pharisees who believed in Jesus and had become Christians were teaching that other Christians should be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law (cf. Acts 15:5). Paul had not taught this. The question then was about Paul’s teaching. The Pharisees were clearly charging Paul with preaching a different gospel than the other apostles. Surely all can see that male children must be circumcised and taught to keep the Mosaic Law in addition to the Law of Christ (was their reasoning). If the believing Pharisees were correct regarding their assessment of Paul’s teaching, he was certainly “*running in vain*” in relation to his teaching.
    - b. The results of the Jerusalem conference should forever put to silence those who question the apostleship of Paul. The elders and other apostles convened together and make a unified decision that illustrated their unity with Paul’s teaching (cf. Acts 15:24-27). A letter was composed to illustrate their unity and sent out to all the surrounding churches (note the churches communicating with each other in truth).
    - c. The letter of unity between Paul and the other apostles was devastating to the false teachers who were claiming that Paul’s doctrine was different than the other apostles and thereby should not be adhered to. The design of the letter sent out from Jerusalem to other churches was to crush any opposition to the truth that was preached by Paul.
- C. “*But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you*” (2:3-5).
    1. Apparently, Titus was one of the “*certain others of them*” mentioned in Acts 15:2 that accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.
    2. Acts 15:2, 5 reveal that the believing Pharisees had “*compelled*” (Gal. 2:3) men like Titus to be circumcised in order to be saved from their sins (this was an addition to the gospel of Christ). To “*compel*” (*anagkazo*) = “to force, compel... to be forced to do a thing... to constrain by argument” (LS 53). The issue of circumcision was a hot issue in Paul’s day. The line of fellowship was drawn in the case of a liberty.
    3. Note that the believing Pharisees (Christians) were termed “*false brethren.*” What made these men “*false*?” Was it the “way” they went about teaching or was it their teaching? Clearly that which made the Pharisees false brethren was the syncretistic doctrine they were teaching (see study # 9; Who is a False Teacher?).
    4. These false brethren brought in a false doctrine among the brethren in a “*privily*” manner. The words “*privily brought in, who came in privily*” = (*pareisaktos pareiserchomai*). The word “*pareisaktos*” = “clandestinely introduced, brought in stealthily” (Moulton 307). The word “*pareiserchomai*” = “to steal in” (Moulton 307). “To come or go in beside or secretly” (LS 606). Here are the facts:
      - a. False brethren brought in a false doctrine regarding circumcision being necessary for salvation.
      - b. These were men who “*believed*” (Acts 15:5).
      - c. So convinced were these men that circumcision was necessary for salvation that they turned to stealth and secrecy to introduce their ideas. Note again that it is the doctrine preached that determines whether one is “*false.*” Secondly, note, too, that it is the false doctrine preached that defines a man’s character. These men introduced what they

believed was truth and said introduction is termed “clandestine and secretive.” When Paul introduced the gospel message to the Galatians, it was termed “*revelation*.” What made one not only an unacceptable doctrine but an illegal way of introduction to men and the other not? Clearly it was that one message was of divine origin and the other not! (see II Cor. 4:1-2). The message is under consideration not one’s character (see study # 10; The False Teacher’s Character).

5. Note that what these false brethren were doing when they introduced another doctrine (different doctrine) was to “*spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus*.” To “*spy out*” (*kataskopeo*) = “to view closely” (LS 415). “To view closely and accurately; to spy out” (Moulton 220). “to spy out, lie in wait for” (AG 418). Though the believing Pharisees would not consider their work to be “stealth” and “secretive,” Paul exposed it as such because what they were truly doing was looking closely at the Christian’s liberty and taking it away. Where there is no liberty, there is “*bondage*.” At Acts 15:10, Peter said of the matter, “*Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*” Consider Galatians 5:1ff for the understanding of bondage in this context.
  6. Note that since the believing Pharisees were compelling Titus to be circumcised in relation to their false teaching, Paul could not give into this not even for an “*hour*” (*hora*). The word “*hora*” = “any time or period, whether of the year, month, or day... the times of day, i.e., morning, noon, evening, night” (LS 906). If Paul and Titus gave into these false teachers request at any point of time they would have compromised the truth! Clearly there is a time to stand and a time to give in to others scruples (I Cor. 8:13). When one is teaching his scruples as though they are binding commands of God, we must not give in, no not for one moment (see study # 11; Making a Distinction Between Matters of the Faith and Liberties).
  7. Note that if Paul would have been compelled to allow Titus to be circumcised, then the “*truth of the gospel*” could not have continued with them because he taught the very opposite.
  8. Here is an interesting fact about the truth, i.e., it is not to be changed to fit one’s ideas. If Paul would have allowed Titus to be circumcised to appease the minds of the believing Pharisees, where would truth stand? Truth would therefore be liable to change at any and every man’s opinions (see study # 12; The Nature of Truth).
- D. “*But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepts not man’s person) – they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me:*” (2:6).
1. Now Paul clearly stated that his message was independent from the other apostles and James.
  2. Apparently some of the false brethren were discounting Paul’s apostleship because he did not have a past relationship with Jesus as did the other apostles and even James the Lord’s brother.
  3. Paul’s point was that it doesn’t matter what men were in their past, what matters is the now. Paul was presently preaching a message that was equivalent to the other apostles because it had a common origin (i.e., divine revelation). Those of “*repute*” did not impart any teachings to Paul. Truth is not determined by how well-known and accepted a preacher is, truth is known by reading divine revelation. Brethren would do well to learn the lessons of this verse. Let us not be moved by a “popular” preacher but rather test all things that every teacher would say (I Jn. 4:1, 6) (see study # 12; The Nature of Truth).
- E. “*But contrariwise, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles)*” (2:7-8).
1. A contrast is given between a supposed theory that the apostles were teaching Paul what to preach and the truth; these same apostles discovered that the source of Paul’s message was divine and thereby in unity with their message of truth.
  2. The only difference between Paul and the other apostles was their audience. Paul was commissioned to speak primarily to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21) and the other apostles to the Jews.

3. Though Paul's message was directed primarily at the Gentiles, we know that he did preach to the Jews (Acts 18:5-6). Likewise, Peter did preach to Gentiles (cf. Acts 10:1ff).
  4. The word "*wrought*" (*energeo*) = to be in action, to operate" (LS 261). Paul's "operation" as an apostle was to the un-circumcision and the others to the circumcision, and this arrangement was a sovereign decision of God.
- F. "*And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do*" (Gal. 2:9-10).
1. When those of "*repute*" or "*pillars*" (*stulos*) ["a pillar, column, used of persons of authority, influence, etc., a support or pillar of the church" (Moulton 378)] perceived that Paul's message was in unison with theirs, they gave him the right hand of fellowship.
  2. To "*perceive*" (*ginosko*) = "to learn or know, to perceive, mark, learn... to observe, to form a judgment on a matter, to judge or think so and so" (LS 165). When the pillars of the church in Jerusalem (elders and apostles) learned that Paul preached the same truth that they did ("*the grace that was given unto me*" [Paul]), they "*gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.*" Note that the right hand of fellowship was not given until they had heard what Paul was preaching (see study # 3; Test the Spirits).
    - a. The words "*right hand*" (*dexios*) = "used in welcoming... to salute by offering the right hand... the right hand given as a pledge or assurance... having exchanged assurances, made a treaty..." (LS 179). This right hand extended for the purpose of a pledge or agreement was in the area of "*fellowship*" (sharing). What were the pillars of the church in Jerusalem in agreement or sharing with Paul and Barnabas? The subject matter of the entire context is the truth versus a man-introduced doctrine of circumcision and keeping the Mosaic Law. When two share Bible fellowship, they share a mutual understanding of truth. They share the same purpose in this life; i.e., to receive eternal salvation through Jesus Christ (see study # 13; Bible Fellowship).
    - b. The pillars of the church in Jerusalem understood that truth was what Paul represented, and Paul understood that this was what they represented. There was another understanding as to the primary subjects that each was to work for the common goal of helping them come to a knowledge of truth and share in fellowship. Paul and Barnabas were to go to the Gentiles, and the others to the Jews. The result of the Jerusalem conference was devastating to the false brethren who were saying that Paul was not a true apostle and that he was not preaching the same truth that the other apostles were.
    - c. The only request that the pillars of the church had for Paul and Barnabas was that "*we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.*" The poor in this context could stand for both those in the world and those in the church; however, it seems that with the events of Acts 11 not too far in the past, that Christians were intended here. Paul had no problem with this part of their agreement because he always sought to so do for those who were less fortunate than others. No doubt such a charge was in Paul's mind as he was to later collect funds for the needy saints in Judea from Gentile churches (cf. Rom. 15:25ff).

## II. Paul's Conflict with Peter (2:11-21):

- A. "*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned*" (2:11).
1. Up to this point, Paul has labored in the epistle to the Galatians to prove that he was an apostle and that his message was of a divine origin. Paul brought another argument to the table (so to say) to prove that he was an apostle to the Galatians and that his message was worthy of being viewed as having a divine source. He reviewed a time when he rebuked Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and thereby was placed on an equal plain with Peter.
  2. Sometime after the Jerusalem conference and Paul's second tour of preaching, Peter came to Antioch. When Peter was found to be in sin, Paul "*resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.*"

- a. To “*resist*” (*anthistemi*) another is to “to set against, to set up in opposition... to stand against, esp. in battle, to withstand, oppose... to make a stand” (LS 70-71). Paul took a stand and opposed Peter because he stood “*condemned*” (*kataginosko*). The word *kataginosko* = “to lay as a charge against a person... condemned... to charge oneself with wrong-doing... to give as judgment or sentence against a person... to pass sentence of death on one” (LS 404). Paul made a judgment against Peter charging him with sin. Such a state of the soul demanded that Paul take a stand against Peter and oppose him (see study # 7; The Christian’s Judgment).
  - b. Note that the confrontation happened “*face to face*.” Paul loved Peter enough to say something to him (more on this below). Too many today see a brother in sin and do nothing but talk to others about the brother’s sin instead of helping him out of it. Here we find authority to keep watch over our brother’s soul (see study # 14; Watch and Warn).
- B. “*For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision*” (2:12).
1. Paul now explained why Peter stood condemned. Apparently Jews from the church in Judea where James was located had come up to Antioch and begun preaching the same error of Acts 15. There are a couple of possibilities here. These brethren could have been some that were withdrawn from by the Jerusalem church. These brethren could have had the backing of James in their unlawful work. These brethren were simply from the same area as James. The wording, “*came from James*” appears upon first reading to mean that James sent these false brethren with a mission to change the decrees at the Jerusalem conference. This seems highly unlikely. It seems more likely that these men left the church in Jerusalem, where James was an elder, due to their doctrines not being tolerated.
  2. Peter had learned the lesson regarding the standing of the Gentiles in Acts 10, and at Acts 11:3 we find him eating with the Gentiles. At Acts 15:7ff we find Peter making a strong speech regarding the acceptance of Gentiles by the Lord. Now, we find Peter “*drawing back and separating*” himself from these same Gentiles. To “*drew back*” (*hupostello*) = “to draw back for shelter... to withdraw... to cloak a thing through fear... to dissemble” (LS 847). As Peter recognized that eating with the Gentiles was not a popular thing to do, he “drew back for shelter” rather than standing his ground. He did not practice what he preached (see study # 15; Practice What You Preach).
  3. Peter’s reason was that he feared the Jews; however, we see that whatever the Jews were doing to cause Peter fear was not enough to justify his sinful conduct (see study # 16; Situational Ethics).
- C. “*And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation*” (2:13).
1. The power of influence is depicted in this verse (see study # 17; Influence). The Jews and Barnabas were guilty of “*dissimulation*” (*hupokrisis*) = “the playing a part on the stage, the actor’s art... an orator’s delivery, declamation... metaph. The playing a part, hypocrisy” (LS 844). They were hypocritical in this situation because they knew the truth yet did not practice it. They played like the Jews who taught circumcision were correct when they knew they were wrong (see study # 18; Finding Strength to take a Stand).
  2. Christians today can be guilty of the same thing. We may find ourselves in conversations with others and the popular consensus over a religious topic may be reached that is erroneous. Rather than exposing the error we go along with it due to fear of losing ground at the workplace.
- D. “*But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*” (2:14).
1. Paul’s conduct is contrasted with the dissimulating Jews, Barnabas, and Peter. These men were carried away in fear of the false teachers whereas Paul faced all in boldness.
  2. When Peter, Barnabas, and the Jews’ conduct was laid aside the “*truth of the gospel*,” their character was found faulty (i.e., “*walked not uprightly*”).

3. Note that due to their faulty conduct Paul addressed Peter *“before them all.”* Apparently Paul received news of the dissimulation and confronted the issue with the guilty before an open audience. Above we spoke of Paul addressing Peter face to face rather than talking behind his back about the issue. Here he exposed Peter in the hearing of all. We have those in the church that do not like to hear the sins of others exposed, yet here is an example of it happening. Many today erroneously opine Matthew 18:15ff on said occasion. These brethren don’t want to hear about the sins of others but rather believe that if a brother is in sin you ought to go to that person and reveal his sin. Such thinking is in error and does not take into consideration the text of Matthew 18 nor Galatians 2. Matthew 18 is speaking about a brother who has sinned against you personally. Galatians 2 is talking about Peter’s public sin against the Lord. Peter did not sin against Paul personally. Peter was in sin and Paul, being a lover of souls, exposed Peter’s error before all present. No doubt this was a time of shame for Peter. He had, therefore, two recourses. One, Peter could have gotten mad at Paul for embarrassing him in front of all his peers. Two, Peter could with a spirit of humility admit that Paul was right and ask the Lord to forgive him. Apparently Peter did the second and appreciated Paul for exposing his hypocrisy (consider II Pet. 3:15). The lesson that we should learn is that when a sin is committed in the public’s eye it should be rebuked in the public’s eye!
4. Paul’s admonition of Peter:
  - a. *“If you, being a Jew, live as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”*
  - b. Paul established the point that Peter had certainly been living as a Gentile in respect to keeping the Mosaic Law. The Jewish Christians who held to the Mosaic Law continued in the Law of Christ and the Mosaic Law demanding the same on all else. Paul’s question to Peter was, “How can you go on living like a Gentile, though you’re a Jew, and at the same time compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Peter, you’re setting a double standard here.”
- E. *“We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (2:15-16).*
  1. Those born Jews (as opposed to those who are inward Jews by faith; cf. Rom. 2:28-29) considered themselves different than the *“sinners”* (a derogatory term for all Gentiles) (cf. Jesus’ use of the same word in Matt. 26:45; Mk. 2:15). The sinners were seen as separated from God and seeking a life that was opposed to the will of God and thereby they were unclean people.
  2. Paul’s point was that even the Jew (one born into a covenant relationship with God) cannot be justified (acquitted of sin) by keeping the Law of Moses. That the *“we”* (i.e., Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and all believing Jews) *“believed on Christ”* illustrated that the Jew was in the same boat as the Gentile (out of fellowship with God until they put their faith in Christ).
  3. The fact of the matter is that no man can be justified by keeping law aside from the Law of Christ. To seek justification outside of Christ’s law is to meet with failure. Christ is the only one who offers justification of sins through our faithful obedience to His Law. The Christian is one that lives a life of faith as did Abraham (Gal. 3:6). During that life of faith we make mistakes as did Abraham. Through the Law of Christ, the Lord provides a remedy to our sin. When one is in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27) the Lord hears our prayers (Jn. 9:31) as we repent asking God to forgive us of our wrongs (I Jn. 1:9).
- F. *“But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid.” (2:17).*
  1. This verse continues the argument with Peter (Paul’s public rebuke to him). Paul stated that *“we”* (Jew and Gentile) are justified by faith in Christ as opposed to the Mosaic Law (2:16). The instructions of Christ are that we are so justified (cf. Peter’s discussion with the Lord concerning Cornelius at Acts 10:20; 11:1ff).
  2. Paul’s point in verse 17 was that if Christ had so instructed man (i.e., man is justified in Christ and not the Mosaic Law) yet when the man followed these instructions he was considered in

- sin, then certainly Christ would be a “*minister of sin.*” Such a case would reveal Jesus’ instructions to cause man to sin when followed.
3. The entire thought is absurd, yet this is what Peter was treating Christ as (i.e., one who was a minister of sin because He taught differently than what Peter was practicing, yet Peter was acting as though the one’s who followed Christ instructions regarding the Gentiles as though they were in sin).
- G. “*For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor*” (2:18).
1. Peter had destroyed the idea of justification through the Mosaic Law system and his Jewish view of Gentiles being without hope. This occurred through the instructions of Christ to Peter as an apostle (i.e., divine revelation) (Acts 10).
  2. When Peter succumbed to fear by the Jews and withdrew from the Gentiles acting as though they (Gentile Christians) were unclean simply because they had not been circumcised nor kept the Mosaic Law, Peter was building again those things that went beyond the teachings of Jesus.
  3. The word “*transgressor*” is thereby important in this verse. To “*transgress*” (*parabates*) = “to step by the side of; to deviate... violate law” (Moulton 300). “One who stands beside: properly the warrior who stood beside the charioteer... light troops who ran beside the horsemen... a transgressor” (LS 594). One who runs alongside the doctrine of Christ is not with Christ and His teachings but is rather standing beside it. Such a one follows the standard yet deviates from it in some areas.
- H. “*For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God*” (2:19).
1. Jeremiah had foretold of a new law that would abrogate the Mosaic Law in Jer. 31:31ff. The author of Hebrews quoted from Jeremiah in Hebrews 8:7ff to illustrate that man cannot be forgiven of any sin through the Mosaic Law (in this way the Law was “*faulty*” and “*weak and unprofitable*” cf. Heb. 7:18; 8:7).
  2. The law of Christ demands that man be set free from the Law of Moses (i.e., die to the law) because through the Mosaic Law no man can receive justification (see previous verses).
- I. “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me*” (2:20).
1. How was Paul “*crucified with Christ?*” Paul was crucified with Christ in the same manner that all Christians today are crucified with Him. Paul wrote to the Romans concerning their baptism saying, “*knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin*” (Rom. 6:6). It is the purpose of sin that is opposed to the purpose of right living dictated by the teachings of Christ that are under consideration. I purpose to kill that old man of sin and live unto Christ when I repent of my sins and am baptized for the remission of those same sins (see study # 19; Crucify the Desires of the Flesh).
  2. Christ lived in Paul because he lived a life of faith. “*The faith*” was the teachings of Jesus Christ. When I obey those teachings and commands and follow the Lord’s example, I have Christ living within (i.e., I am in fellowship with Christ through the forgiveness of sins). I am in a state of justification and I can go on living in such a state as long as I repent and ask the Lord to forgive me of my sins as I commit them (cf. I Jn. 1:8-10; 2:5-6; 5:20).
  3. The “*Son of God*” is Jesus and the phrase indicates His deity (cf. Jn. 5:18). God (the Son) loved Paul and gave himself up for all. The love of God is mentioned in I Jn. 4:8ff.
- J. “*I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought*” (2:21).
1. The author of Hebrews told us that if forgiveness of sins (salvation) could occur through the Mosaic sacrificial system of the Law then this way of life would have never ended (Heb. 10:1-4).
  2. Paul reminded Peter that if justification of sins could be obtained through Mosaic Law, then Christ really “*died for nought.*” Seeing that this is not the case, Paul was certainly not making “*void the grace of God.*” Note the close association of the grace of God with the teachings of

Christ in the context of these verses. By God's unmerited favor He delivered a divine law (the Law of Christ) that man may adhere to and receive eternal salvation (cf. Titus 2:11-12).

