

A  
Doctrinal and Devotional  
Commentary  
of the book of  
*Galatians*

By  
Rénald Leroux Jr.

A Doctrinal and Devotional Commentary of the book of Galatians  
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## Introduction

### **1. Author**

The author is the apostle Paul external and internal evidence points to this.

### **2. Destination**

The churches that lived in the region of Galatia which was a Roman provincial region.

### **3. Date written**

We can not give a definitive date of Paul's letter (probably written in Antioch) to the Galatians but it is highly believed that it was written at an early date such as A.D. 49-50.

### **4. Purpose of the letter**

This is Paul's effort to counter-attack the Judaizers who taught that the Law of Moses must be followed for someone to be saved. Thus placing the grace found in the sacrifice second to the following of the Law.

**GALATIANS**  
**1 - 'To the churches of Galatia'**  
**Galatians 1:1-5**

**(1)Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), (2)and all the brethren who are with me,**  
**To the churches of Galatia: (3)Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, (4)who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, (5)to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.**  
**(NASB)**

In his letter to the Galatians Paul is not writing to a specific church for Galatia is not a city but a region in Central Asia Minor. This region became a Roman province in 25 B.C. It seems that this letter was to be read in churches that Paul had established in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:14 – 14:23). It appears that false teachers were judaizing people in these churches and gaining momentum. They were teaching that to be truly saved one needed to be circumcised and to follow the Law of Moses. As we will see this false teaching is still taught today and the urgency to defend the faith is just as important today as it was back then. Paul wrote this letter in order to defend justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

**(1)Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),**

What we see is that Paul first establishes his authority, he is an apostle (APOSTOLOS) which means: a delegate, to send out. We know that Paul was not one of the original 12 apostles and some wonder how Paul could ever consider himself an apostle. His apostleship was even challenged by people that surrounded him! So how does this work out? The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia answers this for us:

*The very fact that the name "apostle" means what it does would point to the impossibility of confining it within the limits of the Twelve. (The "twelve apostles" of Re 21:14 is evidently symbolic; compare in Re 7:3 ff the restriction of God's sealed servants to the twelve tribes.) Yet there might be a tendency at first to do so, and to restrict it as a badge of honor and privilege peculiar to that inner circle (compare Ac 1:25).*

*If any such tendency existed, Paul effectually broke it down by vindicating for himself the right to the name. His claim appears in his assumption of the apostolic title in the opening words of most of his epistles. And when his right to it was challenged, he defended that right with passion, and especially on these grounds: that he had seen Jesus, and so was qualified to bear witness to His resurrection (1Co 9:1; compare Ac 22:6 ff); that he had received a call to the work of an apostle (Ro 1:1; 1Co 1:1, etc.; Ga 2:7; compare Ac 13:2 ff; Ac 22:21); but, above all, that he could point to the signs and seals of his apostleship furnished by his missionary labors and their fruits (1Co 9:2; 2Co 12:12; Ga 2:8). It was by this last ground of appeal that Paul convinced the original apostles of the justice of his claim. He had not been a disciple of Jesus in the days of His flesh; his claim to have seen the risen Lord and from Him to have received a personal commission was not one that could be proved to others; but there could be no possibility of doubt as to the seals of his apostleship. It was abundantly clear that "he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for (Paul) also unto the Gentiles" (Ga 2:8). And so perceiving the grace that was given unto him, Peter and John, together with James of Jerusalem, recognized Paul as apostle to the Gentiles and gave him the right hand of fellowship (Ga 2:9).*

Paul establishes that he is an apostle and the main reason for this is that he is going to write with an authority that people will need to respect. In our first verse Paul describes where his authority as an apostle comes from – and this is very important. Was he a self-proclaimed apostle, a man-made apostle or a God sent representative? He makes it very clear right away ‘*not sent from men nor through the agency of man*’. The apostolic succession does not exist in the Bible. No man can ever pass on to another the right to be called an apostle. Just as no man can ever pass on a spiritual gift that he has received from God – the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that distributes the spiritual gifts as he desires (1 Cor. 12:1-11)

### **1 Corinthians 12:11**

**But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.**

**(NKJV)**

So Paul did not take upon himself to be called an apostle. The same verse also tells us that no man ever bestowed upon him apostleship. His calling was not through ‘*the agency of man*’. So where does that leave us? It leaves us with only one other source of apostleship – God had called him to be his very own special ambassador. When God sent Ananias to Saul so that he would receive his sight back, Ananias was hesitant and brought back to mind all that Saul had done against God’s people. It is at this moment that God established Paul as a very special sent one (APOSTOLOS).

**Acts 9:15,16**

**(15)But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

**(16)"For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."  
(NKJV)**

The Galatians needed to be reminded of who Paul was and what authority Paul had. Although he had established churches in Galatia it seems that he had to re-establish his authority. As we will see false teachers had worked at destroying Paul's reputation and teachings. It must have been emotionally difficult for Paul to have to remind the Galatians believers of who he was. Never the less he does so without any harsh words. Shouldn't this teach us a good spiritual lesson? When we are forgotten or our name is diminished by outsiders (or even insiders) we should react in a kind way, reflecting how Christ reacted to his accusers (Luke 23:34).

**(2)and all the brethren who are with me,To the churches of Galatia:**

In the heading of his introduction Paul includes the *'brethren who are with me'*, but where is Paul writing from? It is not certain but the thought of Antioch around 50 A.D. is the place and time that most conservative theologians agree upon. So the *'brethren who are with me'* are the Christian believers that were most probably in Antioch with Paul. So this letter is from Paul but he includes the brethren alongside of him in his introduction. We see the kindness of Paul in doing so. When you think of it they really had nothing to do with the letter per say. We see that Paul is a person that is 'inclusive' and we should have the same vision with regard to our brothers and sisters. After all, are we not all members of the same family? Do we not all have the same spiritual Brother and Father? This is the only letter that Paul wrote that is not meant for a specific church (except for those that were written for a specific person). As I earlier wrote Galatia is not a city but rather a province of the Roman Empire. It is situated in the very center of Turkey. The teachings that Paul will be writing against have spread from one church to another. This false doctrine is like an infection that is constantly growing and needs to be rapidly and aggressively addressed. May I remind my readers that all false teachings or all sin must be taken very seriously and confronted with as much vigor as Paul did in his epistle to the Galatians.

**(3)Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,**

The opening three words *'grace to you'* can be looked upon as a common denominator in all the letters that Paul wrote to churches. Somewhere written in each of his epistle you can find these three words. Grace is so important, because everything depends and is based upon the grace of God.



Your entire life balances in the hand of the Almighty. It is by the grace of God that you ARE, that you exist! Every breath you take and every heart beat is by the grace of God.

**Acts 17:28**

**"for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' (NKJV)**

Paul also wrote that it was the grace of God who made him the person that he had become (1 Cor. 15:10). If Paul wished the grace of God to rest upon the brothers and sisters in Galatia I believe that as a child of God we all should have the same desire. Wanting the grace of God to rest upon all those we know. Not only Christians but also those who are still outside of God's family. Jesus expressed this thought in his Sermon on the Mount:

**Matthew 5:43-45**

**(43)"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'**

**(44)"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

**(45)"that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**(NKJV)**

Have I asked God to spread his grace on anyone lately? Do I pray for God to shower his blessings upon people? Do I care enough about my enemies to take time in prayer for them interceding and pleading for God to open their eyes and see the beauty of the cross of Christ? '*Grace to you*' should be on our hearts and on our lips. May we become dispensers of God's grace unto others!

Peace is the other blessing that Paul calls upon God to give to the Galatians. How peace is necessary is no understatement. The world is crumbling under hate, animosity, enmity and bitterness. It's as though the nations are burning under the fire of these conflicts. Peace is a very rare commodity and its source comes from God. There is only one peace that can satisfy the soul. One peace that can calm our fragile hearts. One peace that can water the barren ground in which the children of Adam are planted – and that is the peace that only Christ can give to the born-again soul!

**John 14:27**

**"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

**(NKJV)**

In his following words Paul will remind the Galatians of the source of the grace and peace that he wishes upon them – *‘from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’*. You may search in every corner of the earth, explore the very bottoms of the oceans, and fly as high as the birds and will never find grace and peace – NEVER! And why is that? Simply because both grace and peace come only from God. Your money can not buy it, your hands can not work for it, your family can not leave it as an inheritance and your governments can not provide it. This shows me that I can be a fool thinking that I can find grace and peace outside of the Lord. How many of God’s children are actually insulting him by turning their backs on him and searching for grace and peace elsewhere?

**(4)who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, (5)to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.**

How the grace and peace of God came about is explained in verses four and five. This point is extremely important. It makes the difference between true Christianity and all else. Paul boldly expresses what some of the Galatians were forgetting. Christ had to do something for the Father to shower those who would place their complete faith in the Son. Jesus *‘gave Himself for our sins’*. God – the Son had to personally intervene in the history of mankind. He did something that would repair what had been done. He *‘gave himself’*, he went to the cross, he became a living sacrifice. In other words he did what I could never do – live a perfect, holy and righteous life before God – the Father. He became an accepted sacrifice unto the Father because of *‘our sins’*. Jesus bore the punishment of my sins at the cross (we will see this in greater detail later on).

Why would the Son of God ever want to do that for me? The answer is the following: *‘so that He might rescue us from this present evil age’*. Jesus was on a rescue mission. Countless souls were to be saved! Here Paul specifies that Jesus rescued all believers *‘from this present evil age’*. This *age* (AION) which gives the idea of a ‘time-frame’ hence this world in which we live. Christ has rescued us from this age which is described as *evil* (PONEROTEROS). This word comes from the word PONEROS which means: hurtful, or evil. But Paul calls this world PONEROTEROS which gives the idea of more evil and more hurtful. As though this world (and it is) is terribly evil, horribly dark, and against all that God stands for. Since the believer is rescued from this *‘present evil age’* he has escaped from the coming judgment of this world and all that it lives for! Should we not be eternally grateful unto our Lord for doing this?