3. This verse ends the conversation with Peter.

### **Thoughts on Galatians 1 and 2**

Galatians chapters one and two reveal that the apostle Paul's apostleship and teachings were on trial. Paul's argument regarding the validity of his apostleship seems to conclude at the end of chapter two. He effectively argued that the things he taught the Galatians, while in Galatia, represented divine revelation as opposed to his own ideas (Gal. 1:11-12). This being so, Paul was surprised to hear that the Galatian brethren had so quickly removed themselves from such teachings (Gal. 1:6). Apparently there were false teachers that were telling the Galatians and others that Paul did not represent the truth. Secondly, they were saying that Paul's message was different than the other apostles. Paul answered both of these criticisms saying that the message he received was the same that the other apostles were given. Paul brought up the occasion of the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) to prove his case. The apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church gave Paul the right hand of fellowship after hearing him present the message he preached (Gal. 2:2, 9). This fellowship indicated that their messages were equally divine and of the same origin. Another way that Paul illustrated his equality with the other apostles was that he rebuked Peter, a fellow apostle, for committing sin. Only those who stand on equal ground may rebuke each other. Paul concluded the matter by reiterating to the Galatians that justification of sins can be obtained through faith in Christ alone (Gal. 2:16).

## Chapter 3

### I.

- A. *“O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?”*
1. Paul now turned his attention back to the Galatians and addressed them personally.
  2. The address to the Galatians is as to *“foolish”* ones. The word *“foolish”* (*anoetos*) = “not within the province of thought, unintelligent... not understanding” (LS 73). Secondly, Paul stated that they had been *“bewitched”* (*baskaino*) = “to slander, malign, belie... to bewitch, by means of spells” (LS 148). “To delude” (Moulton 67). “To place under one’s power by or as if by magic; cast a spell over... to captivate completely; fascinate” (AHD 175). These definitions point to the false teachers doctrines that were being spread and believed. They were clearly denying Paul’s apostleship, saying that Paul taught a different gospel than the other apostles, and were teaching that Christians should obey the Mosaic Law and be circumcised. Obviously some of the Galatians had taken these concepts “hook, line, and sinker” (see study # 2; The Effects of False Teaching).
  3. How was *“Jesus Christ openly set forth* (as being *crucified”* before the eyes of the Galatians? Note that the words *“openly set forth”* (*prographo*) = “to give public notice of anything... to summon by public notice... to be set forth publicly” (LS 673). Jesus was openly set forth as being crucified for the remission of man’s sins and the hope of eternal salvation by public preaching (cf. Acts 13:23ff; I Cor. 2:1-2). The Galatians had accepted this message yet now had been turned away from Christ through keeping the Mosaic Law.
- B. *“This only would I learn from you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* (3:2).
1. Paul had one question for the Galatians who had left off following the gospel message and began following a syncretized mixture of gospel/Mosaic Law doctrines. Paul asked, *“received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* The reception of the Holy Spirit could not have been by both ways (a unity in diversity approach to salvation).
  2. The form of this question suggests that the one who has *“received”* the Holy Spirit is the one who has been justified (i.e., one subject to eternal salvation through the forgiveness of sins). Paul’s entire discussion with the Galatians had to do with their soul’s final abode. The word *“receive”* (*lambano*) = “to have given one, to get, gain, win... to receive in marriage... to receive as produce or profit... to take a cold... to take hold of, lay hold on” (LS 463-464). So, Paul asked the Galatians if they had received (laid hold of) the Holy Spirit by performing perfect law keeping (Mosaic Law) or by *“the hearing of faith?”* The receiving of the Holy Spirit can thereby come of only one of these means (i.e., Mosaic Law keeping or the hearing of faith). The NT reveals that the Holy Spirit comes to one by the hearing of faith (gospel message) (see study # 20; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit):
    - a. When one hears the gospel (hearing of faith) and follows its instructions he is said to be *“walking in the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:16) and being *“led by the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:18).
    - b. Note that faith in Jesus comes of hearing the word of God (the gospel message) (Rom. 10:17). The apostle John states, *“Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God:”* (I Jn. 5:1). How do I believe without the gospel message? The gospel message that causes one to be begotten of God is the word of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). One is produced a Christian (begotten of God) by the Spirit’s word so that in a sense, the Christian is one *“born of the Spirit”* (cf. I Cor. 12:13).
    - c. Note that it is the Spirit’s work to reveal the gospel to man (Jn. 16:13). When one receives this gospel he has in effect received the Spirit (the Spirit’s teaching which comes from the Father and Son).
    - d. All of these facts point toward fellowship with the Holy Spirit. When one obeys the gospel, he comes into fellowship with the Father and Son through having his sins remitted. If one is in fellowship with the Father and Son through the message delivered by the Holy Spirit, he is in fellowship with the Holy Spirit as well as the Father and the Son.

- e. To receive the Holy Spirit is to have His indwelling (Rom. 8:9-11; II Tim. 1:13-14). Note that the Holy Spirit is part of the godhead and is therefore God (cf. Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 12:28 compared to Lk. 11:20). The apostle John said, “*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God*” (I Jn. 4:15). Note that the only way that one can make such an affirmation is through the Holy Spirit delivered Word of God. Paul said, “*no man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit*” (I Cor. 12:3).
  - f. The thought is now clear: to receive the Spirit is to have accepted the teachings of Jesus Christ and to be in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Such an event could only happen by the hearing of faith (the gospel that explains the process).
  - g. The Galatians had done this and were abiding in the teachings of Christ, yet when the false teachers came along, they received their teachings as though they were divine and thereby ruined their fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
- C. “*Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?*” (3:3).
- 1. A contrast is made between “*Spirit*” and “*flesh*” in relation to the method one is “*perfected*.”
  - 2. The idea of being “*perfected*” is the idea of receiving the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God (cf. Heb. 7:11, 18, 19; 10:1-2).
  - 3. The scriptures promise the forgiveness of sins through the instructions of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38). The false teachers that were addressed at the Jerusalem conferences had conjured up a new plan for man’s redemption (i.e., obey Law of Moses and be circumcised in addition to keeping Law of Christ; cf. Acts 15). Such human reason is considered “*flesh*” (cf. Matt. 16:17).
  - 4. Paul explained to the Galatians that they were “*foolish*” (without understanding) because they stopped following instructions that saved to follow fleshly ideas that condemned.
  - 5. Interestingly, the contrast of flesh and spirit begins here at chapter 3. Paul was explaining to the Galatians that there is a way to walk in Christ (by the Spirit) as opposed to walking after the flesh (doing things as one supposes to be right to do). This idea is further developed in chapter 5 when we shall examine the works of the flesh as opposed to the fruit of the Spirit.
- D. “*Did ye suffer so many things in vain? If it be indeed in vain*” (3:4).
- 1. Apparently the Galatians were suffering the same persecutions that Paul underwent when preaching in the cities of Galatia (II Tim. 3:11) (cf. Antioch [Acts 13:50]; Iconium [Acts 14:2, 5]; and Lystra [Acts 14:19]) (see study # 21; The Christian’s Lot to Suffer).
  - 2. Consider Jesus’ statement on the Sermon on the Mount considering suffering (Matt. 5:10-12). The Galatians had gone through these sufferings at one point for nothing because that which they once stood for has been cast off.
- E. “*He therefore that supplies to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” (3:5).
- 1. The question of verse two is resumed. The Galatians had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith and thereby received the remission of their sins. Due to their acceptance of the truth they were persecuted.
  - 2. A third issue is the working of miracles in their sight that confirmed the word to them (Acts 14:8-11 / Mark 16:20). Those who taught the Galatians a syncretistic gospel message brought no powerful miracles yet Paul brought faith confirming miracles with his message.
- II. Paul turned to the Faith of Abraham to Convict the Galatians of their Error (3:6-9):**
- A. “*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness*” (3:6).
- 1. The word “*even*” connects this thought with the preceding thoughts. The Galatians were justified of their sins through the instructions of the Holy Spirit, and the message they heard was confirmed as truth by miracles. Unfortunately, there were Judaizing teachers who were convincing the Galatians that they needed to keep the Mosaic Law and be circumcised in order to be saved (cf. Acts 15:5). These teachers were so persuasive (in addition to their persecutions) that many of the Galatians were falling away. Many of the Jews considered their relationship to Abraham a medium by which they would be saved (cf. Matt. 3:9). Paul turned to this issue to illustrate that not even Abraham was justified by law keeping.
  - 2. The passage above is a quote from Genesis 15:6. At this point in the life of Abraham, he had not received the covenant of circumcision (Gen. 17) yet Moses recorded that Abraham was

justified. Note, too, that Abraham was justified far before the Mosaic Law came into existence. How was Abraham justified? He was justified by faithful obedience to Jehovah God's commands. That's not to say that he did not sin from time to time, because he did. The point Paul was making was that Abraham continued to give efforts to obey God (cf. James 2:23ff; Heb. 5:9).

3. Note that Abraham's faith was put to his account for (*eis*) righteousness. The same Greek word is used in Acts 2:38 and Matthew 26:26 regarding repentance and baptism for the purpose of the remission of sins. What these things tell us is that God is looking for our obedience (cf. Jn. 3:36).

**B.** *"Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham"* (3:7).

1. It was not being a natural descendant of Abraham that gave one justification, but rather having the faith of Abraham (cf. Jn. 8:38-40).
2. *"They that are of faith"* are those who heard, believed, confessed Christ, repented, and were baptized for the remission of their sins because the Holy Spirit revealed this to them. Said individuals are seeking to be justified in the same manner that Abraham was justified as opposed to the Judaizing teachers.
3. To be justified by faith is to be a *"son of Abraham"* i.e., one who has what Abraham has in the same manner that Abraham had it (justification by obedient faith).

**C.** *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed"* (3:8).

1. God has always revealed the method of man's justification as indicated as early as Genesis 12:1ff. The good news of salvation was preached to Abraham on that occasion. Note that both Jew and Gentile have always had the hope of eternal salvation when they are justified by the method Abraham was justified.
2. Here we see an important concept brought out in relation to our salvation. Man is not saved by keeping the Mosaic Law, but rather he is saved when he lives as did Abraham (this is why Paul can say that the gospel message of salvation was preached way back in Gen. 12).
3. The omnipotence of God is illustrated here in that He (the author of "scriptures") foreknew (known in advance) that both Jew and Gentile would be justified by faith (a life of obedience) (see study # 22; The Omnipotence of God).

**D.** *"So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham"* (3:9).

1. Here is a great lesson on what it means to be *"blessed"* by God.
2. Those who share the same *"faith"* of Abraham (justified by faith) are *"blessed"* (Rom. 3:28 – 4). To be justified is to be acquitted of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 5:1-2).
3. Clearly to be blessed of God is to be a recipient of His promises (cf. Acts 2:39).
4. Note that Sarah was *"blessed"* when she received the son of promise (cf. Gen. 17:16).

**III. A Contrast of Law and Faith (3:10-14):**

**A.** *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them"* (3:10).

1. Paul revealed the end of the Galatians' present course who had allowed the persuasive words and persecution of the Judaizers to turn them away from truth.
2. One who seeks to be justified by Mosaic Law is *"under a curse."* Nothing good can come of one who would try to be justified by perfect law keeping because there will inevitably be a time in which the follower will make a mistake (Rom. 3:23). When the mistake is made, he has lost out on justification and has no more hope of obtaining it (i.e., cursed). How do we know this? Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26. Herein was the *"weakness and un-profitableness of the law"* (cf. Heb. 7:18).
3. At this point of our study we have not been introduced to the specific syncretistic teaching brought by the Judaizing Christians; however, we have been given strong hints. The Galatians had been persuaded to follow a different gospel and in a deluded state they followed it (cf. Gal. 1:6, 3:1). This different gospel clearly had something to do with following the Mosaic Law. Obedience to Mosaic Law will save no one. Obedience to Law of Christ (i.e., living by the faith of Abraham) will provide justification.

4. The continued theme is that the Christian conduct himself according to divine revelation (Spirit) as opposed to the flesh.
- B. *“Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, the righteous shall live by faith”* (3:11).
1. The scriptures teach that man is justified by an obedient faith (Gen. 15:6). The Law of Moses actually places any and every individual under a curse who do not obey it perfectly (Deut. 27:26). The prophet Habakkuk stated, *“the righteous shall live by faith”* (Hab. 2:4).
  2. The evidence to the honest Jew is overwhelming. The sacred OT scriptures tell them that all were under a curse because they could not keep the law perfectly. Said individuals were not without hope, however, because the faithful ones understood that true justification came by living as did Abraham and longing to see the seed promise fulfilled.
  3. Note that Paul equated *“justification”* with *“righteousness”* and then in Romans 4:1-12 stated that all those who walk as did Abraham are identified as justified and righteous!
  4. Some may be struggling at this point due to the fact that the Mosaic Law demanded perfect law keeping or else be cursed (Deut. 27:26), whereas the faithful life of Abraham illustrated a life of obedience as well. The Calvinist would say that two cannot be saying the same thing. Where our once-saved always-saved (or the imputation of righteousness) friends are lacking understanding is in the area of justification as opposed to legalistic efforts. To be justified is not to live perfectly and never sin but to be an individual who seeks justification through faith in the forgiving blood of Jesus Christ. When the Christian sins, he can obtain forgiveness for those sins (cf. I Jn. 1:8-9). When the legalist sins there is no remission... only a curse. The Christian is therefore one who keeps law to the best of his abilities, and when he falls, Jesus rescues him from the state of sin (Heb. 2:18) through the sinner’s humble confession and repentance of sins (cf. Acts 8:22).
- C. *“And the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them”* (3:12).
1. The Law of Moses is in contrast to the law of faith. To seek one’s justification through law is to attempt to live perfectly. To be justified through belief in Christ is to have one’s sins forgiven through obedience.
  2. The law *“is not of faith”* because it gives no remedies for sin. Apparently the OT worthies understood this at some degree and thereby had hope (cf. I Pet. 1:10).
  3. If the Galatians were going to be persuaded to keep one part of the law, they were obligated to keep the whole law. When they failed at any point of the Mosaic Law, there would be no remedy for that sin. They were left in a state of hopelessness.
- D. *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”* (3:13).
1. The word *“redeemed”* (*exagorazo*) = “to buy up” (LS 268). “To buy out of the hands of a person; to redeem, set free” (Moulton 143). “To recover ownership of by paying a specified sum. To pay off, as a promissory note. To set free; rescue or ransom (the release of a person or property in return for payment of a demanded price)” (AHD 1027). The word redemption simply means that one has purchased another’s freedom and thereby has rescued, saved, or set the individual free from the state of bondage that he was in (see study # 23; Bible Redemption).
  2. Again, let us remember what the curse of the law is: Anyone who did not keep the law perfectly was cursed because there was no remedy for the sin committed (cf. Deut. 27:26). The guilty one was often *“hung on a tree”* and killed for a penalty of breaking the law. They died without mercy (cf. Heb. 10:28).
  3. Paul now told us how Christ redeemed mankind from the curse of the law. Jesus *“became a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.”* The idea of Jesus’ becoming a curse *“for”* (*huper*) us is important to note. The word *huper* = “in behalf of” (Moulton 414). The idea is that instead of man being cursed, Jesus was cursed in our behalf. He took upon Himself the curse that was due sinful man.
  4. Consider the OT passage that Paul quoted from: *“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of*

*God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance”* (Deut. 21:22-23).