I remember when I was about 11 or 12. I saved a boy who was a little younger than me from drowning in a pool. When I got the boy out of the waters, the father was so captivated by his sons misfortune that he totally forgot to even say ‘thank you’!

He took his son away from the pool with the other people surrounding him – leaving me with not an iota of any manifestation of gratitude. At the time I was very surprised and still am today! How can someone care so little for the one who just saved his child? Unfortunately I believe that many Christians react the same way to Jesus who *'rescued us from this present evil age'*. How much time do you give to thanking the Lord for having saved your soul from the eternal torments that are to come? If you have confessed Christ as your Savior why so little care and concern for his kingdom? May I encourage you to reflect on the worth and price of your salvation. In verse four Paul also talks about who wanted you to be saved. Who initiated the salvation process? In other words who opened the door so you can enter into the family of God?

**(4) ...according to the will of our God and Father**

Even before time began (Eph. 1:1-14) it was the Father who initiated this salvation rescue. It is the will of the Father that the Son become the Savior of the lost souls of this world. We must never believe that God does not care or is not concerned for our soul. Of course he is, for he willed that his Son would die to rescue me. Paul writes it so beautifully in Romans.

**Romans 5:8**

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us.  
(NKJV)**

Notice in verse four that Paul called God *'Father'*. Because of the sacrifice of Christ which makes us stand righteous before him we can now honestly and legally call God our Father! Believers have entered into a Father- Child relationship with the Almighty! I don't believe that we will ever know the depth of this grace that has fallen upon the redeemed. May our hearts rejoice and our tongues sing praises to the One who willed that the Son would rescue great sinners of which I am the first!

**(5)to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.**

Paul ends his introduction by pointing to God. To God be the glory – he writes! If I am a true believer I should do the same for those who surround me. I should point to God, manifesting my immense gratitude and thankfulness. Salvation, and the benefits of salvation, are the greatest gift you shall ever receive. So give glory to God and live for him.

**GALATIANS**  
**2 - 'Deserting the gospel'**  
**Galatians 1:6-10**

**(6)I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; (7)which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (8)But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! (9)As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!**

**(10)For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.**  
**(NASB)**

If Paul is amazed concerning something that is happening with the Galatian churches I am amazed at the 'right to the point' attitude that Paul has. It's like a boxer giving an upper cut to his adversary to knock him out right away! I can see that Paul doesn't beat around the bush with these Christians. When we read verse six we instantly understand why. If you read his letters you will find that each church had specific concerns, some far greater than others. But we never see such an alarming spiritual problem as what we see in Galatians. Some problems are of the flesh but here we see a deep theological issue – the false teaching that Christ is not sufficient!

**(6)I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;**

*'I am amazed'* (THAUMAZO) gives the idea of gazing in wonder. As though Paul is looking at what is happening in these Galatian churches and says 'What in the world is going on here!' He is not gazing because of satisfaction or approval but rather disapproval. Why was Paul in such an uproar? What was happening that displeased him so much? This is how Paul describes it: *'you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel.'* The issue of turning from orthodox Christian faith to another 'type' of Christian understanding is still a contemporary issue in our churches today. Great numbers are leaving their churches for the churches of the latest trend! What is in vogue, the latest fashion and craze that's what far too many want to experience.

Paul writes *'that you are so quickly deserting Him'*. The idea behind the word *quickly* (TACHEOS) means speedily, rapidly or hastily. As though they changed their mind in the snap of a finger –from grace to works. Paul speaks of *deserting*.

When we think of a deserter we have the picture of a soldier leaving his camp and no longer wanting to be there any longer. Or it might be someone running away from a call to enroll in the army. We used to call them 'draft-dodgers'. Some, because of conscience issues, would leave one country for another so that they would not go to war. Paul states that in Galatia some were *deserting* (METATITHEMI) giving the idea of: transferring or changing sides. These Christians were actually going from one 'team' to another and by doing so they had now become opponents. I would like you to notice that the ones who deserted their faith to embrace another '*deserted*' not a religion or philosophy of life but rather '*Him*' – Jesus. Paul stresses the point that it is the person of Christ that they have set aside and turned their backs on. It is a very personal matter – Christ had died for them and now they reject and disregard him for a set of rules that was supposed to make them righteous before God! True Christianity is not a matter of 'do's and don'ts'! It is God loving humanity and doing what it takes to get us to be once more in harmony with him. What the Galatians were doing is probably the greatest insult that they could do to God.

What the Galatians were also doing was the following: '*Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel*'. By deserting Christ they were also abandoning the grace that Christ had offered them. How dark was the veil that had covered their eyes! This reminds me of what Paul has written concerning the Jewish people of old and how they also had a veil that blinded them.

### 2 Corinthians 3:14-16

**(14)But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.**

**(15)But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.**

**(16)Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.**

**(NKJV)**

The book of Romans has many things to say concerning grace. If the Galatians reject Christ they automatically reject the grace of Christ that brings:

- The justification (Rom. 3:24)
- True faith (Rom. 4:16)
- The hope and glory of God (Rom. 5:2)
- The free gift of salvation (Rom. 5:15)
- The gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17)
- The reign of grace in your life (Rom. 5:21)
- The breaking of the power of sin over you (Rom. 6:14)
- The election that grace gives (Rom. 11:5)
- Spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6)

One can reject or turn his back on something for something better – and this can be understood. But the Galatians were deserting Jesus *‘for a different gospel’*. The word different (HETEROS) does not mean different for the same kind, like buying a different size container of laundry soap: it’s the same soap but we buy more of it. Here the word *‘different’* means: altered. They switched from the orthodox faith that Paul had transmitted to them. To make certain that we understand each other, the word orthodox that I am using is not for a church denomination but rather the following: Orthodox is made up of two Greek words "ortho" which means correct and "doxa" which means worship or glory.

What Paul is telling the Galatians is that by abandoning the gospel of Christ they are changing the way they are approaching God and this way which is altered – is not acceptable to God. I wonder if as Christians we realize that the way we approach the Lord God does make a difference! We live in a time where many wrongly think that ‘anything goes’ or that ‘it doesn’t really matter’, that we are under grace and therefore we can do just about anything the way we want. This is so far from the truth. It is a sign that people in general lack understanding about the true character of God. Many will be surprised when they see Christ face to face. Believing that they will be well received, they will unfortunately hear the following from his lips:

**Matthew 7:21-23**

**(21)"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**

**(22)"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**

**(23)"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'**

**(NKJV)**

By changing the gospel, you are changing the very message of God and by doing so you become a false prophet. This was the main battle of Christ during his ministry. He was in constant conflict with the religious leaders also who were presenting a *‘different gospel’* – a gospel of works and tradition. So you see we are at the very heart of the Christian faith. If you replace grace by anything else, then the true gospel no longer exists and what is taught is only a man-made religion.

**(7)which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.**

Paul sets the record straight right away – there is no other true gospel to be found! The only thing that is found is *'some who are disturbing you'*. As we will see later on there were people who had infiltrated the congregations in Galatia and brought with them a different doctrine. The natural outcome was disturbance in the church. When Paul writes that these men were *'disturbing you'* (TARASSO) he meant that they brought agitation and stirred up troubles. In other words their 'other gospel' brought tension, worry and distress. I can understand this because I lived it as Pastor. One Sunday morning people began coming to see me concerning a couple that was visiting the church. They had been members in the past but only brought severe trouble which had deeply devastated the church. Some even asked me to protect the church from them. I went to see them right away, told them of what I had heard and warned them that I would not accept one 'slip' on their part. During that very week I got news that they had begun to talk to people against me and were even giving out 'tracts' against me! When they came back the following Sunday I went straight to them and told them that they were no longer welcome here because they had gossiped and disturbed the church – so they left and we never saw them again.

The disturbance that they brought was founded on the *'distortion'* they brought concerning the gospel of Christ. Already Paul stated that their gospel was *'different'* which mean altered (v.6) now he says that they want to *'distort'* (METASTREPHO) it! This means to corrupt or pervert it. The view of conservative theologians is that Paul wrote this letter around 50 A.D. If this is true then it shows how fast corruption was infiltrating the gospel of Christ, for Jesus had died about 15 years earlier. As you can see our spiritual enemy does not waste time. It also teaches that we need to be very diligent concerning the teaching that we receive. It is not because you are reading this book that it means that all of it is correct. You must read other books and primarily study the Scriptures to make certain that what I write is correct.

**(8)But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! (9)As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!**

There was a spiritual hemorrhaging of the truth concerning grace. Paul had to use a drastic measure to stop it from continuing. So he makes a solemn declaration, one that is rarely seen anywhere in the Epistles. He declares *'ACCURSED'* (ANATHEMA) anyone who brings forth a different gospel. He calls God to curse them! That, my friend, is terrifying. Remember what the writer of Hebrews wrote:

**Heb. 10:31**

**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

**(NKJV)**

Remember also what Christ said about fearing the Lord God:

**Luke 12:4,5**

**(4)"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.**

**(5)"But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!**

**(NKJV)**

Paul is saying not to believe anyone who bring a different gospel. We should be listening very closely to what the Scriptures are saying to us. If any man, woman and even child, brings a different gospel than what is given in the New testament – he or she is to be accursed, which means that the wrath of God be upon him. Paul goes even further, even if an angel – a celestial being offers a different gospel that creature is also to receive the wrath of God. Take time to think about all the new (and old) religions or spiritual trends that have at its source an angelic messenger. Think of all of those who are ‘channels’ for spirits, think of those who receive messages from the ‘other side’. Friends the world is literally infested with angelic beings that bring their own message. Beware of both men and spirits who are false teachers, who bring another gospel.