5. The foolish Galatians needed to see that there was no justification to be had in following a syncretistic doctrine that mixed the Mosaic Law with the Law of Christ. The Law of Moses served its purpose; however, it must be put behind the Christian rather than adhered to.

### **Facts Regarding Man’s Redemption:**

1. Law has always existed, and therefore, so has sin. When Adam sinned, it was because he had violated God’s law (cf. Gen. 2:15-16; Rom. 5:12).
2. When one violates law, he is guilty and due punishment and is thereby “*curse*” (Deut. 27:26; Rom. 2:13; Gal. 3:10). The word “*curse*” (*katara*) = “doomed.” The idea of being cursed is that the guilty individual no longer has a hope of salvation. The law offered no remedy for sins only penalty to the violator (cf. Deut. 21:22-23; Heb. 7:18-19).
3. It is evident that no person could ever live and never violate any portion of the Mosaic Law (at some point all would stumble) (cf. Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:11-12). From this standpoint, man was held in bondage to the law they were under (cf. Rom. 7:1; Gal. 3:23). Sin and Law go hand in hand (cf. Rom. 4:15; 5:13; I Cor. 15:56; I Jn. 3:4). The one who seeks justification strictly through Mosaic law keeping is doomed because no forgiveness is offered in said case.
4. Jesus, however, never one time sinned. He lived a perfect sinless life (cf. Heb. 4:15).
5. God formulated a plan, by His sovereign will, to provide justification of man’s sins through the seed of Abraham (i.e., Jesus) (Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:8, 16).
6. The penalty of sin (violation of law) is death and a hanging upon a tree to indicate that said one is “*accursed of God*” (Deut. 21:22-23).
7. Jesus redeemed mankind from the curse of the law (i.e., violator is guilty and subject to shameful death on a tree) by going to the tree Himself on our behalf (i.e., “*for us*” Gal. 3:13). The idea of “*redemption*” is to rescue or set one free by paying a ransom. The redemptive price Jesus paid was His own life (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:20; Heb. 7:27).
8. The scriptures reveal that Jesus was innocent of all sins, yet he bore our sins to the cross (cf. I Cor. 5:7). He was a vicarious sacrifice (one who stands in the place of another; Isa. 53:5-8). The Lord bore our iniquities at the cross (cf. Isa. 53:11). To bear another’s burden is to shoulder the punishment that is due them (cf. Gen. 4:13; 49:15; Lam. 5:7; I Tim. 2:4-6).
9. The author of Hebrews stated, “*And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation*” (Heb. 9:27-28). The author of Hebrew told us why Christ blood was spilled; “*to bear the sins of many.*” The word “*bear*” (*anaphero*) = “to bring or carry up... to uphold, take upon one... to offer, contribute, to offer in sacrifice” (LS 64). “to bear or carry upwards, lead up... to offer sacrifices... to bear aloft or sustain a burden, as sins cf. I Pet. 2:24” (Moulton 26). “To lay or impose a burden on someone, give something to someone to bear, as a rule, in fact, to someone who is not obligated to bear it... In a case in which a man takes upon himself the burden that another should have borne... he himself brought our sins in his body to the cross I Pet. 2:24” (AG 63). Isaiah said, “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities*” (53:11) (see appendix # 37). Jesus paid the price for man’s redemption by carrying the consequence of the world’s sin to the cross. Jesus thereby paid the price for the release of our guilt (justification) by bearing our load of sin to the cross. This is not saying that Jesus became the world’s sins in that he became guilty of murder, homosexuality, adultery and all the other sinful things that man has done. The author of Hebrews was simply saying that he bore the burden of those sins to the cross. The burden of sin is death, and so Jesus gave Himself as a sacrifice in our place.
10. Note that the entire subject of Christ redeeming man from the curse of the law is that sin separates man from the Lord and causes him to be spiritually dead (Isa. 59:1-2; I Jn. 1:5-7). The redemption of man from the curse of the law thereby is the offering of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with Jehovah God. Man does not receive the forgiveness of sins by more law keeping (Rom. 4:14).

11. The death of Christ provides the forgiveness of man's sins (He did this willingly because He graciously loves His created beings and wants to provide for them the forgiveness of sins) (cf. Eph. 2:1ff).
12. How then does I take advantage of Christ's redemptive work? To receive the forgiveness of sins, I must **hear** the gospel message of Jesus being crucified on the cross for the redemption of mankind (Rom. 10:17). When I **believe** the message, I hear I need to do all that I can to obtain the Lord's gracious offer of salvation (Acts 17:30). I am to **confess** that Jesus is Lord (my redeemer) (Rom. 10:8ff). Seeing that it is sin that separates me from God and the very thing that I seek forgiveness of, it behooves every aspiring Christian to **repent** of sins committed (cf. Lk. 13:3). When I have heard, believed, confessed Christ as the true redeemer, and repented of sins, I certainly want to have the forgiveness of my sins. The word of God teaches that in order to receive the forgiveness of my sins, I need to be **baptized** for the remission of those sins (Acts 2:38). Lastly, I need to **live faithfully** to the Lord from here on out (cf. Titus 3:8). When I sin again, the redemptive blood of Christ is there for me. I can now ask God to forgive me of my sins in all humility and be assured that He will so do (cf. I Jn. 9).
13. Note that one is not saved by simply obeying law (this is impossible as already brought out because all sin). Yet at the same time, we find that the Christian is under law that must be kept (cf. I Cor. 9:20-22; Gal. 6:2; James 1:25). Herein is where the faithful life of Abraham comes in. Abraham was justified by his faith (Gen. 15:6) and this idea is developed throughout the New Testament as a life that has as its purpose to live according to God's standards (cf. Rom. 4:12). When I fail, I have the redemptive blood of Christ to call upon because He is the propitiation for my sins (I Jn. 2:1ff).

E. *"that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"* (Gal. 3:14).

1. The word "*that*" helps us understand that Paul was summarizing why Jesus redeemed man from the consequences of sin by hanging upon the cross himself.
2. God had always promised salvation for the Gentiles through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1ff). The Gentiles, therefore, were capable of receiving the forgiveness of their sins through Christ just as the Jews, and the redemptive process is now referred to as "*the promise of the Spirit through faith.*"
3. God's promise revealed by the Holy Spirit was that mankind had the opportunity of receiving salvation, the forgiveness of sins, through the redemptive work of Christ. This is the promise that Luke spoke of in Acts 2:39 (the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation).
4. The "*blessing of Abraham*" is the idea of one being a recipient of God's promise of salvation.

#### IV. **Though Forgiveness Cannot be Achieved by Law, It Nonetheless Serves a Purpose (3:15-22):**

A. *"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto"* (3:15).

1. Paul now made a comparison between human covenants and the covenant God made with Abraham. Even human covenants are not made void or altered once agreed upon unless the two parties make an agreement.
2. God made a covenant with Abraham far before the Mosaic Law came into existence. Justification, therefore, is obtained without the Law of Moses (cf. Gen. 15:6).
3. It is very apparent that the doctrines brought to the Galatians was a message that bound certain acts (i.e., circumcision) as binding for salvation due to it being a part of the Mosaic Law.

B. *"Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as one, And to thy seed, which is Christ"* (3:16).

1. There were others, such as Ishmael, that were born unto Abraham that could have been the seed promise, yet God in His sovereignty choose Isaac (cf. Rom. 9:6-8).
2. The seed promise that would ultimately provide a blessing to all nations and fulfillment of Genesis 12 was Christ. The genealogy of Christ can be followed at Matthew 1:1ff.

C. *"Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect"* (3:17).

1. What promise was Paul speaking of here? At verse 16 the context reveals the promise to be that which was made to Abraham on behalf of all humanity. At verse 14 the promise is connected to the Holy Spirit through faith. At verse 8 the promise is depicted as a blessing to

- all nations through the seed of Abraham and termed “*justification*.” Clearly then the promise is that all nations have the opportunity of justification (acquittal of sins) through the seed of Abraham (Jesus).
2. The Galatians had been persuaded that they needed to obey the Mosaic Law and be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:5). Paul made a point here in regard to time and law. Note that justification was allotted to Abraham 430 years before the Mosaic Law came into existence. This being the case, why were there some who were saying that we must keep the Mosaic Law to be saved when God made the way of salvation known 430 years before the Mosaic Law even came out?
  3. The Mosaic Law does not therefore “*disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect*.”
- D. “*For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise*” (3:18).
1. Paul had connected the promise of God to Abraham with justification (Gal. 3:8), the Holy Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14), to Christ (Gal. 3:16), and now to “*inheritance*.”
  2. Justification through Christ by promise to Abraham (inheritance) cannot be defined by the Law of Moses that came 430 years afterwards, else “*it is no more of promise*.” There is nothing that changes in the covenant, and so the Mosaic Law was not an appendix to the promises of Abraham as the Jews so treated it. Simply put, justification is obtained by God granting it to “*Abraham by promise*.”
- E. “*What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator*” (3:19).
1. If no justification can be obtained by the Mosaic Law, then what was its purpose? This would be a natural question to the confused Jew at this point. Paul clearly stated that the purpose of the Mosaic Law was to help man identify sin (cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 7:7). The promise to Abraham was that man would receive the forgiveness of sins through Christ, and the purpose of the Mosaic Law was to identify those things that are not acceptable to God (sin). The Law of Moses was thereby “*added*” to the promise given to Abraham not in so much as it was another stipulation of the covenant God had made with Abraham but rather another step for man to achieve eternal justification by identifying sin and learning to loathe it as does God. It was another covenant, separate yet not disconnected from the covenant made with Abraham.
  2. The Mosaic Law was inferior to the promise God made with Abraham in that “*it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator*” as opposed to God’s direct communication to Abraham. God spoke to angels, and the angels spoke to Moses and finally Moses spoke to the people (cf. Deut. 33:2; Acts 7:38, 53; Heb. 2:1-4).
  3. Note also the temporary nature of the Mosaic Law. Paul said it was added to the covenant promise to Abraham and was only to last “*till the seed should come*.” When Christ came, the Mosaic Law was nailed to the cross and thereby abrogated (Col. 2:14).
- F. “*Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one*” (3:20).
1. The idea of a mediator is one who goes between two in a conflict. God, however, is one in that He spoke directly to Abraham as opposed to using a mediator (i.e., Moses).
  2. The superiority of the covenant God made with Abraham is thereby seen in that God spoke directly to Abraham, whereas the Mosaic Law was administered by angels from God to Moses and then to man.
- G. “*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law*” (3:21).
1. Another rhetorical question is posed that could very well be in the minds of his readers. If the Mosaic Law is inferior to the covenant God made with Abraham, does it militate against the promises of God? Paul answered, “*God forbid*.” Remember, the law served the purpose of helping man identify sin and helped one to understand what is unacceptable behavior in the eyes of God. From this standpoint, the law is not against the promises God made to Abraham.
  2. At the same time, however, Paul made it clear that the Mosaic Law plays no role in man’s justification other than the identification of sin. If it did provide justification, then there would

certainly be no need for Christ coming into the world and making a sacrifice upon the cross (cf. Heb. 8:6-8).

H. *“But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe”* (3:22).

1. Here we see more precisely the relationship between sin and law. To be *“shut up”* is to be imprisoned. The law made a prisoner of its adherent because it did not offer any remedy for sin. Once one violated the law, there was absolutely no hope.
2. When man becomes aware of such a doomed state, he is motivated to seek out a remedy for his sinful condition. Those who would learn of Christ and the promises through Abraham in relationship to the Lord found that justification was obtainable. The point being, the Law identified sin to man, helped him to recognize his doomed state, and motivated him to seek out Christ.
3. The *“promise”* is again mentioned (i.e., justification, reconciliation to God, redemption through the blood of Christ, the inheritance of God etc...). Note that this promise is obtained by those who live by faith in Jesus Christ (obedient). The entire life of Abraham was such a life, and so he taught his predecessors to do (cf. Gen. 18:19; 22:18; 26:1-5).

V. **The Purpose of the Law is to Bring one to See his Need for Christ (3:23-29):**

A. *“But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed”* (3:23).

1. The idea of *“faith”* in this verse cannot mean subjective faith in Jesus Christ because we know that Abraham looked forward to the day of Christ, and he lived before the Mosaic Law was delivered (cf. Jn. 8:56). Secondly, the knowledge of Christ was known and preached about well before He came into the world by the prophets (I Pet. 1:10). The faith under consideration is apparently the gospel message (i.e., *“the faith”* Jude 3).
2. Before the gospel message of eternal salvation came, men were kept in *“ward”* under the law. The word *“ward”* (*phroureo*) = “to keep watch or guard... to be watched or guarded” (LS 873). The context suggests man as being held in bondage to sin and “watched or guarded” by the law to see that they were kept in this condition. This state of bondage would continue until the gospel message (*“the faith”*) was revealed. The inference is clear. The gospel message would free men from the bondage of sin that the law kept them in ward to.

B. *“So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (3:24).

1. Here is a verse that can be easily misconstrued if the context of this chapter has not been followed. One may say that the purpose of law is to reveal Jesus, and my objective is to believe in Jesus and when this occurs so does justification. Such a line of thought, however, negates the previous context.
2. Let us consider how Abraham was justified because he is much of the subject of this chapter:
  - a. Abraham’s faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness (3:6). Those who are so justified are recognized as the *“sons of Abraham”* (3:7). It would be through Abraham’s seed (Christ) that all nations would be justified (acquitted of sins) (3:8). Those justified as Abraham would be termed *“righteous”* that *“live by faith”* (3:11). Said individuals receive the *“promise of the Spirit through faith”* (3:14).
  - b. Over and over we find the connection between living by faith and justification. One does not receive justification without living by faith. The question is, does this faith mean a subjective faith in Jesus (i.e., a simple belief that He is) or does it entail following a set of instructions? Again, let us allow the context of Galatians three to answer this question.
  - c. Note that the Galatians had received the Holy Spirit (salvation or justification) by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2, 5). Paul then connected Abraham to the idea of hearing of faith at Galatians 3:6 when he said, *“Even as Abraham believed God...”* What did God tell Abraham that produced faith? It was the gospel message (cf. Gal. 3:8). When Abraham heard this message, he believed it and obeyed the voice of God (Gen. 18:19). It was not until Abraham obeyed God’s message that God said that such faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6). The Christian today is therefore one who hears, believes,

and obeys! Our faithful obedience evidences our subjective faith in Christ (cf. Heb. 11:1ff).

3. The “*law*” under consideration at this verse is the Law of Moses that came 430 after the promises that God made to Abraham. This law was to serve as a “*tutor*” (*paidagogos*) = “the slave who went with a boy from home to school and back again... a kind of tutor” (LS 584). The Law was like a slave responsible for seeing to it that those under its control made it to Christ that they may receive the justification of sins committed. How? The Law revealed sin (Rom. 7:7). The Law also demanded perfection with no remedy for mistakes (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10). When one understood that sin separates from God they were left in a hopeless state without Christ. God promised justification of sins through the seed of Abraham and thereby men longed to see the day of Jesus because the Mosaic Law left them in sin with no remedy (I Pet. 1:10).
4. Question: How can one be justified from sin and continue in sin (cf. Rom. 6:1)? The idea of the impossibility of apostasy does not stand up to reason, let alone the word of God.
- C. “*But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor*” (3:25).
  1. The “*tutor*” is the Law of Moses that helps man identify sin, demands perfection, and yet offers no remedy for sins committed.
  2. Once the gospel message (faith) has been revealed, man is given the opportunity to be set at liberty from the law and sin that they were under.
    - a. To be forgiven of sins through faithful obedience in Jesus Christ is to be justified (set free from the tutor whose objective was to see that we made it to Christ) (Acts 2:38).
    - b. Once one is forgiven of sins, he is free from the bondage of law (i.e., the law that demanded perfection yet offered no remedy for sins committed).
    - c. Herein is the distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. Each Law demands perfection (cf. Matt. 5:48); however, the Law of Christ offers a remedy for the one who violates the law, whereas the Law of Moses did not (Heb. 7:18-19).
- D. “*For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Jesus Christ*” (3:26).
  1. Those who have been freed from the bondage of law and sin through faith in Jesus Christ are now termed “*sons of God*.”
  2. Being recognized as a “*son of God*” occurs through “*faith in Jesus Christ*.” Note that Paul had earlier said, “*know therefore that they that are of faith are the sons of Abraham*” (Gal. 3:7). To be a “*son of Abraham*” is equivalent to being a “*son of God*.”
    - a. Those who are therefore justified of sins, recipients of God’s promises, and the inheritance of God are those who are “*of faith*” (Gal. 3:9). Faith is again the key to understanding the whole of Galatians 3. The Galatians had gone after another doctrine that produced another faith in them and caused them to leave off following the teachings of Christ (Gal. 1:6).
    - b. Paul’s point was that it is through adherence to the doctrine of Christ alone that man will receive justification of sins. REMEMBER! Abraham was justified by faith when he adhered to God’s commandments (cf. Gen. 18:19; Heb. 11:8).
    - c. Jesus addressed this idea in John 3:36 saying, “*He that believes on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*.” Many Bible versions miss the mark when they translate “obeys not” as “believes not.” There is a big difference. One could claim that belief in Jesus alone is the one condition for salvation and that is what is brought out in Galatians 3 along with passages such as John 3:16, 36. Faith alone, however, is not the consideration of Galatians three nor of John 3. Consider the Greek word used at John 3:26 for “*obeys not*” (*apeitheo*). Liddell and Scott define the word as “to be disobedient, refuse compliance, to disobey” (LS 90). The ASV has rightly translated *apeitheo* as “*obeys not*.” Here is clear evidence that the Christian is to keep only the doctrine of Christ as opposed to a mish mash of religious doctrines.
  3. Man is recognized as a “*son of God*” when he has complied with the teachings of Jesus Christ. The teachings of Christ (gospel) reveal what one must do to receive justification of sins. When one complies with these regulations, one is justified (acquitted of sins) and recipients of God’s promises just as Abraham (Gen. 18:19).

- E. *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ”* (3:27).
1. I became of *“son of God”* when I complied with the teachings of Christ. Verse 27 reveals clearly what teaching I complied with that I may be termed a *“son of God”* (one who is *“justified,”* a recipient of God’s *“promises”* of eternal *“inheritance”*). The teaching was the act of baptism for the remission of my sins (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16).
  2. Note secondly that to *“put on Christ”* is equated to having my sins forgiven (i.e., justification), an event that happens when I am baptized. The idea of *“putting on”* is to cloth oneself with Christ. The clothing of one with another is a figurative way of saying that everything Christ is, I so purpose to be (cf. Col. 3:12). I am to emulate the Lord’s character, sinless life, love, method of teaching and preaching, humility, and so forth (cf. I Pet. 2:21ff) (see study # 24; Following the Example of Christ).
- F. *“There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus”* (3:28).
1. The individual (whether Jew, Greek, bond, free, male, or female) that is baptized into Christ for the remission of sins is justified. Plain and simple!
  2. All stand on equal ground when baptized for the remission of sins. Such an act puts one *“in Christ Jesus”* which is another way of saying that fellowship is now enjoyed with Christ. The apostle John said, *“but whoso keeps his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked”* (I Jn. 2:5-6).
- G. *“And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise”* (3:29).
1. Herein is the conclusion to the chapter on receiving justification by faith and not perfect Mosaic Law keeping. Those who are baptized into Christ are justified of sins because they obey God’s instructions just as Abraham (justified by an obedient faith). The Judaizing teachers were claiming that in order for one to be saved, he needed to obey the Mosaic Law and be circumcised (Acts 15:5). Paul now clearly showed that one is saved from the consequences of his sins by faithful living as did Abraham. When one is baptized, he is placed *“in Christ”* and furthermore is depicted as *“Abraham’s seed”* because he seeks his justification in the same manner that Abraham did.
  2. The Jews looked to their physical relationship to Abraham for salvation and Paul taught that salvation comes to all nations who seek justification in the manner that Abraham did (by faithful obedience to God’s instructions). When one so lives by God’s instructions, he is termed a *“son of Abraham”* (Gal. 3:7) which is equivalent to being a *“son of God”* (Gal. 3:26).

### Synopsis of Galatians 3

Many of the Galatian Christians had been swayed away from the true gospel message to another doctrine (Gal. 1:6). The apostle Paul referred to those who were swayed as *“foolish”* (Gal. 3:1). False teachers had taught them that they needed to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law in order to be saved (Acts 15:5). Paul asked the Galatians a rhetorical question regarding how they obtained their hope of eternal salvation (i.e., justification through the forgiveness of sins) (Gal. 3:2-3). Those who put their trust in their physical descent of Abraham were failing to see the *“weakness and unprofitableness”* of the Law of Moses (i.e., it could not forgive sins) (cf. Heb. 7:18-19). Those who put their faith in Jesus Christ and obeyed His teachings were considered the true *“sons of Abraham”* (Gal. 3:7). Abraham evidenced his faith in God by obeying His commandments (cf. Heb. 11:2, 8, 17-19; Gen. 18:19; 22:18). Paul proved to the Galatians that justification through obedient faith in Christ was the means of salvation 430 years before the Mosaic Law came into existence (Gal. 3:17). The Law of Moses came along and demanded perfect obedience with no remedy offered to the one who violated its principles (Gal. 3:10).

Naturally, the Jews would ask, *“what then is the purpose of the Law?”* Paul explained to the fallen Galatians that the Law was *“added”* to the covenant that God had made with Abraham due to sin (Gal. 3:19). Sin separates a man from God, and without a remedy there would be eternal separation (cf. Isa. 59:1ff). The Mosaic Law identified sin to mankind (cf. Rom. 7:7) and thereby served as a *“tutor”* to bring man unto Christ (Gal.

3:24). Under law, man was doomed to punishment of death for his sin (cf. Rom. 3:23; 6:23). The law held its adherents in bondage because it offered no hope (cf. Gal. 3:23). Said state of being is referred to as being cursed and without hope (Gal. 3:10). Thanks be to God that Christ suffered the penalty of sin upon the cross for mankind so that we would not have to face the consequences of our sins (Gal. 3:13).

All those who now obey God's instructions through His Son Jesus Christ are justified of sins as was Abraham when he obeyed the voice of God. Divine instructions reveal baptism to be necessary in order for one to be justified of sins in the sight of God (Gal. 3:27). Such an act of obedience causes one to be recognized as a "*son of God*" (Gal. 3:25). When one is "*in Christ*" there is no distinction made between Jew, Greek, free, slave, male, or female because, "*ye are all one man in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). To belong to Christ is to display the obedient faith of Abraham and so be called the spiritual "*sons of Abraham*" (Gal. 3:29).

## Chapter 4

### I. The Process Whereby one Becomes Recognized as a “son of God” (4:1-7):

- A. *“But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from a bondservant though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed of the father”* (4:1-2).
1. The idea of eternal salvation being compared to an *“inheritance”* (justification through the forgiveness of sins) was introduced at Galatians 3:18. God had made promises through Abraham that had to do with one’s justification (Gal. 3:8, 16). To be a recipient of said justification was to be an *“heir according to promise”* (Gal. 3:29).
  2. The idea of an *“heir”* being related to a *“child”* that is under bondage to a system of law helps us understand that Paul had under consideration both Jew and Gentile. Earlier Paul had spoken of the Mosaic Law as a *“tutor to bring us unto Christ”* (Gal. 3:24). At a set time determined by the Father, both Jew and Gentile would be set free from the bondage of the respective law that they followed.
- B. *“So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world:”* (4:3).
1. Paul used the plural pronoun *“we”* to identify both Jew and Gentile who were enslaved under the *“rudiments of the world.”* Earlier we noted that the Mosaic Law bound its adherents to a doomed state of prison due to its inability to forgive man of their sins (cf. Gal. 3:22).
  2. What about the Gentiles? How were they *“held in bondage under the rudiments of the world?”* Let us examine how Paul used this phrase in other epistles. Paul made a contrast between the *“rudiments of the world”* and the teachings of *“Christ”* at Colossians 2:8. There, the *“rudiments of the world”* are identified as *“philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men...”* Again, at Colossians 2:20ff, Paul compared Mosaic Law ordinances to *“rudiments of the world”* and precisely identified it as such in Colossians 2:14-15.
  3. Clearly the *“rudiments of the world”* are man-made ideas that are followed as though they were divine instruction. While it is easy to see that the Gentile’s heathenish faith would fit this description, it is very difficult for some to identify the Mosaic Law with this since God had revealed the Law by revelation (cf. Gal. 3:19). The point is not the source of the message or religion followed, but what it did or did not do! The Mosaic Law (as well as Gentile pagan worship) could not remove one sin from any one being.
  4. Clearly, a distinction must be made by the Christian regarding what represents truth and what is error (of the flesh) (see study # 7; The Christian’s Judgment).
- C. *“but when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (4:4-5).
1. The *“fullness of time”* corresponds to the *“day appointed by the father”* at verse 2 of this chapter. When the child came of age, he would be due his father’s inheritance. The coming of age occurred for mankind when *“God sent forth his Son”* and thereby made man eligible to receive the inheritance of God (i.e., justification of sins and the hope of eternal salvation). Jesus had a **mission** that was authorized by God (See study # 25; The Work of Jesus). Jesus’ mission was to free man from the bondage of sin. This occurred in the *“fullness of time”* (i.e., at the time the prophets had foretold [Isa. 40:3; Dan. 2:1ff] consider Mk. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:9) and a time when man was ripe for seeing his need for one to save them from the consequences of their sin (cf. Gal. 3:24).
  2. Note the identity of Jesus:
    - a. *“God sent forth his Son”* indicates the deity of Jesus in that He preexisted with God.
    - b. The idea of being *“born of a woman”* indicates the Lord’s humanity. The author of Hebrews wrote, *“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”* (Heb. 2:14).
    - c. Christ was also *“born under the law”* in that He came into the world when the Mosaic Law was in effect, and so He was subject to it. Jesus never one time violated a principle of the

Mosaic Law and was therefore perfect (cf. Jn. 8:29, 46; Heb. 4:15; I Pet. 2:22). As such, the Lord was a perfect sacrificial lamb for the sins of mankind (cf. Jn. 1:29).

- d. Jesus was deity in human form born under law and never one time violated that law that He might “*redeem*” all who were under the curse of the law (cf. Gal. 3:10). For the idea of redemption, review comments on Galatians 3:13. Once the curse of the law was removed from man, he was no longer in a state of bondage with no hope of freedom under the law but rather “*adopted*” as a son by God through His Son’s sacrifice. Before adoption man is in bondage to law like a common slave. After adoption man is considered an heir of the inheritance that God has for man (i.e., justification and hope of eternal salvation).

D. “*And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*” (4:6).

1. One becomes a son of God through the obedient faith of Abraham (i.e., such a one obeys the voice of God as did Abraham. God commands baptism for the remission of sins and when one complies with this command he is considered a “*son of God*” [faithful obedience through the act of baptism is the adoption process] (Gal. 3:26-27)). God adopts the men who would have the faith of Abraham and obey His commands. Now God deals with His sons as a loving Father (cf. Heb. 12:4ff).
2. As Jesus was “*sent forth by God*,” even so the Holy Spirit is “*sent forth*” by God with a mission. The work of the Holy Spirit was to reveal divine revelation to mankind through the apostles and prophets (cf. Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; I Cor. 2:9-13) (see study # 26; The Work of the Holy Spirit). Man would hear the revelation of God. His being adopted by God as a son was up to him alone if a man heard the saving message of Christ (Rom. 10:17), believed that message (Acts 17:30), repented of his sins (Lk. 13:3), confessed the name of Christ (Rom. 10:8-9), and was baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27). Note that being “*begotten*” of God (i.e., being made or produced a Christian through faithful obedience to God’s Word) is parallel with being a “*child [son] of God*” (cf. I Jn. 2:29-3:1).
3. The idea, therefore, of one crying “*Abba, Father*” is produced as an effect of having heard the divine message that the Holy Spirit brought forth through the apostles and prophets. The word “*Abba*” is an Aramaic word meaning “Father.” Jesus used this term in the Garden of Gethsemane when praying and addressing God (Mk. 14:36). Interestingly, Paul said, “*no man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit*” (I Cor. 12:3). It is divine revelation that reveals these things to man so that when one who has knowledge of divine revelation speaks he is speaking “*in the Holy Spirit*.” This does not mean that the Holy Spirit has taken possession of one, it simply means that the Spirit’s teachings have come known to the man through revelation.

E. “*So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God*” (4:7).

1. Whether one was under the Mosaic Law, Pagan law, or some sort of religious system today that does not represent the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, said one is under bondage. The bondage is in relationship to sin. No system, other than the Law of Jesus Christ, can free man from the bondage of sin.
2. One becomes a “*son of God*” by doing what Abraham did (obeying the voice of God). When one becomes a son, he is an “*heir*” (subject to justification and the hope of eternal life).

## II. Paul’s Fear for the Galatians (4:8-11):

A. “*Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods:*” (4:8).

1. A contrast begins here regarding knowing God and not knowing God.
2. Throughout the study of Galatians, the word “*bondage*” (as well as the idea of being “*shut up*” Gal. 2:22 and being “*kept in ward under the law*” Gal. 2:23) is used in relation to one’s state of sin with no forgiveness (cf. 2:4; 4:3). The idea is that one is in jail (or recognized as a slave) with no hope of release. In this state, one is considered as having not known God.
3. Paul’s “*at that time*” is in relation to the days when the Gentile converts were held in bondage to sin under worship of other deities. No hope of eternal salvation existed while serving these gods. The Galatians were convinced of this fact and were therefore baptized into Christ for the

remission and justification of their sins (cf. Gal. 3:27). When they obeyed, they became known of God.

4. When one is under sin (held in the bondage of sin due to not having obeyed the gospel) he is described as *“not knowing God.”* To not know God is to have God not know you. When one walks in sin (conduct not dictated by the authority of the Lord), God proclaims, *“I never knew you: depart from me ye that worketh iniquity”* (Matt. 7:23) (see study # 27; Are You Known of God?).
- B. *“but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again?”* (4:9).
1. At one time the Galatians were in the *“know”* in relation to God, yet at this point many had turned away from the one true doctrine of Christ. The apostle John wrote, *“And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”* (I Jn. 2:3-4). Again, the apostle Paul wrote, *“Howbeit the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: and, let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness”* (II Tim. 2:19). One who obeys the gospel message and continues in it not only knows God but is known of God. Such a state causes one to be an *“heir”* to God’s promises of justification and salvation (Gal. 3:29) and known as a *“son of God”* (Gal. 3:26).
  2. Freedom from the bondage of sin occurs through obedience to the gospel message; however, when one *“turns back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments,”* he has lost his freedom.
    - a. The idea of *“weak and beggarly”* means without strength and useless. The power of the gospel message is that it has the ability to forgive man of their sins (cf. Rom. 1:16).
    - b. That which is *“weak and beggarly”* is the *“rudiments”* that were discussed at Galatians 4:3 (i.e., religious teaching that has as its source the human mind). The end of following said teaching is bondage as opposed to freedom through Christ. Paul then asked the question, *“Why do you want to go back to bondage?”*
- C. *“Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain”* (4:10-11).
1. Now we see how far the Galatians had gone in following the Judiazer’s teachings. They were observing days, months and so forth. Apparently the Galatians were keeping the Sabbath, feast of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc. in a way of worship to Jehovah.
  2. There is a great lesson on worship here. God has revealed His pattern for New Testament worship (cf. Jn. 4:23). Worship included singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (I Tim. 2:8), preaching the gospel message (Acts 20:7ff), partaking of the LS (I Cor. 11:23ff), and giving of our means (I Cor. 16:1ff). To add the above mentioned days, months, or certain foods to God’s prescribed worship would be sinful (see study # 28; Bible Worship). Likewise if one were to add to Jehovah’s worship Christmas or Easter it would be sinful. If one wanted to participate in Christmas and Easter in a non-religious way (i.e., exchange gifts and hunt Easter eggs), then no sin would be found. When one follows circumcision for medical reasons as opposed to religious, then no sin has occurred there (cf. Gal. 2:3ff; I Cor. 7:19).
  3. Due to the Galatians’ religious participation in these Jewish practices Paul exclaimed, *“I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain.”* To go back to the system that enslaves is to make void Paul’s work of preaching. Note that Paul experienced *“fear”* likely in the form of anxiety. Paul wanted those to whom he preached to remain faithful for their soul’s sake. He experienced anxiety over those who did not remain faithful (cf. II Cor. 11:28) (see study # 29; The Character of Paul).

### III. Paul appealed to his past relationship with the Galatians (4:12-20):

- A. *“I beseech you, brethren, become as I am, for I also am become as ye are. Ye did me no wrong: but ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time:”* (4:12-13).
1. Paul was pleading with the Galatians who had fallen away to be as he was; i.e., lay aside the Mosaic Law for the Law of Christ (cf. Phil. 3:4ff). The appeal was to apostolic example. Paul had told the Corinthians, *“Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ”* (I Cor. 11:1).