**1 Timothy 4:1**

**Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,**

**(NKJV)**

Whoever that person is, whatever organization he represents, no matter how many followers he has – if his gospel is different – then he and his followers are cursed by God. So do not be afraid of them and SHUT THE DOOR to their teachings. What these people are doing (1 Tim. 4:1) is listening to deceiving spirits and accepting doctrines of demons. There is never anything godly that can be found in a different gospel. So what we see is that this different gospel is condemned and the messengers are also condemned.

Paul places a responsibility upon the shoulders of the Galatians. It is their duty and their obligation before God to recognize these false messengers and to reject their gospel. There are two reasons for this. The first is because it brings dishonor to the Lord God. By accepting another gospel we are manifesting that what God has said is a lie. By accepting another gospel we are directly attacking the character of God. We are doing exactly the same thing as the devil did in the Garden of Eden when he spoke to Eve.



**Genesis 3:4,5**

**(4)Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.**

**(5)"For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

**(NKJV)**

He changed the words of God from *'you shall surely die'* (2:17) to *'You will not surely die'* (3:4). We know that the devil was accursed by God for doing so for there is fire and brimstone and torment prepared for him for all eternity (Rev. 20:10). So let us never receive nor participate in any way with teachings that are of a different gospel than that given by Jesus Christ unto his disciples.

**(10)For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.**

Verse ten expresses one of the foundations that a man absolutely needs in order to become a good shepherd of God's people. It is also to be received by all Disciples of Christ but I specially want to speak to pastors or ministers who are at the head of a local church. I see a parallel between what Paul is doing towards the churches in Galatia and what Pastors, Elders, Ministers or the like ought to be doing in their ministry. As ministers of the Word of God we need to be 'God fearing' and not men pleasers! Paul is putting his foot down and is saying to the Galatians 'stop what you are doing, you are definitively wrong and turn back to what you had been doing'. It takes courage but also submission to God. Paul touches the 'button' of a lot of pastors – who do you want to please, God or men? Or who do you really care for, God or men? Many pastor have great difficulty telling the truth like it is. They are so afraid to displease the congregation that they abstain from disciplining, exhorting or insisting that people live lives that glorify the Lord.

Paul says that he is not *'striving to please men'*. Striving (ZETEO) means to seek or to desire. His ultimate desire was to please God, to live a life that was pleasing to him. Or as he later writes to the Romans to be a living sacrifice (12:1,2) by not conforming to this world. Unfortunately many leaders do conform to this world by being men-pleasers instead of God-pleasers. So whether you are in leadership, have a ministry or do anything in the name of the Lord – do it to please God. Now if it displeases people around you, then leave it in the Lord's hands. Let him take care of it, it's his church anyways!

Paul then writes the following *'If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ'*. What Paul is saying is that you can't please God and please men at the same time, it is one OR the other.

Paul has stopped trying to please men, notice *'If I were still trying to please men'*. When was Paul trying to please men? I believe that this is what he was doing when he was still Saul, when he was not yet converted to Christ. This is what he says of himself before he was born-again:

**Ac 22:3**

**“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.”**

**(NKJV)**

**Ac 26:5**

**"They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”**

**(NKJV)**

Saul wanted to please men by keeping the traditions of men *'our fathers' law'* and also *'the strictest sect'*. So Saul lived as a Pharisee and we all know that they upheld the traditions and teachings of their forefathers. Paul teaches that no one can do that: please men and please God. It was only when he was born-again on the road to Damascus that he *'switched'* from darkness to the light. From being a minister of lies to a minister of life. None of us can be *'a bond-servant of Christ'* if we choose to please men instead of pleasing God. So what shall it be? Whom are you living for? Who do you seek to please when an important decision has to be taken? May we all be like Paul and seek to please God first!

**GALATIANS**  
**3 - 'The calling of Paul'**  
**Galatians 1:11-17**

**(11)For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. (12)For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

**(13)For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; (14)and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. (15)But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased (16)to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (17)nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.**

**(NASB)**

We know that Paul had established churches in southern Galatia. We can therefore assume that they knew who Paul was not only as an apostle but also as a man. When we read this section one can wonder why Paul is telling the Galatian Christians things that they probably know very well. It was no secret in the Christian community who Paul had been in the past. They knew of Paul even when he was named Saul (Acts 7:58)! So why would Paul remind his readers about his past? One of the reasons might be that Paul wanted to use himself as an example in relationship with what he just had written concerning a new gospel presented by false teachers.

**(11)For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. (12)For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

We have read in the last chapter that Paul gave an extremely stern warning concerning those who come with a different gospel than what they had originally received. I believe Paul is now giving an example of what a true teacher and his gospel looked like. *'For I would have you know, brethren'*. There is a sense of family and brotherhood in this first phrase. As Disciples of Christ we are all of the same family. The Word of God expressly teaches this truth.

**John 1:12**

**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,  
to those who believe in His name:**

**(NKJV)**

We have become adopted sons and daughters of God. In five different places Paul states that God had adopted for himself a people (Rom. 8:15,23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). As a believer I need to see myself as part of a huge family. The people that I congregate with truly are my brothers and sisters in Christ. If this is true (and it is) this means that my affection for them must be real and tangible. I am told over and over again in the Scriptures that I ought to think of them before thinking of myself (John 13:34; 15:12,13,17). Paul calls out to the Galatians reminding them that they are a family and their Father is God himself.

Now what is it that Paul wants the Galatians to know? Verse eleven tells us: *‘that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.’* This is where Paul begins to explain WHERE the true gospel comes from. He first tells the Galatians that the source of the gospel that he shares *‘is not according to man’*. It does not originate from the mind, heart and soul of any man. This is in direct opposition with the new and warped gospel that some had been spreading. Paul confirms that his gospel is not according to man by the following:

**(12)For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through  
a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Paul’s gospel is not according to man – he did not *‘receive it from man’*. Although Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) he disavowed all that he was taught by him! This proclamation of not receiving from man is a very strong statement because it teaches us that whatever we learn from men, even Gamaliel who was the most important and influential Pharisee of Paul’s day, can be a twisted gospel. So Paul did not receive or been taught the gospel from men. I believe that this makes him a very unique person (as with the twelve apostles) being taught not by men but by whom? He writes: *‘but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ’*. The word *revelation* (APOKALUPSIS) means disclosure, lighten. Giving the picture of something that was not well seen or understood that suddenly come to light in one’s mind. There was a veil that lay over Paul’s heart (2 Cor. 3:15) which stopped him from knowing and understanding the gospel. He was spiritually blind, teaching a gospel of works and tradition, UNTIL something happened until he received a personal revelation from Christ on the road of Damascus! It was on this road (Acts 9) that he had a personal encounter with Christ. This lead to his salvation and the total transformation of his mind. Paul was truly born-again.

**(13)For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; (14)and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.**

Verse thirteen confirms what I have written in relation to the life that Paul had before becoming a disciple of Christ. Paul will state four facts concerning his life as a Pharisee.

The first was his *'manner of life in Judaism'*. Judaism is the religion of Israel which began with the Babylonian exile. Because of this exile the Jews were forced to change the ways of practicing their religion which had been established by the Lord God. There was a clean break as to how they had communion with God since there was no more Temple, feasts, sacrificial offerings and so forth. Because of this the Jews did not grow closer to God since they began to follow a new direction of religion which was not given by God.

The second is *'how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it'*. This speaks of his persecutions against the early Christians. It seems that it began with the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7). Saul went on a rampage, being possessed by an obsessive spirit. This reminds me of the other Saul – the first king of Israel and how he was also obsessive in trying to kill David. Both Saul's turned every stone they could to try to annihilate who they considered to be their foes. Paul testifies that his attitude was *'beyond measure'* (HUPERBOLE) which means: a throwing beyond others. His persecutions went far above all others who persecuted the Disciples of Christ. Saul literally wanted to get rid (by jailing or death) of every single person who believed that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah.

The third is found in verse fourteen: *'I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen'*. There was a personal drive that inhabited Saul. He wanted to be the best he could and he would do all it took to achieve his goal. To say that he was better than *'many of my countrymen'* is not to be taken lightly. Surely there were others in his day that were gifted with superior intelligence but that did not refrain Saul from wanting to be superior to them. It's as though there was a fire burning inside, an uncontrollable zeal that inhabited him.

The fourth is: *'being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions'*. Can you imagine the intensity of Saul's life? Listen to these words: MORE – EXTREMELY – ZEALOUS! How can one be like Saul was? He was more than others, that should suffice – but no! He was extremely more – that sounds even crazy when you think of it. But again that was not enough! He was extremely more zealous! He was a passionate, fervent, obsessive fanatical person. A very, very dangerous man indeed.

What was his zeal aimed at – ‘*my ancestral traditions*’. This point is crucial for us to understand and it pinpoints who Saul was. His love was for his ancestral traditions, what had been taught from one generation to another, each generation adding on to what had been taught, was beyond description.

This is a perfect picture of what could be a false prophet or false teacher. All that Saul had become, all that he breathed and lived for. All that his life was focused on he had ‘*received it from man*’ (v.12). Paul is declaring that before knowing Christ he was as they (those who taught a different gospel) are. He is asserting that he was wrong, totally wrong, because he believed what men taught and not what God taught. Are we not in the same situation today? Are there not a great multitude of men and women today who teach and communicate spiritual precepts that are based on human thought? They are everywhere to be seen, read and heard. They are affecting and infecting countless lives with their vision of what Christianity is. Remember what Paul wrote to the Colossians:

**Colossians 2:8**

**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.  
(NKJV)**

Dear friend, please be very careful. There are people out there who are spiritual wolves just waiting to devour you. They want to take advantage of you and deceive you by also carrying a false gospel. Jesus spoke of these people and warned his followers to keep their eyes open for them.

**Matthew 7:15**

**"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.  
(NKJV)**

Thank God that Paul’s story doesn’t end there. In his sovereign grace God intervened directly in Saul’s life to give him a new life and also a new name.

**(15)But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased (16)to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (17)nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.**

Verse fifteen is a powerful verse which deals with the subject of predestination and election. Somehow Paul knew very well that God had personally destined him to be whom he had become. Many people shy away from this theological subject – God predestining people for his glory. It may be difficult (and it is) to understand, I grant it.

But to say that predestination does not exist is wrong and I disagree with this conclusion. Election and predestination can be seen everywhere in the Bible. Here are some easily understood examples of both:

- Noah was chose out of all mankind to perpetuate the seed of Adam.
- Abram was chosen to become the father of a great nation.
- Isaac was chosen (and not Ismael) to be the son of the promise
- Jacob was chosen and not his older brother Esau.
- Israel was chosen to become God’s own people.
- Moses was chosen to become God’s prophet and lead his people out of Egypt.
- David was chosen to become king to replace Saul
- Etc...

As for predestination, here are a few verses that teaches this truth.

- We are predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son (Rom. 8:29)
- We are called, justified and glorified because of predestination (Rom. 8:30)
- We are predestined to become adopted children of God (Eph. 1:5)
- Etc...

The question is really not if God does predestine people but rather WHY he predestines them? Why does he set some people apart? The answer is given by the following verse.

#### **Ephesians 1:11,12**

**(11)In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,  
(12)that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.  
(NKJV)**

What God has allowed us to know is the following: He predestines certain people:

- According to His purpose
- According to His will
- For His praise and glory

We may or may not be endowed with a greater knowledge of the mysteries of God's will once we are with the Lord. What we need to do is simply trust in Him. What we are taught in verse fifteen is that the Lord God had a special plan for Paul even before his birth '*even from my mother's womb*'. If you are a child of God do you know that the Lord has done the same for you and that he has a plan for your life! I must encourage you to seek what this plan is and humble yourself when you understand it. Far too many Christians waste their life away, as if they were a wandering homeless person.

The calling of Saul to become Paul was through *grace* (v.15). We can never stress this point enough. Saul did not do anything to become Paul, quite the contrary. Saul did the absolute opposite of doing something to receive God's favor upon his life. As we have seen, he was a terrible man who enjoyed killing Christians! But at a certain point in time God intervened and brought Saul to his knees and he bowed down before the Lordship of Jesus. He suddenly (and quite drastically) understood that Jesus was truly the Messiah.

**...was pleased (16)to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles**

It pleased the Lord God to *reveal* (APOKALUPTO) to take off the cover, to disclose his beloved Son to him. Saul was absolutely and completely unable to see the truth for he was spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1,5). In his eternal plan the time had finally come for God to give a new birth to Saul. Many things could be said but there is one that I would like you to consider. Who was Saul and what had he done? Saul was a man filled with hatred for all who did not see things as he did. Saul was a blasphemer for he mocked the name of Christ Jesus. Saul was a spiritual terrorist who went from village to village searching to imprison all who he considered apostates. Saul was a cold blooded murderer. If God, through the sacrifice of his Son, could forgive Saul and grant him to become righteous before him – can he not do that for you also? Many are those who believe that they have 'gone too far' for being forgiven. They believe that their sins are too many, too ugly or too repetitive. They believe that salvation is no longer for them. My friend if this is the case look at Saul: who he was and what he had done. It pleased God to bring forgiveness and you also can be forgiven if you sincerely repent of your sins and ask Christ to become your Savior.

The plan of God for Saul was to become the Paul that we know – '*that I might preach Him among the Gentiles*'. And that is what he did. The burning zeal that had carried Saul all those years had now become the zeal that would carry him throughout the rest of his life. Paul did preach far and wide, to kings and to paupers.



**Acts 9:15,16**

**(15)But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

**(16)"For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."  
(NKJV)**

May we all become like Paul understanding the grace we have received to be called children of God and working for his glory. Doing what we can to advance his kingdom walking daily in his grace and being a reflection of Jesus for all to see.

**(16) ...I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (17)nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.**

In verses sixteen and seventeen Paul tells the Galatians that truly he did not receive the gospel from a man for he said that: *'I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood'*. When Saul, who now has become Paul, received salvation and his calling he did not 'hang around' with Christians nor go and see the apostles in Jerusalem *'nor did I go up to Jerusalem'* to be taught by them. For some reason, that is not explained, Paul left Palestine and went away to Arabia. There are no speculations considering where in Arabia Paul did go. The book of Acts is silent about these years as it is silent about the lives of many apostles or important events that have occurred. The Holy Spirit simply did not guide Luke into writing these things.

All we know is that once Paul came out of Arabia he went back to Damascus *'returned once more to Damascus'* (v.17). Paul came back to the place where he had been called by God to represent him before mankind.

If you are a child of God have you ever thought about your calling? Do you know what God wants you to do for his glory? If so are you doing it? If you have neglected your calling you might have to come back to where you were born-again. Not the place but in your heart. Think of that day and recall what had happened. Place yourself once more before the Father, ask for forgiveness for having deserted the narrow road and come back to Him.

**1Peter 5:5,6**

**(5)Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."**

**(6) Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, (NKJV)**

**GALATIANS**  
**4 - 'Paul and his first trip to Jerusalem'**  
**Galatians 1:18-24**

**(18)Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. (19)But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (20)(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) (21)Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (22)I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; (23)but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." (24)And they were glorifying God because of me.**  
**(NASB)**

Paul continues to give his 'testimony' to the Christians in Galatia. Giving his testimony was important because it gave proof of how he received redemption through Jesus Christ. It also manifests how God worked in his life from the very beginning. Please remember that Paul is writing to show that the gospel he shares was given to him personally by God and not by any man. I know many people that are shy to evangelize because they just don't know what to say. If you are such a person let me encourage you by saying that all you need is your testimony. When God has opened a 'door' just tell them how God saved you – tell them your story. That will suffice - you will be surprised! I must ask if you do have a testimony to give. I sometimes ask a person (who identifies himself as a Christian) to tell me how he became a Christian. When the person says something like: 'I've always been a Christian' or 'I grew up in a church'. I instantly know that this person does not have a testimony. We are not 'always a Christian' because we need to be born again (John 3:7) and even if I grew up in a church that does not make me a child of God (John 1:12,13). So do you have a testimony? When did Christ save you from your sins? When have you bowed down and surrendered your life? When have you given your heart to the one who holds the universe in his hands? If you can not remember any of this, please do not hesitate to turn to God and rededicate yourself or repent to be saved.

**(18)Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. (19)But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.**

It seems that the *'three years later'* begins with the time of his conversion on the road to Damascus. We know nothing of these three years; as I said in chapter three, the Bible is silent about them. I would like to say that God is sovereign (Acts 4:24) and he does what he wills (Ps. 115:3). There are things that he will explain to us and other things that he keeps hidden. Always keep in mind that he is the potter and we are the clay (Isaiah 64:8).

So what did Paul do *'three years later'*, he *'went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas'*. This phrase manifests the independence of Paul in relationship with the other apostles. It took him three years before he went to see one of them! This manifests that Paul had a deep sense of calling from God himself. It seems that Paul felt that he was accountable to God before being accountable to men – and he was. God had predestined him, God had given him apostleship, and God had saved him from the ruins of sin and human religion. May I encourage all of us to be like Paul – to see ourselves as accountable to God before anyone else. Never forget that one day we all will have to give an account to the Lord Jesus.

### **2Cor. 5:10**

**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul went to Jerusalem to be acquainted with Cephas (Peter), I can only deduct that the reputation of Peter was well known in the Christian world. The word *'acquainted'* (EPIMENO) means: to stay over or remain, thus giving the idea to get to know someone because you are close to him for a while. What they said or what they did we do not have an account of. I can only imagine Paul asking Peter how it was to follow Jesus in the flesh and Peter asking Paul about his experience with the Lord. I find it always exciting to hear other Christians speak about the Lord or what he is doing in their life –do you?. Paul did not stay very long in Jerusalem *'and stayed with him fifteen days'*. A rather short visit I would say. After all Peter was one of the three leaders of the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). There was also the city of Jerusalem which was the holy city of God. A place that Paul new very well. The church of Jerusalem had thousands of people dispersed within its walls. Even though there was so much that could have been done, Paul only stayed fifteen days. The picture that these words paint is of a man that *'does not waste his time'*. He goes and sees Cephas, does what he has to do and off he goes to what he is called to do. It just strikes me to see how much time can be wasted in our life. Things that can be done in fifteen days can take months and months! I remember being at a church where there was a project to change the stage where the pulpit and worship team was.

A year later, there was not a single thing that had been done because of time just wasted, people not being ready, people neglecting to do what was asked or always having an excuse not to be busy doing God's work. Time is one thing that we can never buy back. Once it's gone – it's gone!

**(19)But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.**

Two things I would like to bring to mind here. The first is that Paul *'did not see any other apostle except James'*. I always thought that the apostles and disciples would be together and see each other on a daily basis. I had this idea of closeness and attachment, an everyday proximity of some sort. But this was not the case! Paul spent fifteen days in Jerusalem and he was able to only see Cephas! Where were the other ones? Was the visit of Paul not important enough for the rest to come and pay their brotherly regards? Again the Bible does not leave us any clue but what it does is give us is a true picture of early Christian life. Sometimes we can embellish or have what is called 'wishful thinking' concerning New Testament living. I was disappointed when I read and thought about this section of the Book of Galatians. I thought Paul would have made 'quite an entrance' – being who he was!

The second thing is that Paul saw *'James, the Lord's brother'*. This testifies once more that Mary had more than one child contrary to what the Roman Catholic Church teaches. The New Testament writing teach us that Jesus had brothers and sisters, some are even named!