2. Paul brought to remembrance his coming in among the Galatians at a time when he had an *“infirmity of the flesh.”* The Galatians did not mind the infirmity but rather over looked it and heard the message that Paul preached. The infirmity Paul suffered apparently was associated with his eyes due to the statement made at verse 15. Whether Paul suffered from an eye disease, temporary problem of some sort, or problems associated with beatings he took at the hands of some in Galatia we are not told (cf. Acts 14:19). Again, we are not told whether or not this problem was in relationship to the II Cor. 12:7 issue either.
- B. *“and that which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus”* (4:14).
1. Interestingly, Paul termed his condition as a *“temptation”* (test or trial) in the Galatians.
  2. This infirmity must have been noticeable and one that would cause people to reject the messenger in such a weakened state.
  3. When the Galatians heard Paul’s message they *“received me (Paul) as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.”*
- C. *“Where then is that gratulation of yourselves? For I bear you witness, that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me”* (4:15).
1. A contrast is made between the Galatians’ former mindset (receiving him as though he were an angel and even Christ) as opposed to now (their actions prove a rejection of Paul’s message).
  2. So Paul asks, *“where then is the gratulation of yourselves?”* The word *“gratulation”* (*makarismos*) = “pronouncing happy, blessing” (LS 484). Apparently the Galatians considered themselves blessed after hearing the message Paul preached. They were so glad that he had come their way that they would have gladly *“plucked out your eyes and given them to me.”*
- D. *“So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?”* (4:16).
1. An examination is being made of the Galatians attitude toward Paul’s preaching. When Paul preached to them the *“first time”* (Gal. 4:13), the Galatians received him as though he were an angel of God or even Christ himself (Gal. 4:14). After that visit, the Judaizers did their dastardly teaching and caused many brethren to follow a different gospel. Paul, at some point after the first visit (likely the second tour of preaching; Acts 15:41), came again to the Galatians, yet this time the sermons were not dripping with love and syrup regarding justification through the love of Jesus Christ.
  2. The public proclamation of the gospel was apparently pointed and exposed the false teaching that was corrupting the church. Said type of preaching did not settle well with many of the Galatians, and so they alienated Paul to the point of him feeling as though he had become their enemy for telling them the truth.
  3. Here is a great lesson today regarding the consequences of preaching truth in love. Not all like to hear their error exposed, and when the preacher preaches a message that condemns their practices, they no longer like the messenger (cf. Appendix # 30; Attitudes toward Truthful Preaching). Many brethren today do not want to hear the names of beloved false teachers called out, and so they will protest such preaching as violating church autonomy, lacking love, and even using such derogatory terms as “watchdog” to describe those who preach after the example of the apostles and our Lord Jesus. When firm preaching that exposes error and the individuals in the error occurs, brethren become “enemies.”
- E. *“They zealously seek you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them”* (4:17).
1. The Judaizers who were teaching the Galatians that they needed to keep the Mosaic Law, be circumcised, and obey the law of Christ (cf. Acts 15:5) were passionately going after the true disciples of Christ *“in no good way.”* According to the context of these verses, it seems that the attitude of Paul being an enemy was placed in the minds of some of the Galatians by the Judaizing teachers.
  2. It was the desire of these false teachers to shut off fellowship from all those who taught as did Paul from the Galatians so that the brethren would lean only on their teaching.
- F. *“But it is good to be zealously sought in a good matter at all times, and not only when I am present with you”* (4:18).

1. Paul was not jealous because someone else had taken interest in the Galatians (if others were preaching truth to them then that is great).
  2. Paul's complaint was that those who were now taking interest in the Galatians were doing so at the expense of their (the Galatians') souls. These men sincerely believed that one must keep the Mosaic Law along with the Law of Christ and were teaching these erroneous conclusions to others because they believed Paul to be in error. I think it is interesting that there are many men who bring a message, but only truth can be accepted by the hearers. Today, there are multitudes of religious bodies that are preaching a message. Shall I say that their motives are wrong in that they preach an erroneous message? Shall I say that their goal is to bring people down to the pits of hell with them by their teaching? Shall I say that their characters are sneaky, evil, and filled with impure motives? I think not. It is clear that it is the message brought by the teacher defines who he is. An individual who brings an erroneous message is deluded into believing his message represents truth (see study # 10; The False Teacher's Character). Again, the only way to know the teacher is to test his teaching to see whether or not it stands the test of scripture (cf. I Jn. 4:1, 6).
- G. *"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you- but I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my tone; for I am perplexed about you"* (4:19-20).
1. Paul referred to those whom he is responsible for converting as his "*children*" in the faith (cf. I Cor. 4:14). Paul would remain in painful anxiety over these Galatian Christians until "*Christ be formed in you.*" It has already been established that to have Christ in one the individual must abide in His teachings (cf. Gal. 3:27; I Jn. 2:3-4) (see study # 29; The Character of Paul).
  2. To regain the Galatians' fellowship with God was Paul's personal task now. He would to God that he could be with the Galatians to speak with them face to face. At this point he was somewhat perplexed as to how to approach them that they may turn back to Christ.

#### IV. An Allegory (4:21-31):

- A. *"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?"* (4:21)
1. Paul addressed the Galatian Christians who had been influenced by the teaching of the Judaizers so that they "*desire to be under the law.*"
  2. Paul asked these brethren, "*do ye not hear the law?*"
    - a. Paul had already quoted from the Law of Moses at Galatians 3:10 to illustrate that the law demanded perfection with no remedy for error.
    - b. Man's eternal inheritance does not come of the Law of Moses but by promise (Gal. 3:18).
    - c. The Mosaic Law kept its adherents in bondage (slavery and jail) with no hope of release.
  3. To prove his point Paul used an "*allegory.*" The apostle took an event in the life of Abraham and compared it to the Galatians' situation at present. They were being swayed away from the truth by false teachers who sought to keep them in bondage to the Mosaic system. The allegory defines the foreknowledge of God. In interpreting the allegory we are enlightened as to omniscience of God (see study # 31; The Omniscience of God). Consider the following:
    - a. God's foreknowledge of man's eternal salvation through water. Noah's salvation through water is a "prefigure" or type of our salvation today (cf. Gen. 6 compared to I Pet. 3:20-21).
    - b. God's foreknowledge of a savior to provide the remission of man's sins is depicted in His sovereign promise made to Abraham in Gen. 12:1ff compared to Gal. 3:8, 16.
    - c. The Mosaic Law carried with it "*shadows*" (to prefigure) of the Law of Christ (Heb. 10:1) (i.e., priests, sacrifices, ordinances, etc.)
    - d. When Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac upon the altar, it prefigured Christ's sacrifice (Gen. 22).
    - e. God pronounces the end from the beginning and illustrates divinity and omniscience (Isa. 46:9-10).
- B. *"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; by the son by the free woman is born through promise"* (4:22-23).

1. Keep in mind that many of the OT events prefigured (shadowed) the NT teachings and thereby illustrate the omniscience of God (please see Isaiah 46:9-10).
  2. The apostle Paul now took one of these events out of the OT to prove his point.
  3. Genesis 16:1-4 records the events of Abraham receiving his first son, Ishmael, from Sarah's slave Hagar. Genesis 21:1ff records the birth of Isaac by Sarah "*the freewoman.*"
  4. Note that Ishmael was born "*after the flesh.*"
    1. To be born "*after the flesh*" indicates that no divine intervention was needed for Ishmael to be born. Abraham and Hagar had Ishmael as do all others who have children.
    2. The Jews often spoke of their ancestry that connected them to Abraham. The Jewish connection to Abraham was physical as opposed to spiritual (cf. Jn. 8:33ff). The true sons of Abraham would be those who sought their justification as did Abraham (Jew, Gentile, male, female, bond, or free) (cf. Gal. 3:28).
  5. Isaac was not born "*after the flesh*" but "*through promise.*" There is a difference between the two births. Abraham and Hagar had a child through sexual intercourse and the natural process that occurs. Sarah's womb was "*dead*" (unable to bear children due to age) (cf. Gen. 18:11; Rom. 4:19). Though Abraham and Sarah were advanced in age (100 and 90) God had promised them a son (Gen. 18:9ff). To be "*born of promise*" is to come about by divine intervention. The purpose of said birth being that it would be through Isaac that God's promise to Abraham regarding blessing all nations would come.
- C. "*Which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants; one from mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia and answers to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children*" (4:24-25).
1. An "*allegory*" (*allegoreo*) = "to speak so as to imply something other than what is said, to interpret allegorically (a literary, dramatic, or pictorial device in which each literal character, object, and event represents a symbol illustrating an idea or moral or religious principle [AHD 95])" (LS 37).
  2. According to the definition of allegory, Hagar is the symbol that represents the Mosaic Law that leads to bondage. The more children she bore, the more slaves were created (i.e., those who followed the Mosaic Law were under a curse because no one could keep it perfectly) (cf. Rom. 7:24; Gal. 2:16, 21; Heb. 7:18-19).
- D. "*But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath the husband*" (4:26-27).
1. There is a contrast between the "*Jerusalem that now is*" and the "*Jerusalem that is above.*" The "*Jerusalem that now is*" is represented in Hagar and her children (slaves to the Mosaic Law without hope of freedom). The "*Jerusalem that is above*" is represented in Sarah and her children (those who are free from sin through the Law of Christ).
  2. Consider Hebrews 12:22-23; "*but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living god, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*"
    - a. Hagar and Ishmael represent bondage (Mosaic Law).
    - b. Sarah and Isaac represent freedom through Christ (Law of Christ).
    - c. Remember that at the outset of this allegory Paul told us that these two women represent two covenants (see 4:24). A covenant is a law (Psalms 111:9). The Mosaic Law was deemed a covenant by Moses himself at Deuteronomy 29:9 when he said, "*Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.*" The Law of Christ is recognized as a covenant as well (cf. Jer. 31:31ff; Heb. 8:7-12).
  3. Paul now quoted from Isaiah 54:1 to indicate that Isaiah had prophesied of the coming church that would be filled with people who were saved from their sins as opposed to those who were desolate and without hope under the Mosaic system. During the days of Isaiah, Israel had been conquered by the Assyrians. Those Jews who survived appeared to be desolate and without hope. The Lord cheered them by giving this prophecy. Sarah was once barren for the first 90

years of her life, but her time of rejoicing and laughter came when she had Isaac. Through Isaac the promises of God (a great nation and seed promise) would be fulfilled. Sarah thereby represents hope, whereas Hagar represents doom.

- E. *“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise”* (4:28).
1. Paul now drew his conclusion. The *“we”* refers to himself and the Galatian Christians who had put on Christ in baptism (cf. Gal. 3:27). Note that being a *“child of promise”* is equated to being a Christian (one who has been freed from the guilt and punishment of sin {i.e., justified by faith}).
  2. Isaac is the symbol that represents Christians in that he was born of the free woman as opposed to Ishmael who was born of the bond woman.
- F. *“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also it is now”* (4:29).
1. Paul did not stop with the allegory at the slave/free relationship. He went on to examine the issue of Ishmael mocking Isaac.
  2. Genesis 21:8-9 records, *“And the child grew (Isaac), and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian (Ishmael), whom she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.”* To *“mock”* one is to *“treat with ridicule, or contempt; deride. To express scorn or ridicule”* (AHD 806). Note that the apostle Paul termed Ishmael’s treatment of Isaac as a *“persecution.”*
  3. The persecuting spirit of Ishmael, a representation of those held in bondage to the Mosaic Law, continued to exist during the time of this epistle. The Jews that rejected Christ had persecuted the apostles and those who accepted the Law of Christ on a multitude of occasions (cf. Acts 13:50; 14:2, 19; 17:5; I Thess. 2:15, 16 etc.)
- G. *“Howbeit what saith the scripture? Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman”* (4:30).
1. Sarah was not happy with the persecution of Isaac and so she made request to Abraham saying, *“Cast out this handmaid and her son: for the son of this handmaid shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac”* (Gen. 21:10) and at Genesis 21:12 God said to Abraham, *“hearken unto her voice.”*
  2. What was Paul now saying? Keeping the allegory, we found that Hagar and Ishmael represented the Mosaic Law and those in bondage with no hope of freedom. Sarah and Isaac represented the Law of Christ and those who have freedom from the guilt and consequences of sin. Paul, therefore, was saying to the Galatians that they (as Sarah did) must *“cast out”* the Mosaic System that now bounds them with no hope. There must, however, be more to these verses than a simple casting out of the Mosaic System as a way of justification due to the fact that the bondservants (those represented in Ishmael) were persecuting the Galatians. Paul had said in verse 17 of this chapter that the Judaizers were *“zealously seeking you in no good way; nay, they desire to shut you out, that ye may seek them.”* The conclusion is simple: Paul was commanding the Galatians to reject and cast out these false teachers because they were seeking to bind them in prison with their doctrines. The Galatians were therefore being sought *“in no good way.”* The scriptures are clear on what the Christian’s view toward false teachers in the church should be.
    - a. First, all Christians should put the teaching of others to the test (I Jn. 4:1, 6).
    - b. Secondly, those who teach false doctrines are to be warned on two occasions (Titus 3:10).
    - c. Thirdly, those who continue to preach error and promote division are to be avoided (Rom. 16:17; II Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:11).
    - d. Said brethren in the church are to be *“cast out”* (Rom. 16:17-18; I Cor. 5:1ff; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15).
    - e. All who act in such a way are to be rejected (II Jn. 9-11).
- H. *“Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman”* (4:31).
1. Paul’s final statements clearly identify the Christian as those who are free through the Law of Christ.

2. Let the Christian today take notice! If I begin following any teaching other than the gospel of Jesus Christ I have placed myself in bondage (II Jn. 9).

### Synopsis of Galatians chapter 4

Paul identified those who would seek their justification through Mosaic Law keeping or any other religious service apart from Jesus Christ as those who are “*in bondage under the rudiments of the world*” (Gal. 4:3, 8-9). These rudiments are the teachings of man as opposed to divine revelation (cf. Col. 2:8), teachings that man concocts within his mind that he may be saved by some doctrine other than that which proceeds from God. The Word of God exposes such folly (II Jn. 9).

Paul reminded the Galatians that they had been moved from a state of not knowing God to a state of knowing Him (Gal. 4:9). Having experienced freedom from the guilt and bondage of sin, Paul asked, “How can you possibly want to go back to a system that takes away that freedom?” (paraphrase of Gal. 4:10). Paul reminded them of the days in which they had heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel even though he came to them in a less than physically aesthetic state of being (Gal. 4:12-16). The Galatians were so excited to receive the freedom of the guilt and punishments of their sins that they did not allow the disfigurement of Paul’s eye dissuade them from obeying the gospel. Now, however, the Judaizers had destroyed their faith (Gal. 4:17).

To paint a clear picture in the minds of the Galatians of their current state of bondage Paul used an allegory from the days of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac. Those who are free from their sins are compared to Sarah and Isaac, and those who are held in bondage to sin are compared to Hagar and Ishmael. The sons of Hagar and Ishmael persecute the sons of Sarah and Isaac due to their opposing the freedom they represent. Paul concluded by telling the Galatians that they ought to recognize such a situation and “*cast out*” those who teach false doctrines that take away brethren’s freedom in Christ (4:30).

## Prelude to chapter 5

At this point of our study, Paul has identified that the Galatians' acceptance of false teaching (another or different doctrine) has caused them to lose their freedom in Christ (Gal. 1:6). The Galatians were "*foolish*" for receiving these teachers because through their doctrines the Galatians had become "*severed from Christ*" (Gal. 3:1; 5:4). These false teachers had "*perverted*" the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:7). The false teachers were "*zealously seeking*" the Galatians (Gal. 4:17). For this cause, Paul commanded the Galatians to view them as an "*anathema*" (Gal. 1:9) and "*cast them out*" (Gal. 4:30). The Galatians would only succeed in doing this when putting the false teacher's doctrines to the test of God's word (cf. I Jn. 4:1, 6). If they continued to accept brethren simply on the basis of being called a "*believer*," then they were asking for trouble (cf. Acts 15:5). To this point it is apparent that the reason the Galatians were in the trouble they were in was because they had not put to the test these Christians and their teaching. They rather received them into their fellowship and eventually even received their teachings (Gal. 5:2). They were bullied and were too spiritually weak to wage warfare. Let God's people today know the scriptures and wage warfare against false teachers as a soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:1-13).

## Chapter 5

### I. The Galatians had fallen from grace due to "*persuasive*" teaching that "*hindered*," "*troubled*," and "*unsettled*" the Galatians (5:1-15):

#### A. "*For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage*" (5:1).

1. Remember that Paul had said, "*But before faith came, we were kept in ward (prison/bondage) under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed*" (Gal. 3:23). While the Jews remained in bondage to the Mosaic Law, the Gentiles were in bondage to other religious systems that only gave a false sense of security. Again, Paul wrote, "*Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage (as opposed to having freedom) to them that by nature are no gods*" (Gal. 4:8).
2. How did the Mosaic Law and Gentile religious systems keep them in bondage as opposed to being free? These religious systems offered no forgiveness of sins and therefore no hope whatsoever. Those who looked for hope in these systems were certainly doomed in a state of bondage.
3. Christ's redemptive work on the cross set man free from the bondage of sin (cf. Gal. 3:13). Jesus bore the sins of the history of mankind to the cross and paid the price for our sins (see notes at chapter 3 on redemption).
4. The Galatians had received Christ through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Gal. 3:26-27). Due to the Galatians "*hearing of faith*" (Gal. 3:5b) they had "*received the Holy Spirit*" (Gal. 3:2). Justification (the forgiveness of sins) belonged to them (Gal. 2:16, 17; 3:11, 24). A study of the book of Galatians clearly illustrates how one is justified (set free from the bondage of sin) (see study # 32; Bible Justification):
  - a. One "*hears*" (Gal. 3:2, 5).
  - b. One obtains faith (i.e., a belief that motivates one to obey the voice of God as did Abraham) (Gal. 3:6).
  - c. One is baptized for the remission of sins and fellowship with God (Gal. 3:26-27).
5. Now Paul commanded the Galatians to "*stand fast*" in this faith and their justification that they had obtained. There is never a part of the Christian's life where one can relax his obedience. Now (and never is there a time) is not the time to turn away from the doctrine of Christ (see study # 33; Maintaining Your Salvation).
6. When one who was baptized for the remission of sins and named a Christian turns away from the teachings of Christ and follows another teaching, he has become "*entangled again in a yoke of bondage*."