**Matthew 13:55,56**

**(55)"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?**

**(56)"And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"**

**(NKJV)**

In all aspects of Christian religion our absolute and definitive foundation is the Holy Bible. If anything contradicts its teachings then it must be put aside! If your Minister, church, T.V. Evangelist, church denomination, Elder or anyone else in authority declares something that goes against the teachings of the Bible then they are wrong so don't listen to them.

**(20)(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)**

This is a grave statement by itself. It almost gives the idea that Paul is in a witness stand and is giving an account of what he did after those three years in Arabia. One can wonder if there had been any accusations or gossip concerning him. Maybe it concerned his life as ‘Saul’? Maybe some still did not believe in his conversion and thought it was a tactic to infiltrate the churches. What we do know is that Paul is taking God as a witness to what he is saying. The word *‘before’* (ENOPION) means: in the face of or in the presence of. Paul is speaking as if God himself was standing beside him – meaning that he is telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. What a reminder for all of us – to tell the truth as if God was right there next to us.

**(21)Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (22)I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; (23)but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.” (24)And they were glorifying God because of me.**

Here we see that Paul clearly gives an account of what he did after leaving Jerusalem. It may be that since Paul did not place himself under any authority than God some were actually wondering ‘who is he?’, ‘where does he come from’ or ‘what has he been doing during those three years’. I can only guess that it was difficult just to ‘pop up’ and say ‘Hi, I’m Paul’ and believe that everyone would be satisfied with that. So he continues on with his story.

**(21)Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.**

Paul stayed in this region for a few years and worked with a local church and evangelized the region. It is written (Acts 11:22-26) that there was some kind of revival in the region of Antioch and that Barnabas was sent from the church of Jerusalem to go there and see what was happening. Barnabas seeing what was happening went to Tarsus to get Paul. Now Tarsus is the hometown of Paul and is in the region of Cilicia.

**(22)I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;**

I can only imagine that Paul’s visit to Jerusalem, which lasted only fifteen days, had not given him the opportunity to get to visit, preach, evangelize and get to be known by the brethren in Jerusalem. We have just read (in verse 21) that Paul had been living in Tarsus which is in the region of Cilicia. This region is not in Judea and that is why he was not known to the general Christian public. With today’s modern road system the distance between Tarsus and Jerusalem is 572 km (or 355 miles).

Imagine how far away that would have been in Paul's days and how long it would take to travel between both cities. Paul says that *'I was still unknown by sight'* which gives the idea that some had heard of him but had not the opportunity to see him in the flesh. It was the church in Judea that had not seen him compared to the churches in the region of Cilicia which knew him face to face.

**(23)but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.” (24)And they were glorifying God because of me.**

Not seeing someone by sight does not necessarily stop you from hearing about someone as was the case of Paul. News traveled fast even in those days. What were the Christians hearing about? What was the 'hot news' everybody was talking about?

**(23) ...“He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.”**

They were hearing that Saul of Tarsus *'who once persecuted us'*. Saul's reputation among the Christians was not the best – far from it. He was someone who you absolutely wanted to avoid! He *'persecuted'* (DIOKO) which means: to persecute or given to suffer. He made the 'US' (the Christians) suffer greatly. We know he consented to have Stephen stoned to death (Acts 8), we know he persecuted and imprisoned believers.

### **Acts 8:1-3**

**(1)Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.**

**(2)And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.**

**(3)As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.**

**(NKJV)**

But this man called Saul had changed – he was now a repented man who was now an instrument in the hands of God! Making disciples by the very gospel he once hated. Paul was *'..now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.'* He was now *'preaching'* (EUAGGELIZO) to announce good news. We all know what good news he was proclaiming – the good news of forgiveness and salvation in Christ Jesus the long awaited Messiah!. If God can take a Saul and transform him into a Paul can he not also take each one of us and transform us also? Can he not take a wretched man and make him a son by

adoption, just because he wills that it happens! God can take you and whatever situation that you are in and make something wonderful out of it. God still changes lives today like he did back then – Amen! Saul wanted to *'destroy'* (PORTHEO) to ravage or to waste but God intervened and said NO! There is nothing that life can bring that God cannot over rule. Saul could never have destroyed the faith simply because Jesus is the master builder.

**Matthew 16:18**

**"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.  
(NKJV)**

We are coming to the close of the first chapter. Here we see the result that Paul's conversion had.

**(24)And they were glorifying God because of me.**

The first result was that the hearts of the believers were touched by this. Have you ever thought that the things that you do for the sake of Christ sometimes have a direct impact not only on those who surround you but also those of the faith that are far away? Here is an example of this. Paul is spreading the good news, the brethren hearing of this rejoice in what they are hearing. I wonder if people are rejoicing because of what I do in life. I wonder if I have an effect on the lives of others. As a pastor I have unfortunately seen more negative effect between Christians than ones that are beneficial. May the good Lord change our hearts!

The second result permeates God himself. You see the Christians *'were glorifying God because of me'*. God was glorified because of what Paul had been doing. He was glorified through his children. It is wonderful to be thankful unto God because of what one of his children is doing. God has called us, as a nation of believers, to be an instrument that brings him glory.

**Isaiah 49:3**

**"And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.'  
(NKJV)**

It should be our daily desire to live in such a way that it touches the heart of other Christians and also glorifies God himself. This makes me think of a verse that Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 10:31**

**Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.  
(NKJV)**

**GALATIANS**  
**5 - 'Paul's second trip to Jerusalem'**  
**Galatians 2:1-5**

**(1)Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. (2)It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. (3)But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. (4)But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. (5)But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.**  
**(NASB)**

Paul continues to paint the tapestry of his Christian life. In our last chapter we have seen that Paul goes to Jerusalem for fifteen days and so our story unfolds.

**(1)Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.**

Fourteen years later! Paul leaves fourteen years of his life as a blank space in the minds of the Galatians. It's a good thing that we have the book of Acts that fills in some of his life events. Have you ever wondered why? When you think of it that could have been twenty to twenty five percent of his life that is just brushed aside. If we keep in context what the entire letter is about (false teachers and their warped gospel) we can understand where Paul is heading. There are two people that are mentioned by Paul, both were co-workers in the Lord. One is Jewish and one is Greek. As for Barnabas this is how he was introduced in the book of Acts.

**Acts 4:34-37**

**(34)Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, (35)and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.**  
**(36)And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, (37)having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.**  
**(NKJV)**



As you can see Barnabas goes way back to the beginning of the church in Jerusalem. He is part of the many souls that formed the original Body of Christ. What an exciting time it must have been. What we find is that Barnabas (as with Saul and Cephas) had his name changed. He was known as Joses (v.36) this name meant: *Raised or who pardons*. But for some reason it was changed to Barnabas which means: *son of encouragement*. The word *encouragement* (PARAKLESIS) means: comfort, consolation, solace. I can only imagine that Barnabas was filled with these godly attributes. He was known as someone who would come to one's side and bring encouragement. Isn't that wonderful being known for bringing comfort to others? I wonder what we are known for or what our reputation speaks of us? If people were asked to give a description of us in just two or three words what would they say?

The other co-worker is Titus. He may be more familiar to you because Paul wrote a letter to him which we find in our Bible called the Epistle of Paul to Titus. He was not Jewish but of Greek origin and this fact is extremely important to the context of false teachers coming with a false gospel. The name *Titus* means: pleasing. Although an entire epistle was written to him and he was a well-known co-worker with Paul, very little is known of him. He is never mentioned in the book of Acts and no other New Testament author writes of him either. Paul does not describe how they met nor how they began to work together for the Lord. Chronologically this is the first time that Titus is mentioned by Paul. What we do know is that Paul held him in the highest esteem and that should be sufficient for us. This should encourage us to simply welcome Christian workers of good and well known reputation even if we don't know everything about them.

**(2)It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.**

In verse two Paul explains why he went up to Jerusalem – it '*was because of a revelation*'. We know that sometimes Paul planned his trips and desired to go here and there but this is not the case with Jerusalem. It's not like with the Romans when he writes:

**Romans 1:11**

**For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established.**

**(NKJV)**

Here we see that Paul longed to see the Romans but there was no longing with Jerusalem but rather a *revelation* (APOKALUPSIS) a disclosure or an appearing. We don't know if the Lord just told him to go or appeared to him and told him but what we do know is that

it was revealed to him that he needed to go and see the brethren in Jerusalem – so he did. I love the way that Paul simply does what he is asked to do – like a child with a parent. His heart certainly was open to hearing from his heavenly Father and ready to please him. Have we this simple spiritual quality of being ‘child like’ and obediently doing what is asked?

## **2) ...and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles**

It seems that the goal that Paul had for going to Jerusalem was ‘*submitted to them the gospel that I preach*’. The word *submitted* (ANATITHEMI) means to communicate, declare. In other words he preached the gospel to the brothers in Jerusalem (not that they needed to be saved) the way that he preaches to the Gentiles. We were at a time where both Jewish and non-Jewish churches were growing. We know that once Paul received salvation he left to go to Arabia and the only time he spent with the apostles was a mere fifteen days where he had only seen Peter and James. We do not know why Paul communicated to them the gospel? Was he asked by the Jerusalem church leaders to do so? Were they wondering if Paul’s gospel message was different than theirs? Had somebody brought news that Paul had turned rogue? Or was it the Lord that told Paul to visit them and also to show them the gospel that he was spreading in the Gentile world? We simply do not know. I also would like to mention that sometimes the idea behind the word ‘gospel’ is not only the ‘good news of Jesus Christ’ but as the Easton Bible Dictionary writes:

*It denotes (1) "the welcome intelligence of salvation to man as preached by our Lord and his followers. (2.) It was afterwards transitively applied to each of the four histories of our Lord's life, published by those who are therefore called 'Evangelists', writers of the history of the gospel (the evangelion). (3.) The term is often used to express collectively the gospel doctrines; and 'preaching the gospel' is often used to include not only the proclaiming of the good tidings, but the teaching men how to avail themselves of the offer of salvation, the declaring of all the truths, precepts, promises, and threatenings of Christianity." It is termed "the gospel of the grace of God" (Ac 20:24), "the gospel of the kingdom" (Mt 4:23), "the gospel of Christ" (Ro 1:16), "the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15), "the glorious gospel," "the everlasting gospel," "the gospel of salvation" (Eph 1:13).*

It could also be that the apostle Paul was declaring to them different doctrines that were found in the general message of salvation simply to encourage God’s people in Jerusalem”.

**(v.2) ...but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.**

It seems that the exposition of the doctrines found in the gospel that Paul was preaching to the Gentiles was not given to the entire assembly of the brethren found in Jerusalem. Paul taught in private '*I did so in private*', meaning that a selected few were chosen for this occasion. This exposition was not for all ears to hear! But to whom was it for? Here we see that it was '*to those who were of good reputation*' (DOKEO) meaning: to think, be of good reputation. Paul did not teach to all but to a limited group of people that were of good reputation. These disciples had proven their worth by submitting their lives to Christ and had proven in the past their true allegiance to the Lord Jesus. But why was this so?

**(2) ...for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.**

In other words Paul did not want to waste his time proclaiming the mysteries of the gospel message to people that would not receive it as it should be – a treasure of wealth! If you are serious concerning your faith I am certain that you have noticed that there are Christians that are not as affected by the truths disclosed in the Bible as others are. Some hear a message and are propelled forward, others with the same message almost fall asleep. In this case our preacher who have '*run in vain*' for some (those who almost fell asleep) and impacted others (the ones who were propelled forward). Remember the parable of the four different soils (Mat. 13) the same seed fell on the four soils but only one reacted and gave forth fruit. Paul wanted to make sure that the 'soils' he was going to speak to were 'good soils!

**(3)But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**

Paul will bring into contrast what the leadership of the church of Jerusalem was teaching compared to some 'false brethren'. This will be one of the main subjects that Paul will attack later on in his epistle. We shall see that he is implying that his teachings has the apostolic favor. He tells the story of Titus, the fact that he was Greek. Being a Gentile of the faith he was not circumcised (he was not Jewish). Since he became a believer in Christ did he need to be circumcised as if he had become a proselyte of the Mosaic faith? In other words did Titus have to follow the Law of Moses and be circumcised? Here we see that the answer is NO.

**(3)Not even Titus..... was compelled to be circumcised.**

This Gentile Christian was not *compelled* (ANNAGKAZO) meaning: necessitate, constrained to be circumcised. Not one Gentile Christian has ever been forced to be circumcised in the New Testament in order to become a 'full-fledged' disciple of Christ. There is only one class of believers.

**Colossians 3:11**

**where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.**

**(NKJV)**

The Colossians had a similar problem concerning keeping the 'Law of Moses' and being circumcised. And Paul readily writes that all are the same before God: Greeks, Jews, circumcised, uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free. Because they are all in Christ Jesus!

**(4)But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. (5)But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.**

We have come to the central point of Paul's testimony concerning his two visits to Jerusalem. These two verses link us to the theological debate that will be presented to us. In a nut shell this is what it's all about. So let's take time to understand this debate. So far we have seen that Paul goes to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus one is a Jew and the other a Greek. We know that Jews and Gentiles did not mix very well but that in Jesus we have been made into one new creation. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem readily accepted Timothy without placing any burden on him (v.3). And so ends our story – right? - no! It continues as the plot thickens. Here we will see new actors.

**(4)But it was because of the false brethren...**

Paul is preparing the ground by making a link between false brothers in Jerusalem and false brothers in Galatia. '*False brethren*' (PSEUDADELPHOS) means: pretended associate, spurious brother. These were counterfeit believers, fake Christians and bogus disciples! They seem to have the appearance but it was only an image. Jesus talked about them.

**Mat. 7:15**

**"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.**

**(NKJV)**

As we will see, Christ was not the only one to warn the redeemed about these people that will come into the congregations and bring disturbances and disorder. The apostles also gave grave warnings concerning them.

Paul warned the believers:

**Ac 20:29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.  
(NKJV)**

Peter cautioned the Christians concerning them:

**2 Peter 2:1  
But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.  
(NKJV)**

John spoke of them:

**1 John 4:1  
Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.  
(NKJV)**

These false brethren infested New Testament churches. Their teachings were venomous which infected the heart and very soul of the believers. If you are careful enough to have a watchful mind you also have noticed that our modern churches are also plague-ridden with the same kind of deceivers. And just as the Lord told his followers to be very careful so must we, who bear his name today.

**(4) ...secretly brought in**

These false brethren did not teach their warped gospel by blowing their trumpets and making a big show out of it. They rather '*secretly brought in*' (PAREISAKTOS) which means: smuggled in. It was done behind closed doors, behind the backs of the leadership. I have been a pastor for 35 years now and I have never seen a false teacher come in church and very openly spread his warped ideas. They always are very subtle, doing things quietly and mostly behind closed doors. Jesus spoke in the open, before great crowds and told his followers to speak to others what they had heard from him (Acts 1:8). There was nothing secretive about the gospel that Jesus taught. These false disciples not only secretly brought in false teachings but they also:

**(4) ...who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus**

They *'sneaked in'* (PAREISERCHOMAI) meaning: to come along side. You know what a 'sneaky' person does. He makes believe that he's part of the group, he tries to blend in while having false intentions. Like an actor he knows his role very well! That's what they did, they sneaked into the congregation. They made believe that they were part of the true believers. They were like living chameleons taking the different colors of true Christianity. But why would people ever want to do that? It was *'to spy out our liberty'*. They were spies not true disciples of Christ! And what was the object of their quest – to spy on *'our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus'*. One of the most precious treasures that believers have received as an inheritance from Christ is our new *'liberty'*. Christ has given us a *'liberty'* (ELEUTHERIA) meaning simply: freedom. This is what these false brothers were trying to steal away – the freedom given in Christ.

**Rom. 7:6**

**But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.  
(NKJV)**

As we will see these false brothers wanted to bring the believers back under the Law that Christ had delivered them from.

**(4) ...in order to bring us into bondage.**

Now we see where they were going, this was their strategy. Their plan was not to encourage freedom in Christ but rather to bring people back to the bondage of the Law. Today we would call these people 'legalists', people who believe that we please God by 'doing things' rather than by 'receiving his grace in Christ'. They wanted to utterly enslave the believers in Jerusalem. This reminds me of the Jews when they were freed from the slavery of Egypt and after three days in the desert this is what they were saying:

**Exodus 16:2,3**

**(2)Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.**

**(3)And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."**

**(NKJV)**

They wished they were back in slavery even saying that it was better than being freed by the Lord! This is a perfect reflection of these false teachers. They were also saying: 'Let's go back to our old slave master, it was so better with him!'. So what does one do when he is confronted with false teachers?

**(5)But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.**

There are times when we have to be as doves but there are also times when we need to be as serpents (Mat. 10:16). If you read the letter that Paul wrote to Titus you will notice that these false teachers were everywhere. This was Paul's instruction concerning them:

**Titus 1:13 – 2:1**

**(13)This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,**

**(14)not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.**

**(15)To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.**

**(16)They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.**

**(2:1)But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:  
(NKJV)**

What they needed to do was to rebuke them sharply, not to give heed to Jewish fables and to speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. That sounds exactly like what Paul did when he was confronted with the false teachers in Jerusalem. He did not yield to them and he let the light of the gospel truth shine brightly. There might be false teachers in our churches. Some are preaching against the gospel of grace and of liberty. Some are still trying to smother the believer's liberty with laws and regulations that are no longer valid since Christ has fulfilled all of them perfectly (Heb. 10:10-14). It is my duty and your duty to stand up to them so that our God-given liberty will not be taken away! The importance is that *'the truth of the gospel should remain with you'*. We can actually lose the gospel and we have seen this throughout history. We can pinpoint certain denominations who were very evangelical, holding the banner of biblical truth high in the air. They marched forward separating themselves from error and returning to the gospel truth. A great number of their leaders and even simple believers paid a great price for their love of Christ. It is sad to see that these churches who once were the light of the world have become so dim having no more oil in their lamps (Mat. 25:1-13).

**GALATIANS**  
**6 - 'The hand of fellowship'**  
**Galatians 2:6-10**

**(6)But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. (7)But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (8)(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), (9)and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the righthand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. (10)They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.**

**(NASB)**

Paul continues to speak about his second visit to Jerusalem. When I read verse six I find that it can be very harsh or dry in relationship with the leaders there. It can be seen as though Paul was as cold as ice, having no affection towards them. When we read phrases such as: *'makes no difference to me'* or *'contributed nothing to me'* may give the idea that Paul thought of himself too highly. If this would be the case then it would go against the grain of what Paul was really like. (If you read my commentary on Philippians you will see why). So let's look at our section and move on.

**(6)But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.**

There are two things that Paul wants to get across in verse six. The first deals with how Paul saw the brothers in general. Paul speaks of *'those who were of high reputation'*. I must ask myself who they were. The term *'high reputation'* (DOKEO) meaning: to think or be of good reputation is the same term that Paul uses in verse two where we see Paul speaking to a special group concerning the gospel that he shares with the Gentiles. I believe that it is the same group of men that Paul refers to in verse six. So we are dealing with the leaders of the church of Jerusalem, those who held key roles. What we first see is that Paul considers these men to be as all brothers and sisters.

This is very important for us to understand. I fear that in certain circles of the greater 'Christian Churches' this has been long forgotten – God shows no partiality! The fact that these men were either apostles or other key workers did not affect the way that Paul saw



them as human beings saved by the grace of God. There was not a hierarchy of being more 'blessed' or 'important' in the eyes of Paul. All the members of the body of Christ were just as important before God. The reason is simple '*God shows no partiality*'.

There are certain verses that teach us that whoever we are and whatever capacities we have been given by God.