- a. The word “*entangled*” (*enecho*) = “to hold within, cherish inward wrath at one... to be held, caught, entangled in a thing... metaph. seized with wonder” (LS 262). The “*yoke*” (*zugos*) = “anything that joins two bodies; the yoke or cross-bar tied by the zugodesmon to the end of the pole, and having loops at each end, by which two horses, mules or oxen drew the plough or carriage... metaph. the yoke of slavery” (LS 344).
  - b. Paul was simply admonishing the Galatians to not be seized with a doctrine that only holds one as a slave with no hope of justification. He used the word “*again*” to illustrate that the Galatians were once lost in slavery to sin but had been set free. Why go back to bondage?
- B.** “*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law*” (5:2-3).
1. Paul drew attention to the importance of the statement he was about to make and that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ (one with divinely delegated authority to speak).
  2. One may be circumcised today as a matter of Christian liberty (cf. I Cor. 7:19). To “*receive circumcision*,” however, is clearly to accept it as binding due to the Mosaic instructions (Lev. 12:3). To such a one “*Christ will profit you nothing.*” To profit through Christ is to receive justification of sins (Gal. 3:14). If I seek my justification through any other system than that of Christ, then I profit absolutely nothing at all.
  3. Lastly, Paul made it clear that if one were to seek his justification through the Mosaic Law, “*he is a debtor to do the whole law*” not just parts of it. We must remember the Galatians 3:10 passage: “*For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*” Many today want to seek justification of musical instruments in the church, altars, illegal marriages, etc. through the Mosaic Law, yet they fail to hear the words of the inspired apostle. If you are going to keep one part of the Law you must keep all the law (cf. Deut. 27:26).
- C.** “*Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace*” (5:4).
1. Nestle and Marshal (NM) text reads, “*you were discharged from Christ who by the law are justified, the grace ye fell from*” (NM 754).
  2. The ASV word “*severed*,” NM = “discharged,” and the KJV reads, “Christ is become of no effect unto you.” The Greek word is “*katergethete*” and is defined as “to leave unemployed or idle... to occupy the ground uselessly, cumber it... to make of none effect” (LS 413). The point being that those who would seek their “*justification by the law*” have no part in Christ. One who rejects the law of Christ has rejected Jesus, and in such a state the Lord rejects the sinner as well (cf. Hos. 4:6). The Word of God often refers to such a one as “*resisting the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 7:51; Rom. 13:2; II Tim. 3:8).
  3. Note the verb tenses in this verse. The word “*justified*” is present tense, indicating ongoing action, whereas the verb “*fallen away*” (*ezepestate*) is Aorists active (denoting past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action) (Friberg 584). The Galatians had currently sought their justification at the expense of the doctrine of Christ and so fell away (past in relation to the time in which they began seeking their justification by Mosaic Law). This is an important verse that destroys our Calvinist friends’ doctrine of “once saved always saved.” Paul clearly told us that that the moment we drop Christ and begin seeking our justification through other doctrines we fall away from grace. Note that there is a direct correlation between “*grace*” and the gospel / truth / doctrine of Christ that instructs one in the paths of righteousness (consider Titus 2:11-12; I Pet. 1:9-12) (see study # 34; Once Saved Always Saved).
  4. To fall away from grace is to live in sin, whereas those who continue in faith maintain their justification and access to the grace of God (cf. Rom. 5:1-2).
- D.** “*For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness*” (5:5).
1. “*We*,” as opposed to those who sought their justification through Mosaic Law, have a true “*hope of righteousness*” (that is to be a recipient of God’s eternal promise of salvation).

2. This heavenly hope is “*through the Spirit by faith.*” The work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal truth / gospel and thereby instruct man through the apostles and prophets (Jn. 14:26; 16:7ff). When one hears this truth and obeys it, he exercises the faith of Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:6; 18:19; 22:18; Gal. 3:6-9).
  3. Note that there is “*waiting*” to be done. No one knows when the Lord shall come and judge all of humanity; however, until that time we “*wait.*” The word “*wait*” infers faithful obedience until that hope is realized. The idea of “*waiting*” on God’s promises is a major theme in the book of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 3:28; 25:9; 40:31) (see study # 33; Maintaining Your Salvation).
- E. “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love*” (5:6).
1. To be “*in Christ Jesus*” one must be baptized (cf. Gal. 3:27) and remain faithful to Christ’s doctrine (cf. I Jn. 2:5-6).
  2. If I have been baptized into Christ and am currently abiding in truth, it doesn’t matter if I am circumcised or not circumcised, but what really matters is whether or not I am following the law of Christ (again read I Cor. 7:19 and Gal. 6:15).
  3. The author of Hebrews helps us with a precise definition of faith at Hebrews 11:1ff. The definition may be summarized as follows (as we take into consideration the faith of Abraham in Galatians and all other faithful mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11). Faith = an intellectual conclusion based upon divine creation and revelation and acting in obedience to God’s commandments. Such obedient action evidences our true faith in Jehovah God. Such a faith “*works through love*” (see study # 35; Bible Faith). Those who would deny that the Christian is to “*work*” deny the Holy Spirit’s instructions through the apostle Paul. The word “*work*” (*energeo*) = “to be in action, to operate” (LS 261). The verb “*work*” is in the present tense which again indicates ongoing action (Friberg 584). While it is true that I can continue believing within my mind that Jesus is the Christ, this is not the thrust of these verses. Abraham was one whose faith worked in the since that he believed God and so evidenced his faith by active works (not just sitting back making simple statements such as, ‘I believe’) (cf. James 2:19-24).
- F. “*Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion came not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveth the whole lump*” (5:7-9).
1. This verse helps us put many things together in this epistle to the Galatians. The Galatians had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:2b), believed it (i.e., received the Holy Spirit) (Gal. 3:2a), and obeyed the command to be baptized into Christ for the remission (justification) of their sins (Gal. 3:27).
  2. Now, however, many of the Galatians had “*fallen away from grace*” (Gal. 5:4) because false teachers “*zealously*” sought after them (Gal. 4:17) with a “*different gospel*” (Gal. 1:6). The “*different gospel*” is now clearly identified as a teaching that caused the Galatians to believe that they must seek their “*justification by the law*” (the Law of Moses) (cf. Gal. 5:4). To seek justification through a “*different gospel*” is now set in contrast to the “*truth.*” Here is the thrust of the book of Galatians (a contrast in doctrines followed).
  3. The Galatians, before the arrival and acceptance of the false teacher’s doctrines, were “*running well*” (i.e., abiding in truth). Now, however, the false teachers had “*hindered*” them so much as causing them to “not obey truth” but rather obey the false teacher’s doctrines. The word “*hindered*” (*anakopto*) = “to drive back, to beat back an assailant” (LS 57).
    - a. The false teachers literally “drove and beat back” the faithful Christians at Galatia with their false doctrines. This indicates their tireless work ethic. As noted above, Paul said they “*zealously*” sought after the Galatians. Their work was that of “*persuasion*” that was opposed to the calling of God through the gospel message (cf. II Thess. 2:13ff).
    - b. Many false brethren keep stirring the pot of false doctrines tirelessly until they convince you of their ways. Bit by bit, part by part, speech by speech, they drip their poison to you until you wear away and give in. May God help us all to stand as iron against the doctrines of men that are truly stinky drips of sludge. When the Christian gives in to this sludge of filth, it is because he has allowed the leavening of false teaching to pollute his whole being.

- G. *“I have confidence to youward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be”* (5:10).
1. The word *“confidence”* (*peitho*) = “the faculty of persuasion, winning eloquence, persuasiveness... a persuasion in the mind... a means of persuasion, inducement, argument” (LS 616). Interestingly, the Greek word *peitho* is in the perfect tense which indicates both past and present action (Friberg 584). Paul had been previously persuaded and was currently confident that the Galatians would not let this false doctrine that had crept in among them destroy them.
  2. Note that not only did the false teachers teach a false doctrine (Gal. 1:6), zealously seek after the Christians with their persuasive words (Gal. 4:7; 5:8), and hinder (beating the Galatians with their error), but they also were recognized as those who *“trouble you.”* One must identify who the false teachers are and then make an aggressive conclusion that these brethren seek us *“in no good way”* (Gal. 4:17) and that they *“trouble you.”* Far too many brethren today are trying to protect false teachers while they claim that those of us who expose them are recklessly damaging their reputation and erroneously judging their character. Why don’t brethren put the blame where it belongs and stop trying to protect those who make shipwreck of their own and other’s faith with their false doctrines (cf. I Tim. 1:18-20)? Let us note that these troublemakers will be judge of God and spend eternity in hell if they do not repent. Paul added, *“whosoever he be.”* No matter how popular and well loved a man may be, if he brings another gospel he will be judged accordingly. While brethren may be a respecter of persons, it is not so with God (cf. Acts 10:34) (see study # 36; Attitudes toward False Teachers).
  3. An important note from this verse is that God expects the members of the body of the Christ to have a *“mind”* that is united in truth as opposed to having unity in diversity of beliefs.
- H. *“But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away”* (5:11).
1. Apparently some of the Judaizing Christians were pointing out Paul’s supposed inconsistencies in his preaching. On one occasion, Paul circumcised Timothy that his preaching would be received among the Jews (not for the purpose of obeying Mosaic Law) (cf. Acts 16:1ff). The Judaizers took this to mean that Paul preached circumcision, yet to the Gentiles he rejected it.
  2. Paul countered this argument with the fact that he continued (as in the past) to be persecuted for preaching that circumcision is a matter of indifference. If he truly had taught that circumcision was needful for salvation, why was he still being persecuted by the Jews?
  3. The fact of the matter was that Paul continued in consistency to preach that circumcision avails nothing but rather keeping the commandments of God, and this preaching was a *“stumbling-block of the cross.”*
- I. *“I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision”* (5:12).
1. They that *“unsettle”* you are the false teachers who had zealously sought the Galatians out in no good way (Gal. 4:17). Their false doctrines had caused many Galatian Christians to *“fall from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). To *“unsettle”* (*anastatoo*) = “made to rise up and depart, driven from one’s home... of cities and countries, ruined, laid waste... to unsettle, upset” (LS 62). These false teachers were ‘ruining’ brethren’s eternal hopes of heaven. Again, let us identify what these false teachers are doing rather than try to protect them! (see study # 36; Attitudes Toward False Teachers).
  2. Paul said in relation to these false teachers who were teaching that a man must obey the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ (Acts 15:5) that they would even *“go beyond circumcision.”*
    - a. Consider Nestle and Marshal’s translation, “I would that indeed will (might) cut themselves off the ones unsettling you” (NM 754). The International Children’s Bible (NCV) states, “I wish the people who are bothering you would castrate themselves!” The New American Standard Version states, “Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”
    - b. Note that the entire phrase, *“go beyond circumcision”* is one word in the Greek, i.e., *apokopsontai*. This Greek word is defined as “to cut off, hew off, of men’s limbs” (LS

100). “To cut off” (Moulton 43). The word is used of cutting off of limbs of the body in Mark 9:43-45 and John 18:10.

- c. The verse is clear, Paul used righteous indignation against the false teachers who had pressed circumcision so zealously on the Galatians when he told them that he would that they not only circumcise themselves but even cut everything off (i.e., make a eunuch of themselves). Such an act and teaching would thereby make the false teacher not only unaccepted by the Judaizers but the Christians as well.
- d. Consider the comments of Lenski: “With their circumcision these Judaizers want to outdo Paul and take the Galatians away from him. But if they have no more to offer than Paul offers, if, as they claim, he, too, still preaches circumcision, how will they be able to outdo him? Well, there is a way – would that they might try it! Let them have themselves castrated! Then they would, indeed, leave Paul behind who, as they say, still preaches only circumcision. But this is said with an eye to the Galatians, a fact which we should not overlook. These Judaizers, who are unsettling the Galatians in order to get them away from Paul, who boast that they have something better than he has, can outdo him only by going to the full length of their claim: if they can say that Paul still advocates circumcision they should adopt castration. How the Galatians would then admire and follow these eunuchs!”<sup>1</sup>

## II. Christian Liberties can be used in an illegal way to destroy brethren (5:13-15):

A. *“For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another”* (5:13).

1. This verse is closely associated with chapter 5:1. Christ set us free from the bondage of law in that He provided the forgiveness of our sins. Verse 13 indicates that this freedom from sin is obtained when one responds to the “*call*.” God calls sinful man to freedom with the gospel message (cf. Gal. 5:8; II Thess. 2:13-14).
2. Now that the Galatians had obtained freedom (i.e., forgiveness of their sins), Paul admonished them to “*not use your freedom for an occasion to the flesh.*”
  - a. The word “*occasion*” (*aphorme*) = “a starting-point, esp. in war, a base of operations... the origin, occasion or pretext of a thing... the means with which one begins a thing” (LS 139). The beginning of verse 13 states, “for ye...” and so the thought is connected to verse 12. Paul had condemned the false teachers of Galatia for hindering, troubling, and unsettling the Galatians with the doctrine of circumcision. Paul had made it clear in this study that circumcision is a liberty (does not save anyone). When one has been freed from sin, he is given liberties such as circumcision. Now Paul explained that the Galatians were not to use their liberation from sin and liberties in circumcision as a basis for “*the flesh.*”
  - b. The “*flesh*” (*sarx*) = “carnality (relating to the desires and appetites of the flesh or body; sensual... worldly or earthly)” (Moulton 363); “the flesh as opposed to the spirit; also for man’s nature generally” (LS 724). Throughout the NT the idea of “*flesh*” and “*Spirit*” is set in contrast (cf. Matt. 26:41; Jn. 3:6; 6:63; Rom. 6:19; 7:5, 25 etc.). The apostle Paul wrote, “*for they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit it life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and 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 dwelleth in you*” (Rom. 8:5-9).
  - c. The logic of the Galatians appears to have been that they understood that they had liberties through Christ Jesus and so considered many sinful acts as liberties. With this view they could participate in sinful acts such as Paul list below (i.e., the works of the flesh) and they could keep any part of the Mosaic Law as though it were binding so long as they kept their faith in Jesus Christ. The whole basis for said thinking was their liberties (such as circumcision). Here we see the issue defined. When the false teachers came to Galatia

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<sup>1</sup> Lenski, R. C. H. Commentary on the New Testament: Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians. Pp. 271

with their false doctrines, the Galatians received them and were willing to follow their doctrines so long as it did not interfere with their outward faith in Jesus Christ. Paul therefore gave the Galatians a lesson on the purity and importance of keeping the doctrine of Christ as opposed to other doctrines.

3. Rather than looking to their liberties as a way of practicing ecumenism, they were to use these liberties to “*serve others.*” I should be using my liberties (circumcision, eating of meats, etc.) as a way of serving others for their well being.

**B. “*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” (5:14).**

1. The phrase “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” is taken from Leviticus 19:18 and brought into the NT as part of the Law of Christ. Jesus quoted from this OT passage at Matthew 22:37-40 and defined the “*neighbor*” as one who is willing to help his fellow man in need (Lk. 10:25ff; Parable of the Good Samaritan).
2. Whether it be the Mosaic or Law of Christ, the law is “*fulfilled*” (meet the obligations thereof) when one exercises a caring love for others who are in need as we would certainly hope that others would do to us during our time of need.

**C. “*But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*” (5:15).**

1. This verse has been cited much of late among brethren who believe that when a man exposes the false teaching of a man who teaches or preaches at a different congregation than he this man is “*biting and devouring*” rather than acting in love.
2. We must keep the context before us. Paul was speaking of Christians who had been freed from the bondage of sin and had liberties, such as circumcision, that they were not to use as an excuse to sin. Paul’s teaching is that rather than using my liberty as an excuse to sin, I should use it in a way that illustrates my love for other brethren. When I bind my liberties, such as circumcision, on others (as the false teachers in Galatia were doing) then rather than acting in love I have “*bitten and devoured*” my brother and even “*consumed*” him in error. I have caused him to lose his soul with my liberty.