**Ephesians 2:10**

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

**(NKJV)**

Believers in Christ are the workmanship of God (POIEMA) which means: a product or a thing that is made. Here we see that we are the product of God working in us so that we can do the good works he has prepared.

**1 Corinthians 12:23-25**

**(23)And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,**

**(24)but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,**

**(25)that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.**

**(NKJV)**

To those who have less honor we give and those who are presentable we don't for there is no need. Again we see that God composed the body – all receive honor so there will be no schism and all will receive the same care.

**1 Corinthians 4:7**

**For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?**

**(NKJV)**

Paul here is scolding the Corinthians because some viewed themselves better or greater in importance. Asking the question: 'what do you have that you didn't receive (from God naturally)'. And ending with 'Well if you receive it why do you boast as though YOU were so good.'

As Christians we must understand that all that we are and all that we have comes from God. There is absolutely no boasting before the Lord. If this is true, and it is, then we also need to understand that there is no need at all to regard certain people as being ‘higher’ in some sort of make-believe spiritual hierarchy.

Coming back to Galatians 2:6 we do not see Paul ‘putting down’ the church leadership but rather reminding his readers that even the leadership in Jerusalem are saved by the same grace and ought to be considered as beloved in Christ, but no more. We do not bow our knee before men whomever they may be!

As for the second part of the verse:

**(6) ...those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.**

What Paul is saying is that those of reputation ‘*contributed*’ (PROSANATITHEMI): to lay-up in addition or simply added, *nothing to me*. The idea is not that his gospel was better than their gospel but rather that they did not add anything to what he said. Meaning that they agreed with what they heard from Paul. Let’s not forget that only Peter and James (those of reputation) had seen him and that was fourteen years later. They needed to hear from Paul what he was preaching.

**(7)But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (8)(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), (9)and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the righthand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

Verse seven confirms what was said about verse six. Those to whom Paul took time to share his gospel quickly understood that he had been ‘*entrusted*’ (PISTEUO): to commit or entrust to spread the gospel. Paul writes that just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (the Jews) he had been entrusted to share the gospel to the Gentiles (the non-Jews). But who committed Peter and Paul to be heralds of the gospel? Was it man or a church or even angels? No, it was God.

**(8)(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)**

Who is the one who worked in Peter? Who is the one who worked in Paul? I know of only one and that is the Lord God. What I would like for you to notice is how God worked in Peter and Paul – *‘effectually’* (ENERGO): to be active, effective, to be mighty in. The workings of God in both Peter and Paul were mighty. In his writings we see that Paul presents the Father, Son and Spirit working mightily in Christians. In 1 Cor. 12:6 it is the Father who works mightily in all. In 2 Cor. 1:5,6 it is the sufferings of Christ that are working in us. Finally in 1 Cor. 12:11 it is the Holy Spirit that is working in the believer. Isn't it wonderful to realize that the God who worked so mightily in Peter and Paul is also working in his other children! You may wonder why there is such a difference between the life of Paul and your own. There are two main reasons. The first is that the Lord has different plans for the lives of his children.

### **1 Corinthians 12:15-18**

**(15)If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?**

**(16)And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?**

**(17)If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?**

**(18)But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.  
(NKJV)**

Here we see that God has made some to be a hand, others an eye, others as ears and finally still others as a nose. They are all different as organs and they all have different functions. But they were all made by the same God. Paul writes that God places them in the body of Christ as it pleases him. Peter's ministry to the Jews was different than Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. It is God that decided that it would be this way. It may be that your life is different than Paul's just because God has given you something else to do. The second reason, which I believe is the main reason, is that most Christians are not open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They have forgotten or even renounced what Christ had said they should be doing:

### **Mat. 6:33**

**"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."  
(NKJV)**

By not seeking FIRST the kingdom of God and his righteousness they will fail to experience a life lead by the Spirit. You need to ask yourself if God is using you for his glory. If not, then you need to repent and allow God to work through you. When you do this you will be fascinated to see what God can do through you. After Paul exposed his gospel to the leaders of the church of Jerusalem, what happened?

**(9) and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the righthand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

They '*recognized the grace that had been given to me*'. In a way we can perceive that Paul's gospel was placed on trial here. They wanted to hear or witness what was the content of Paul's message was to the Gentiles. Controversy has always been part of the gospel message and Paul had his share of controversy. We see in verse nine that the leaders of the church of Jerusalem were satisfied with what they had heard! They came to 'recognize'(GINOSKO) which means: to know, to be aware or understand, that Paul's gospel was also their gospel. They also saw that God was actively working with Paul '*the grace that had been given to me*'. As we have said before it is the same God that gave grace to those of Jerusalem that also gave grace to those who were not part of the church of Jerusalem.

How I wish we could understand this and hide it deeply in our hearts. The way that Paul had his ministry was not at all the same way that Peter, or John or James held theirs. They worked differently but understood that God was working in both types of ministries (Jewish and Gentile). As for us there are many different types of churches, out-reaches, ministries and so forth. Unfortunately for some Christians if things are not done as they see fit then they set aside those that are not like them. We may have the same gospel as Paul and Peter did BUT contrary to the leaders of the church at Jerusalem there is very little acceptance. How this must sadden the Lord to see such coldness which some of his children have towards other believers!

**(9) ...James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the righthand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

Please notice that Paul writes that James and Cephas and John '*were reputed to be pillars*'. Some believe that Peter and only Peter was the head of the church of Jerusalem but this was not so. Here we see that at least these three apostles were considered '*pillars*'. Peter is mentioned in second place with James in the first and John in third.

This theory that Peter was ‘the’ reigning apostle is simply not true. Far less that he had a successor! We rather see that the apostles worked hand in hand for the glory of God.

Paul and Barnabas were given the *‘right hand of fellowship’*. Please notice that it was James, Cephas and John who took the initiative to give Paul and Barnabas this sign of agreeing with them. By doing so they were publicly manifesting that they absolutely approved of the gospel and ministry of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. We know that Paul did not need to be ‘approved’ by the church of Jerusalem since God himself had sanctioned Paul’s ministry. What is to be noticed is that Paul agreed to have his gospel message ‘inspected’ by those of Jerusalem. He wilfully accepted to be checked out even if he didn’t have to. Again we see the character of Paul who deeply understood that he was part of the Body of Christ.

Some see Paul as being somewhat of a rogue, a loner, who ‘did his own thing’ but he really wasn’t. He was called by God to have a different ministry and did a good job at it. To finish verse nine we see that it was perfectly understood where the apostles and Paul stood. Paul went to the Gentiles and the apostles went to the Jews. This did not mean that they could not evangelize each other’s ‘group’. It just meant that both groups were known to work particularly with their own peoples. I find it quite alright to do so. Specializing ourselves to a particular group of people while being open to evangelize all that come to you can be very effective. Some work with the youth, others work with immigrants, others with people on the street, others with couples still others with children or bikers. May we all understand their calling and pray for them and do all we can to encourage our brothers and sisters.

**(10)They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.**

The only thing that was asked of Paul, Barnabas and Titus was *‘to remember the poor’*. This is also a reminder for all of us who bear the name ‘Christian’ – we need to remember the poor. When John the Baptist was in prison he sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was truly the one that they had been waiting for and this was his answer:

**Matthew 11:5**

**The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.**

**(NKJV)**

Jesus spoke of the blind, the lame, the lepers and the deaf. These were not the rich or the noble of society far from it! These were the poor, the destitute, the needy and the deprived of Jesus' day. If the eyes of Christ were mainly on the poor, how can we turn away from them? Today's Christian must remember his roots in Christ and helping the poor is one of them. It may be that we are not in a position to help with our hands. But we certainly can help with our possessions and our monies. Why not get involved with different outreaches or other godly ministries that bring help and share the gospel message? We need to be active in our society and not hiding in our Christian closets.

**GALATIANS**  
**7 - 'Paul opposes Peter'**  
**Galatians 2:11-14**

**(11)But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. (12)For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. (13)The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. (14)But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**  
**(NASB)**

We ended our last section with James, Peter and John giving the hand of Fellowship to Paul and Barnabas; all agreeing that Paul's work with the Gentiles was from God just as Peter's work with the Jews was also. This 'hand of fellowship' was the strongest evidence of the unity, harmony and accord between the leaders of the church at Jerusalem and Paul. Some time has passed between Paul's second visit to Jerusalem and when Peter came to Antioch – we simply do not know how long. The reason why Peter came to Antioch is also unknown. Was it a 'surprise' visit? Was Peter on the way elsewhere and stopped by? Was he called to be there by the Christians in Antioch? As we will see whatever the reason Peter (who is also known as Cephas) arrived it made quite a story.

**(11)But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.**

The episode that we will be looking at shows us once more the independence of Paul towards the apostles. His calling, his gospel, his mission and his authority – all of this he had received from God and not man. This is probably unique in the New Testament – one apostle opposing another! It is written '*I opposed him to his face*'. The word *opposed* (ANTHISTEMI) means: to stand against. Peter did something that Paul knew wasn't right so what did he do? If Paul would have been like a good portion of Christian leaders today he would have discounted it, made nothing of it, let it pass or maybe just grumbled inside. But Paul was not like that he did what was right – he stood up against Peter because he did not stand in the truth. Seeing this we can appreciate the liberty that Paul had. He stood up against Peter who was one of the three pillars of the church of Jerusalem, Peter who was one of the original twelve, and the same Peter who walked on water. All of this did not matter to Paul because there was something much greater at stake – the gospel truth!

In John 8:44 we see that the devil *'does not stand in the truth'*.