**III. A contrast between walking by the “*flesh*” or “*Spirit*” (5:16-18):**

**A. “*But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*” (5:16).**

1. Instead of using your Christian liberties as an excuse to live in sin why not “*walk by the Spirit.*”
  - a. What does it mean to “*walk by the Spirit?*”
  - b. The idea of “*walking*” in the NT is to pattern one’s conduct after Christ. Paul told the Ephesian brethren, “*I beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called...*” (Eph. 4:1). The gospel message “*calls*” (II Thess. 2:13-14), and it is the Holy Spirit that has delivered these truths (Jn. 14:26; 16:7-15). The commandment therefore is that I conduct myself in accordance with the word of God delivered by the Holy Spirit. The inference is clear. I can and must know truth / gospel if I am commanded to obey it.
2. When I follow the gospel, I understand that it demands that I put away all things identified as sin (Eph. 4:31). Here is a contrast between the ways of God (walking by the Spirit) and the ways of man (walking in such a way that I believe benefits me). There are multitudes of examples that we may examine to see this point.
  - a. One may look upon a woman to lust after her in his heart and even follow through with the lustful thoughts due to living by the flesh. Jesus, however, said, “*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*” (Matt. 5:28).
  - b. Again, when someone mistreats us, we may be inclined to get revenge, yet the Lord said, “*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*” (Matt. 5:39).
  - c. We may be inclined to give the best seats in the church building to a rich man who visits while sending the poor man to the back. Again, James wrote, “*My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there com in also a poor man in the vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say,*

*sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?”* (James 2:1-4).

- B. *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would”* (5:17).
1. Paul explained that the *“flesh”* and the *“Spirit”* are *“contrary”* to one another. The word *“contrary”* (*antikeimai*) = “to be set over against, lie opposite” (LS 78). “To occupy an opposite position; to oppose, to be adverse to” (Moulton 32). The way of the Holy Spirit is opposed to the ways of man’s fleshly desires.
  2. Paul spoke of this spiritual battle that takes place within the mind of any true Christian who is trying to follow God’s laws at Romans 7. Paul stated, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin”* (Rom. 7:22-25).
- C. *“But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law”* (5:18).
1. Again, to be *“led by the Spirit”* is to walk by the precepts and commandments of God.
  2. Such a one is *“not under the law.”*
    - a. While once the Holy Spirit *“moved”* prophets to speak the word of God in the Mosaic System (cf. II Pet. 1:21), the same Spirit moved the apostles and prophets to speak the new covenant (Eph. 3:1-5).
    - b. The covenant teaches that the Mosaic system has been nailed to the cross (i.e., abrogated) (Col. 2:14). The Lord removed the Mosaic system because it was *“weak and unprofitable”* in that it could not make a man *“perfect”* (i.e., forgiven of sins) (cf. Heb. 7:18-19).
    - c. The conclusion is simple. The Holy Spirit revealed a new covenant to replace the Mosaic system (cf. Heb. 8:6ff), and so those who are led by this new covenant by the Holy Spirit are certainly not under the law that cannot forgive sins!

#### IV. The Works of the Flesh (5:19-21):

- A. *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:”* (5:19-21) (see study # 37; The Works of the Flesh):
1. *“Fornication”* (*porneia*) = “fornication; prostitution” (LS 662; Moulton 337). “Sexual intercourse between a man and woman not married to each other” (AHD 526).
  2. *“Uncleanness”* (*akatharsia*) = “impure” (LS 25). “Uncleanness; lewdness (preoccupied with sex and sexual desire; lustful... obscene; indecent... wicked [AHD 726]); impurity of motive” (Moulton 11).
  3. *“Lasciviousness”* (*aselgeia*) = “Licentiousness [lacking moral discipline or sexual restraint. Having no regard for accepted rules or standards (AHD 728)]” (LS 123). “Outrageous, intemperance; licentiousness, lasciviousness, insolence, outrageous behavior” (Moulton 55).
  4. *“Idolatry”* (*eidololatreia*) = “Idolatry” (LS 227). The root word (*eido*) is defined as “to see, perceive, behold... to look at... to see mentally... visible” (LS 226-227). The apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, *“for we walk by faith, not by sight”* (II Cor. 5:7). The word *“sight”* (*eidos*) is “that which is seen, form, shape, figure” (LS 226). It is used in other passages of the NT. The apostle John said, *“My little children, guard yourselves from idols”* (5:21).
    - a. The word *“idols”* (*eidolon*) is from the root word *eido* and Latin *Video*. It is defined as “a form, shape, figure; image or statue; hence, an idol, image of a god” (Moulton 117). The act of worshipping an image based upon human perception is idolatry. The Christian does not worship based upon *“sight (eido)”* but upon *“faith”* (divine revelation). Many today are looking for a feel-good, see-something religion. The word of God, however, is a system of instructions for Godly living (II Cor. 4:18). Those who reject the teachings of Christ and use their own human perception are practicing idolatry. Humanism is therefore idolatry defined.

- b. Idolatry comes in a variety of forms other than worshipping false gods. One may exclaim with vigor that he would not participate in idolatry yet have no problem with worshipping God in unauthorized ways. Consider Isaiah 46:12 in its context of idolatry. Those idolaters of Judah were “*stouthearted, that are far from righteousness.*” I Samuel 15:23 states the nature of idolatry as well. “*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*” The rebellious are stouthearted and stubborn as is evidenced by their rejection of the authority of God. Saul did what he thought was best rather than what God commanded, and so it was with Judah in the days of Isaiah. Many today want to do what they think best rather than following God’s divine standard. Children’s church, theatrics, food fest, lock-ins, and games, to name a few, are ways some churches are attempting to raise attendance.
5. “*Sorcery*” (*pharmakeia*) = “the use of drugs, potions, spells... poisoning, witchcraft... remedy, cure” (LS 855). “Employment of drugs for any purpose; sorcery, magic, enchantment” (Moulton 423).
  6. “*Enmities*” (*echthra*) = “hatred, enmity (hostility, antagonism, animosity... these nouns refer to the feeling or expression of ill will. Hostility, in addition can refer to clear expression of this in the form of threats or violent acts [AHD 455]) ... to be at feud with one... to engage in hostility with” (LS 340).
  7. “*Strife*” (*eris*) = “Strife, quarrel, debate, contention... to meet in battle... contention, rivalry. Eris, a goddess who excites to war, sister and companion of Ares” (LS 314).
  8. “*Jealousy*” (*zelos*) = “Jealousy, envy, malice, indignation... spiteful” (Moulton 181).
  9. “*Wraths*” (*thumos*) = “the heart as the seat of anger” (LS 371).
  10. “*Factions*” (*eritheia*) = “to serve for hire, to serve a party, the service of a party, party spirit; feud, faction (Moulton 166).
  11. “*Divisions*” (*dichostasia*) = “standing apart, dissension (a difference in opinion, esp. one that leads to contention or strife; AHD 408)... sedition (conduct or language inciting rebellion against the authority of a state... insurrection; rebellion; AHD 1109)” (LS 206). The apostle Paul told us that we are to “*mark*” (watch) such individuals because they do not have our best interest in mind. Paul told the Galatian brethren that the false teachers among them “*zealously seek you in no good way*” (Gal. 4:17). Clearly we see their *modus operandi*.
  12. “*Parties*” (*haireisis*) = “a taking, esp. of a town... the taking by the king... a taking for oneself, a choosing, choice... a choice, deliberate plan, purpose... a sect, school, etc. : esp. a religious sect, such as the Sadducees and Pharisees... a heresy (an opinion or doctrine at variance with established religious beliefs; AHD 607).
  13. “*Envyings*” (*phthonos*) = “ill-will, envy, jealousy... to feel envy or jealousy...to incur envy or dislike” (LS 861). Peter requested that Simon the sorcerer repent after he had obeyed the gospel because he had sinned with his thoughts (cf. Acts 8:22). Here is a sin of the mind. If I have inward jealousy and allow that to cause me to dislike one, then I have sinned against the Father and must repent asking the Lord to forgive me.
  14. “*Drunkness*” (*methe*) = “strong drink... to be pretty well drunk” (LS 492; Moulton 261).
  15. “*Revellings*” (*komos*) = “a village festival: a revel, carousal, merry-making... a band of revelers (to engage in uproarious festivities; make merry... a noisy festivity; AHD 1057)” (LS 460).
  16. “*And such like*” that is, any sinful conduct that is opposed to the Holy Spirit’s revealed word and in unity to the desires of the flesh.
- B. “*Of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (5:21).
1. Paul told the Galatians now, as apparently he had when present with them, that those who practice unauthorized works will not “*inherit the kingdom of God.*” There is a way of the flesh and a way of the Spirit. Each leads to its respective eternal and consequential abode (cf. Rev. 20:10-15).
  2. The idea of “*inheritance*” has been previously examined at Galatians 3:14, 18, 29). Christ died on the cross to redeem sinful man from the consequences of his sins. This is the “*promise*” that

God had given to Abraham. Recipients of God's promises (eternal life through the forgiveness of sins) are those who inherit God's rich blessings. Note that receiving the inheritance is equated with "*the kingdom of God.*" The "*kingdom of God*" is often used in the NT to reference the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 16:18). We know that when Christ comes again, He will deliver up His church to God (I Cor. 15:24). The people who comprise the church (the kingdom of God) will spend eternity with God in heaven as a "*kingdom of God*" (II Pet. 1:10-11).

**V. The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-25):**

**A.** "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law*" (5:22).

**1.** Keeping the context before us, we note that the "*works of the flesh*" are opposed (contrary) to the "*fruit of the Spirit.*" Those who walk after fleshly lust will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who walk by the Spirit will receive the kingdom of God. The apostle John revealed to us what bearing fruit means to the Christian in John 15:1-10. Jesus is the vine and His disciples are the branches (John 15:5). To bear fruit is to abide in Christ's commandments (Jn. 15:6-10). What is the fruit of the Spirit? (see study # 38; The Fruit of the Spirit):

**a.** "*Love*" (*agape*) = "brotherly love, charity; the love of God for man and of man for God, NT" (LS 4). Love is what evidences one's faith in Jesus Christ. If I truly love God, then I will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15). If I truly love God, then I will love my brethren in their time of physical need (cf. I Jn. 3:17). If I truly love God, then I will love my brethren in their time of spiritual need (I Jn. 4:7-10). As Christ did all possible that I might escape the consequences of my sins, so I must help my brother. When my brother is in sin, I must help him to see the error of his way and promote repentance and prayer for forgiveness. The evidence of one's faith is a true love for God which illustrates itself in action (cf. Heb. 11:1-4).

**b.** "*Joy*" (*chara*) = "joy, delight" (LS 881). When the world in general mopes over the hardships of this life, the Christian is "*filled with joy*" knowing that such hardships produce patience and a greater hope of heaven (cf. James 1:2-4). The Christian is ever delighted in the hope of heaven! The apostle Paul therefore said, "*Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4).

**c.** "*Peace*" (*eirene*) = "peace, time of peace (the absence of war or other hostilities; AHD 912)" (LS 230). The Lord is the "*God of peace*" (Rom. 15:33) who governs His people with an everlasting covenant (law) of peace (cf. Ezek. 37:26). Peace is to be free from conflict. The Christian will always experience conflict from the world as he or she tries to live a Christian life (II Tim. 3:12) because this is our "*appointment*" in this life (I Thess. 3:3). Peace that the Christian possesses is peace with Jehovah God. The Lord is against those who sin and will bring great wrath upon them, yet to those who live Godly there is peace (cf. Rom. 2:5-11).

**d.** "*Longsuffering*" (*makrothumia*) = "longsuffering; forbearance" (LS 485). "Patience; patient enduring of evil, fortitude...slowness of avenging injuries, long-suffering, forbearance, clemency" (Moulton 256). Jesus displayed a great example of what being longsuffering is all about. The author of Hebrews said of Jesus, "*Who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity; and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins*" (5:2-3). Let us first identify the "*ignorant and erring.*" There are times in man's life that we sin in ignorance to God's laws. Many use euphemisms and steal from their employers in all good conscience because their conscience has not been trained to differentiate between good and error (cf. Numb. 15:22ff). Still others know God's laws yet give in to the lust of the flesh (Rom. 7:14, 20). Whatever the case, when man sins he has separated himself from Jehovah God (cf. Isa. 59:1-2; I Jn. 1:5-6). The author of Hebrews told us that Jesus "*bears gently*" (*metriopatheo*) with such sinners. The Greek word used here is defined as, "to bear reasonably with" (LS 507); "To moderate one's passions; to be gentle, compassionate" (Moulton 268). "To moderate one's feelings, deal gently with the sinners" (AG 515). Though Jehovah God has passionate hatred for sin (cf. Rom. 12:9), He is forbearing and

longsuffering with sinful man because He loves us (cf. II Pet. 3:9; I Jn. 4:10ff). There will come a day, however, when His gentle longsuffering and patience will end against sinful man (cf. II Thess. 1:7ff). While in the flesh, Jesus suffered all things that we do (i.e., temptation and pain) yet never sinned (cf. 4:15). Jesus understands firsthand what it means to be tempted to sin and is therefore forbearing and longsuffering. He has provided every avenue of rescue (cf. Heb. 2:18) and help (cf. Heb. 4:16) in that He has laid down His life as a living sacrifice for our sins. The admonition, therefore, is that I be longsuffering with others who are in error as I am thankful that Christ suffers and bears me gently when I err. Let us keep in mind that nowhere do the scriptures teach that we are to be ever suffering with the erring. This was the error of the church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:20).

- e. “*Kindness*” (*chrestotes*) = “goodness of heart, kindness... of persons, goodness, honesty” (LS 895). “To use, make use of, employ, to avail one’s self of, to treat, behave towards” (Moulton 438). This Greek word is found a total of eight times in the NT and more times translated “goodness.” The overall meaning seems to be fair and good deeds. God is more than fair (kind / *chrestotes*) to His created beings in that He provides a way of justification from our sins (cf. Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4). The Christian is to be fair and just in his dealings with others. As God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), nor is He prejudice (Gal. 3:28), so the Christian is to be. The Christian’s judgments and treatment of others is dictated by truth (cf. Jn. 7:24).
  - f. “*Goodness*” (*agathosune*) = “goodness, kindness” (LS 3). *Agathosune* is found four times in the NT (i.e., Rom. 15:14; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; II Thess. 1:11). Paul groups “*goodness*” with “*righteousness and truth*” at Eph. 5:9. The good thing to do is always the right thing to do. The gospel of Jesus Christ reveals truths for man to follow and is therefore good. The Christian who would be good and filled with goodness is the one who will follow truth (James 4:17).
  - g. “*Faithfulness*” (*pistis*) = “persuasion of a thing, confidence, assurance... that which gives confidence... an assurance” (LS 641). The author of Hebrews similarly defined faith by saying, “*Now faith is assurance of things hoped for a conviction of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1). I did not see God create the world nor did I witness Jesus hanging on the cross, yet by the creation that surrounds me and the revelation given by God I am assured that God is. I evidence my faith in Jesus by “faithfulness” (acts of obedience) as those who have gone on before me have (cf. Heb. 11:1ff).
  - h. “*Meekness*” (*praotes*) = “mildness, gentleness” (LS 667). “Mild; gentle, kind... forbearance, kindness, benevolence” (Moulton 339). Meekness is the ability to deal with those who err in a spirit of mildness, gentleness, and kindness. There are times when meekness applies; however, there, too, are times when hard words that lash like a rod must be said (cf. I Cor. 4:21).
  - i. “*Self-control*” (*egkrateia*) = “mastery over a person or thing... self-control” (LS 222). The Christian is to be a master over one’s passions, anger, emotions, and life in general (cf. II Pet. 1:6).
2. After giving a list of the “*fruit of the Spirit*” Paul adds, “*Against such there is no law.*” Whether it be civil, Mosaic, or any law thought of, such qualities of life will not be condemned by any law known to man.
- B. “*And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof*” (5:24).
1. The idea of “*crucifying the flesh*” is found in Romans 6:6 where Paul stated, “*knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.*” To “*crucify the flesh*” is therefore the mental decision to put sin out of our lives (see study # 19; Crucify the Desires of the Flesh).
  2. The word “*passions*” (*pathema*) = “emotion, passion; an affection” (Moulton 312). The word “*lusts*” (*epithumia*) = “to set the heart upon; to desire, long for, have earnest desire” (Moulton 156). Both of these terms define what walking after the flesh is all about (i.e., doing what one’s inner desires are as opposed to being governed by the Spirit).

3. What this verse states is that those who have truly accepted Jesus Christ abide in His divine instructions which demand that we put away our self guided mind (the flesh) and be guided by His Holy Word.
- C. *“If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk”* (5:25).
1. To *“live by the Spirit”* is to *“walk”* after the instructions of the Spirit.
  2. The Galatians were living in a deluded state. They thought that as long as their faith in Jesus remained they maintained their fellowship with God regardless of how they had been affected by the false teachers. Paul pointedly told them that they had *“fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Paul now reminded the Galatians that it is not enough to simply say that one believes (i.e., lives by the Spirit), one must *“walk”* by the Spirit’s instructions. Such a verse destroys faith only types of doctrines.
- D. *“Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another”* (5:26).
1. To be *“vainglorious”* (*kenodoxos*) is to be “empty, vain” glory (LS 427). Vainglorious is boasting in things which one ought not to be proud of. What vain boasting occurred in Galatia? The context of this chapter suggests that some of the Galatians were boasting that they were circumcised (a matter of liberty).
  2. This boasting led to *“provoking”* (i.e., “challenge” Strong’s 4292). There was an apparent accounting of those who had been circumcised and those who had not. Those who had not been circumcised were being challenged by those who were as though it were a matter of spiritual salvation.
  3. *“Envy”* took place in the area of circumcision as well. These brethren were so eaten up with false doctrines that they envied each other in some way.

### Synopsis of Galatians Chapter 5

The Galatians who received the false doctrine of circumcision had been *“zealously sought after in no good way”* (Gal. 4:17) by teachers who taught a *“different gospel”* (Gal. 1:6). Rather than *“casting out”* (Gal. 4:30) the teachers, they received their teaching to the detriment of their souls (Gal. 5:2, 4). Paul pointedly told the Galatians what these false teachers’ work did to them. The Galatians had been *“hindered”* by the false teacher’s *“persuasive”* words (Gal. 5:7). The false teacher’s doctrines had *“troubled”* and *“unsettled”* the faithful Christians. Nowhere in this chapter do we find Paul attempting to protect the reputation of those who had taught *“different doctrines.”* The apostle rather clearly exposed the error taught and explained that those who follow such teachings had been *“severed from Christ”* (Gal. 5:4).

The different doctrine under consideration was the binding of circumcision upon all who would be called Christians. Apparently those who did not receive circumcision were ill treated by those who did (cf. Gal. 5:15, 26). Paul reminded the Galatians that such binding is a work of the flesh (i.e., sinful). Paul drew a clear contrast between the *“works of the flesh”* and the *“fruit of the Spirit”* to illustrate to the Galatians that God has delivered, by divine decree, a form of life to live. When one walks otherwise (by the flesh), he shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21). Christians today are to have the mind of the apostles in that they would be willing to crucify (kill) any desires, opinions, or doctrines that contradict the teachings of Jesus Christ. While today’s standard may be “if it feels good do it” the Lord’s command is to keep His word (II Jn. 9).

## Chapter 6

### I. Restoring the Erring (6:1-10):

- A. *“Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted”* (6:1).
1. To be *“overtaken”* (*prolambano*) is to “take or receive before... to take or seize beforehand... to take away or off” (LS 679- 680).
  2. Paul considered the brother who walks by the flesh (as opposed to the Spirit). Said one has been seized or carried away in sin.
  3. The *“spiritual”* brother (i.e., the one who walks by the Spirit) has the responsibility to *“restore”* (bring back to original state) the one who walks by the flesh. The word *“restore”* infers that the one walking after the flesh once walked by the Spirit.
  4. The method of restoration is given; i.e., *“in a spirit of gentleness.”* The word gentleness (meekness) has already been defined above as we examined the fruit of the spirit as, “Mild; gentle, kind... forbearance, kindness, benevolence” (Moulton 339). Paul’s command is that the erring are to be initially treated gently and mildly as opposed to smearing their sin in their face while jumping all over them. The *“spiritual”* are to be patient and longsuffering with those who err *“lest thou also be tempted.”* The spiritually minded brother will restore the erring while understanding with humility and taking into consideration that he, too, if not careful, can fall from God’s grace through sin. Paul seems to be saying that sin happens in each of our lives. When I sin, I hope that others will be gentle, mild, and patient with me until I see the error of my way and repent (see study # 39; The Christian’s Responsibility to Restore the Erring).
- B. *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”* (6:2).
1. What *“burdens”* are under consideration in this context? The burdens under consideration are obviously the sins committed by those who choose to walk by the flesh.
  2. How do I *“bear”* (*bastazo*) my erring brethren’s sin? The Greek word *“bastazo”* = “to lift, raise... to bear, carry, support... to hold in one’s hands... to carry off or take away” (LS 148). How can I “lift, carry off, or take away” one’s sins? I can do so just as the Lord does. Consider these facts regarding how Jesus deals with the erring:
    - a. Jesus *“bears gently”* the erring that they may repent (Heb. 5:2). The words *“bears gently”* (*metriopatheo*) is defined as “to bear reasonably with” (LS 507); “To moderate one’s passions; to be gentle, compassionate” (Moulton 268). Putting these thoughts with the admonition that we deal gently with the erring we see that this is how Christ deals with all sinners.
    - b. Secondly, consider the fact that the Christian is commanded to love our brethren wherever they may be (I Pet. 2:17). True Bible love takes into consideration the souls of others as God considers our souls (I Jn. 4:10ff).
  3. When one gently deals with those in error with a spirit of patience and longsuffering, the *“law of Christ”* is fulfilled. The book of Galatians has clearly identified a law other than the Mosaic Law (Gal. 1:11-12). The Christian is under Law. Paul termed this law the *“law of Christ.”* Paul’s statement regarding Peter, Barnabas, and the Jews *“dissimulation”* at Galatians 2:14 proved that the gospel / truth equated to law. Paul said, *“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles ... etc.”* The Jews, Peter, and Barnabas *“walked”* after the flesh on this occasion as opposed to walking after the Spirit (the Law of Christ).
- C. *“For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor”* (6:3-4).
1. Following the context of restoring the erring brother who is now walking after the flesh, Paul instructed that first, the spiritual are to attempt to restore the erring. Secondly, the spiritual are to bear the burdens of sin that has ensnared the erring. Thirdly, the spiritual are now instructed to not be self deluded by thinking that he is greater than the erring. Such an air of superiority comes when we begin to compare ourselves with those who err. We see that we are strong,

- spiritual, and are not weighed down with the error of our brethren and begin to think to highly of ourselves. Said individual give way to sin in their arrogance.
2. Not only should I test others' teachings and practices (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6), but here Paul commanded that I put myself to the test. When I have examined myself and found that I currently walk by the Spirit as opposed to the flesh, then may I glory in Jehovah God for my self and no one else (see study # 3; Test the Spirits).
- D. *"For each man shall bear his own burden"* (6:5).
1. The Greek word "*bastazo*" is used again (cf. Gal. 6:2) meaning carry off or take away. Galatians 6:2 and 6:5 are paradoxical (a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true). Two truths are taught in these two verses. At verse 2, the truth of the matter is that I must love my brother and see to it that I do all within my power to help him rid sin out of his life. At verse 5 we find personal responsibility. It is always easier to see the faults of others, but what about me? What if I put myself to the test and find that I am walking after the flesh? Should I not now "*bear*" (rid myself, carry off, take away) my burden of sin?
  2. Clearly verse 2 speaks of my responsibility to others regarding their sin, and verse 5 teaches that I am responsible for my own sin, too.
- E. *"But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things"* (6:6).
1. The word "*but*" indicates a contrasting conjunction. If I fulfill my duty to bear my brethren's load of sin, then I have taught the Word of God. The erring that has been taught to forsake fleshly living is to "*communicate unto him that teaches in all good things.*"
  2. The word "*communicate*" (*koinoneo*) = "to have or do in common with, have a share of or take part in a thing with another... to have dealings with or intercourse" (LS 440). What should the one being taught out of error share or have in common (fellowship) with the one who is walking by the Spirit? Paul told us that the two (i.e., the one taught out of his error and the one doing the teaching) are to share in "*all good things.*" The only possible conclusion is that the "*good things*" of verse 6 is the "*fruit of the Spirit*" mentioned in chapter 5:22-23. When one so walks, he "*fulfills the law of Christ.*" When two are equally walking in truth, they share together in fellowship of salvation (cf. I Jn. 1:5-7).
  3. Though many have concluded that the one taught is to share his finances with him that teaches, I do not see how such a conclusion can be made. There is absolutely nothing in this context that speaks of a preacher or teacher receiving monetary wages from the erring for teaching them. Such a conclusion ignores the context of the two chapters (5 & 6).
- F. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life"* (6:7-8).
1. Self delusion may cause one to think within that God will not hold him accountable for walking after the flesh. Paul's admonitions are now formed into solid commands by this warning. "*God is not mocked*" (i.e., God will not be ridiculed as though His warnings and commandments have no consequences when not followed).
  2. Note that these verses connect the context of chapter 6 all the way back to chapter 5:16ff in that walking after the flesh continues to be set in contrast with walking by the Spirit.
  3. The consequences of walking after the flesh is said to be "*corruption.*" "*Corruption*" must be equated to "*not inheriting the kingdom of God*" (Gal. 5:21). When I sow (works) unto the Spirit, I am walking by the Spirit. When I walk by the Spirit, I please God and can expect to receive "*eternal life.*"
- G. *"And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (6:9).
1. What is included in the "*well-doing*?" Following the context, "*well-doing*" must include walking by the Spirit as opposed to the flesh (Gal. 5:16-17), helping my brother see the error of his ways (Gal. 6:1), being on guard lest I find my self in sin (Gal. 6:3), testing myself to see whether I am walking in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh (Gal. 6:4), and following after fellowship in the law of Christ with my brethren (Gal. 6:6) all the while understanding that there are consequences to walking after the flesh.

2. Though the road to “*eternal life*” may at times seem to be wearisome, the Christian is admonished not to “*faint*.” Like a long distance runner, the Christian is to press to the end that he may cross the line of the race (life). Such a one will reap the rewards of heaven!
- H. “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith*” (6:10).
1. The word “*opportunity*” (*kairos*) = “the right point of time, the proper time or season of action, the exact or critical time... at the right time, opportune... critical times” (LS 392).
  2. The one who walks by the Spirit is to seize the right point of time when a fit word is to be spoken to the erring (one walking by the flesh). Paul now included those of the world as well as our brethren. The one who walks by the Spirit should be willing to speak up when the world and brethren take the course of flesh.
  3. The phrase “*let us work that which is good*” is a command to expose error no matter what its source (cf. Eph. 5:11). The lost of the world will remain so without my exposing their sins and causing them to feel shame for their ungodly deeds. The Christian who errs by flesh will likely remain in the direction of flesh if no one attempts to restore him by exposing his dark deeds. Here is a commandment of God that brethren expose other brethren’s sins along with the sins of the world! To do this takes a spiritual mind, a mind that thinks on Godly things and is not caught off guard by erring brethren or the world.
  4. Let brethren who so choose to call such a one a watchdog go ahead and do so. The one who walks by the Spirit cannot be hurt or moved in his purpose to follow the Lord’s commandments.

## II. Conclusion (6:11-18):

- A. “*See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand*” (6:11).
1. Some of Paul’s epistles were written by others as he dictated. Tertius wrote Romans as Paul dictated (cf. Rom. 16:22).
  2. There were other epistles that Paul wrote himself (cf. II Thess. 3:17; I Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18).
  3. The statement before us simply indicates that Paul authenticated the letter by signing it with this statement.
  4. The large size of the letters used to write could mean a number of things that are all pure conjecture.
- B. “*As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ*” (6:12).
1. The phrase, “*make a fair show*” is one word in Greek (*euprosopesai*) = “to make a fair show” (LS 331). Moulton defines the word as “to carry or make a fair appearance, to be specious (deceptively attractive... having the ring of truth or plausibility but actually fallacious) (Moulton 175). Outwardly, these false teachers “*desired*” their doctrine of circumcision to appear attractive to the Gentiles.
  2. The word “*compel*” (*anagkazo*) = “to force, compel... to be forced to do a thing” (LS 53). If the Judaizers could compel the Gentiles to be circumcised, they would be able to halt the persecution that was occurring on the part of zealous Jews.
  3. It becomes apparent that the Judaizing teachers were seeking peace at the cost of the doctrine of Christ. They mixed and mingled the law of Christ with the Mosaic Law in an attempt to please all men (Christian and Jew that held to Mosaic System). Their solution was to have the Gentiles circumcised to appease the Jews and to hold to the belief in Christ to appease the Christians (cf. Acts 15:5).
  4. Question: Was Paul in error by making such a judgment about the Judaizers? The answer must be NO. Paul had knowledge of what the Judaizers were teaching, what they were saying about him, and what their motivation was. He made his assessment regarding their not wanting to be persecuted for the cross of Christ based upon the facts involved (see study # 7; The Christian’s judgment).
  5. This verse helps us understand that there are various attractions to following “*different doctrines*.” The Judaizers held to circumcision to keep from being persecuted. Many today hold to various false doctrines for various reasons. Some hold to false views of marriage, divorce and remarriage because a loved one is involved. Some refuse to call one who continues

to teach false doctrine a false teacher because of their past relationship. Some hold to various doctrines because they simply want peace, as did the Judaizers. One's objective in life clearly reveals what he or she is. Idolatry can come in various forms. Though the one whose priorities and objectives in life are opposed to Christ's teachings would never admit to participating in idolatry, he or she nonetheless is doing so (see study # 40; My Objective in Life Defines Who and What I Am).

- C. *“For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh”* (6:13).
1. These Judaizers received circumcision as binding, however, they did not accept all the Mosaic Law as binding. Such an attitude toward the Mosaic Law put them at fault as Paul revealed in Galatians 3:10 and 5:3. Not only were they at fault with the Mosaic Law, but they were at fault with the law of Christ in that they added stipulations where the Lord had not added (cf. Col. 3:17; II Jn. 9).
  2. The purpose of the Judaizers has been identified above as to seek peace at all cost; however, this verse indicates that they gained a benefit from such teaching as well. Apparently some Jews praised the efforts of the Judaizers for causing the Gentiles to be circumcised.
- D. *“But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* (6:14).
1. Paul could have gloried in his past accomplishments and ancestry in the flesh, yet he saw a more important and abiding glory in the cross (cf. Phil. 3:4ff). It is through Christ and Christ alone that man attains eternal salvation (cf. Acts 4:12). The *“cross of Christ”* is apparently used as a synonym to the doctrine of Christ.
  2. Paul had killed the desires of the world (i.e., the lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life (I Jn. 2:15) (see study # 19; Crucify the Desires of the Flesh). Paul said that this is the attitude of all true disciples of Christ at Galatians 5:24 (*“And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof”*). When one becomes a Christian, the filth of the world no longer interests them. Said one is intent on making it to heaven.
  3. The flip side of this must be examined as well. Not only does the Christian have a distaste for the things of the world, but the world has a distaste for the Christian (cf. II Tim. 3:12; I Pet. 4:3-4).
- E. *“For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature”* (6:15).
1. Though the Judaizers attempted to persuade the Gentiles to be circumcised to be saved Paul reminds the Galatians one last time that this is not a matter of their eternal salvation (cf. I Cor. 7:19). At Galatians 5:6 Paul had said, *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.”*
  2. The entire context of chapter 5-6 indicates a prescribed way of life for the Christian who has crucified the flesh. Such a new approach to life is considered a *“new creature.”*
- F. *“And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”* (6:16).
1. The *“rule”* that man is intended to walk after is the Law of Christ (fruit of the Spirit) as opposed to the Law of the flesh.
  2. Those who choose the spiritual life are assured peace and mercy as the true Israel of God. Those who reject truth will have no part of peace and mercy but only the wrath of Jehovah God (cf. Rom. 2:5ff).
- G. *“Henceforth, let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus”* (6:17).
1. The physical marks (scars) Paul sustained due to his rejection of the binding necessity of circumcision were visible for all to see.
  2. Paul had suffered much and so desired to have the Judaizers and Jews leave him alone.
- H. *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen”* (6:18).
1. The grace of God carries with it the idea of instruction in truth (Titus 2:11-12).
  2. The grace of God carries with it the idea of mercy and salvation (Eph. 2:1ff).
  3. Paul's concluding statement is a request that the Galatians would heed the instructions of truth, crucify the fleshly desires, and receive the grace of God.

## Synopsis of chapter 6

Paul clearly identified two paths of life. One path leads to the mercy and peace of God (i.e., the path of the Spirit), and the other path leads to one experiencing the wrath of God (i.e., the path of the flesh). Paul admonished the Galatians to walk by the Spirit (truth) and to restore to spiritual health those who had fallen from this path of life (Gal. 6:1). The restoration of erring brethren, however, can be costly to the spiritually minded one if he allows himself to be tempted to participate in the same sins as the erring. Again, the spiritually strong brother can find himself in trouble with God if he begins to think too highly of self due to pulling the erring out of their sin. The saints of God have the responsibility to correct the error of the sinners' way (Gal. 6:10) whether such a one be a Christian or non-Christian. These verses (i.e. Gal. 6:1-10) have been used by institutional brethren to prove that the church of Jesus Christ has the obligation to help the needy of the world as well as the needy in the church financially. Unfortunately, they have totally ignored the context of the chapter. Paul had nothing to say about physical help in the form of monetary aid in this chapter. Galatians 6 deals with spiritual matters and helping sinners to come out of a world of darkness.

Paul closed the letter to the Galatians by clearly stating the objective of the false teachers who had compelled them to be circumcised. These teachers' objective was to avoid persecution (Gal. 6:12). To avoid persecution, these teachers sought to blend the law of Christ with the Mosaic Law that all may be appeased. These men were peace seekers of the worst kind. Peace was sought at the cost of men's souls. Paul painfully wore "*branded on my body the marks of Jesus*" by way of his troubles with various false teachers. Such is the lot in life for all Christians (cf. I Thess. 3:3).