**John 8:44**

**"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

**(NKJV)**

If the religious leaders had the devil as their father when they were not in the truth what about Peter? If they had the desires of the devil what about Peter when he was a hypocrite? In other words is there a difference between not *'standing in the truth'* if you are a believer or a non-believer? Was it permissible for Peter to do what he did because he was 'born of the Spirit'? And what about us when we are hypocrites and do not stand in the truth, is it acceptable for us to do so? In 1 Cor. 13:6 we are told that love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth. I think we can all agree that Peter was out of step with being in the truth and walking in it. This warns me that I also need to be very careful, if Peter can fall so can I!

**(11) ...I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.**

There was no way out of it, no matter what angle you look at it – Peter was wrong and was sinning! I have noticed how often people have difficulty saying that sin is a sin. How often I hear Christians giving excuses for themselves or others concerning what is plainly a sinful life. Friend this should not be so! As children of God we should follow his example.

God told:

- Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge
- Cain that sin was at his feet and he needed to watch out
- Abraham that Sarah was laughing at Him
- David that what he did with Beth-Sheba was a grave sin
- Israel over and over again to repent of their sins
- Told Peter that he was going to deny him
- Ananias and Sapphira that they had lied

God also tells us very openly that we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) and we need to repent (Mat. 4:17) for there is a judgment that is coming (Rom. 2:2-5). The work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) is to convict men of sin, righteousness and judgment. So Peter was totally out of line when he did what he did – but what did he do exactly?



**(12) For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.**

What we see is that Peter acted hypocritically. This word gives the idea of being an actor or playing a part. In other words Peter was acting one way and then changed and acted another way.

**(12) For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles**

The 'before part' is explained. Peter was walking in the light and was eating with the Gentiles (the non-Jews). We know that Jews did not have good relations with the non-Jews. They did everything they could to keep themselves separate from them. This segregation was so strong that God himself had to intervene in Peter's life (Acts 10:10-20). How could Peter be a reflection of the light if he did not shine among the Gentiles? God wanted to bless all the nations and Peter needed to learn that Gentiles needed Christ just as the Jews did. So by a dream God spoke to Peter and it seems that Peter did understand because when people from the house of Cornelius came to get Peter, he went right away with them. Peter was doing what he knew was the will of God and he was eating and fellowshiping with the Gentile-Christians in Antioch.

The 'after part' is this. '*Certain men from James*' came and that changed the whole scene.

**(12) ...but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.**

Suddenly something happened when these men came - Peter changed! These men, who are not named, were Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. Why they came is not known just as why Peter came to Antioch is also not known. They were Christians because they were '*men from James*'. For a reason that is not told, Peter seemed to be afraid of what they would think or say if they would see him with the Gentile Christians. This seems to be a character fault in Peter. When Jesus was taken prisoner Peter three times denied knowing him. It is evident that he was afraid of what the Jewish leaders would do to him. Keep in mind that John went inside with Jesus and nothing happened to him!

Humanly speaking it can be understood that Peter was afraid to be condemned as a follower of Christ and even be killed as John the Baptist was. But here in Antioch, this is a totally different story. There was no danger whatsoever in eating with brothers and sisters of the faith – even if they were not Jews for God had told him. So it was not a sin to do so (it never had been anyway) and Peter could not be condemned for it.

Peter '*began to withdraw and hold himself aloof*'. He withdrew himself from the Gentile Christians. To *withdraw* (HUPOSTELLO) means to cower or shrink. It gives the idea that Peter suddenly became a coward, he trembled and began to shrink. When he saw the people from James he became afraid of them! I always had this picture in my mind that Peter was brave and solid, always ready to be upfront (except for the trial period). This Peter to whom Jesus had given the 'keys to the kingdom of heaven' (Mat. 16:19) had now become a frightened little boy – unbelievable! But is it? Have we not all been at one point or another frightened to stand up for what is right and true before the Lord? Have we not shrunk before our un-saved friends or family? Have we not trembled at the thought of standing out at the office, club or school? If we are honest we all would have to say that we have in one way or another not presented ourselves as we should have. But there is one thing that really bothers me – Peter was a pillar of the church of Jerusalem and if the pillar does not stand upright the building will collapse! Peter really had no excuse for doing what he had done especially being who he was – an apostle! It is written '*fearing the party of the circumcision*'. Peter feared the Jewish believers that had come.

What can be understood from this is that there were Christians in Jerusalem that had not yet understood or refused to understand that both Jews and Gentiles were 'ONE' in Christ (Eph. 3:5,6). Jesus had told them from the very beginning that their mission was to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 1:8) so there was no excuse for them to refuse the Gentiles as truly being loved and redeemed just as they were. Have you noticed that some Christians are stubborn and for reasons only known to themselves they persistently refuse to do what is openly asked of them by God? They have been taught but they say 'NO'. This, I believe, was what was happening to these men from James. The next verse teaches us the gravity of their view of segregation.

**(13)The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.**

When we sin openly within the congregation, as Peter did, what happens is that others will join us in our sin – '*the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy*'. Sin that is not dealt with will always grow and infect others. Just think of the following in a church setting:

- Gossip between brothers
- Spiritual laziness
- Segregation or making 'clans'
- Lack of commitment
- Holding back in our offerings
- Etc.

If sin is not attended to right away it ALWAYS destroys the body of Christ. This is exactly what we see happening in Antioch. First, people come into a congregation with a false teaching of segregation from others who are not exactly as they are (not being circumcised). Second, a church leader (Peter) is afraid of them and shrinks away as a dog with his tail between his legs. Third, others see this and imitate their leader and also withdraw themselves from the Gentiles. Fourth, even another well-known Christian is pulled into their falsehood (Barnabas). So Peter was a hypocrite, then others followed him and finally even Barnabas fell into this trap! As I said, if sin is not attended to then it will infect others and keep on growing.

**(14) But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**

Thank God for those who do stand up and do not cower away. Paul was not about to 'shut his eyes' on what Peter was doing.

**(14) But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel**

The first thing I want you to notice is Paul's motive for standing up to Peter – *'they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel'*. Refer to: the people from James, Peter, the rest of the Jews and even Barnabas – all of them. So Paul is actually facing many people, not just a few and some of them were very important people such as Peter and Barnabas. It takes courage to face a group of people and confront them with their sin especially when they are of the faith. And their sin was that *'they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel'*. Paul is going to resist them not because of some personal whim but because they were not walking in the truth of the gospel. They were living a segregation between brothers in Christ and this went totally against all that Jesus had lived and died for! Do you remember what James wrote concerning this?

**James 2:8-10**

- (8)If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;**  
**(9)but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**  
**(10)For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**  
**(NKJV)**

There were people who practiced segregation in the congregation. When a rich person would arrive he was given the ‘front seats’ while the poor brother was told to simply stand on the side lines. There was an open preference for the rich, they were looked upon as being more important or better than the poor believers! This is exactly what the group of people that Paul was resisting were doing. They were also practicing segregation not between the rich and the poor but between nationalities – Jews and non-Jews.

**(14) ...I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”**

Have you ever thought why Paul stood face to face with Cephas (Peter) and not with the men from James, or the other group of Jews that joined them or even Barnabas his co-worker? This is not explained but I believe it was because of the position that Peter had in the church of Jerusalem. Don’t forget that he was a ‘pillar of the church’. Others might think: “If Peter could do this, I certainly can” or “If Peter does not see this as an offense to God, then I can do it also.” I like what Paul did *‘I said to Cephas in the presence of all’*. There are times that one should take a person aside and talk to him alone, like what is taught in Matthew:

**Matthew 18:15**

**Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.**  
**(NKJV)**

When someone sins *against you* then you speak to him alone. But this was not the case here. What Peter had done was to teach by example and openly before all the congregation, that segregation because of nationality was permissible. What he had done was in the open, so the confrontation of his sin also had to be done in the open for all to see.

**(14) ...“If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”**

Paul confronted Peter with the way he was a hypocrite. On the one hand Peter lived like a Gentile in the sense that he was acting with them as any other Gentile would. We have seen that he was having fellowship and eating with them. He was acting like a Gentile because he lived as though the barriers of nationality had been torn down. On the other hand when the ‘men from James’ arrived he changed from living in the gospel truth that says that all are one in Christ to returning to the old ways – disregarding the Gentiles as though they were a lower, less loved and less accepted class of people before God even when they were brothers in the faith!

I believe that all the children of God should not hesitate to challenge other Christians that live ‘double lives’ or teach in direct opposition to the gospel of Christ. Sometimes it is done in private and other time it should be done before all. What is important is not ‘how the person will feel’ or ‘If this will make him leave the church’. The important thing is ‘being *straightforward about the truth of the gospel*’ (v.14). The truth concerning the gospel of Christ is to be kept pure so that others will joyfully follow in its light.

**GALATIANS**  
**8 - 'Seeking justification'**  
**Galatians 2:15-21**

**(15)“We *are* Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; (16)nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. (17)But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! (18)For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. (19)For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.(20)I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (21)I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”**  
**(NASB)**

This entire section (Paul facing Peter) is at the very heart of the gospel. As we have seen Paul will not let this just pass. If we change the gospel, even slightly, then it is no longer the gospel of truth (2:14). As I write these lines I can give a list of people who congregate together and call themselves ‘Christians’. They have abandoned the original gospel and turned it into a man-made religion; leading its members ever further from God. Jesus spoke concerning these self-professed religious leaders:

**Matthew 15:14**

**"Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."**  
**(NKJV)**

In this section we have a very well-known verse (20). Although many say it by heart there are few that actually understand its context. I hope that our study will enlighten you.

**(15)“We *are* Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;**

Please notice that Paul uses the word ‘we’, he now speaks of an entire group of people and naturally includes himself in it. In the mind of every Israelite this is how the world population was divided between – Jews and Gentiles. Paul continues to speak about the Jewish believers in the Messiah which included Peter and the men that had ‘come from

James' and also those who were in the Galatians churches. The first thing that he states concerns their 'nature' (PHUSIS) meaning: lineage or descent.

The Jews were exceptional in the sense that they became a nation by God through one man called Abram (who later became Abraham). They were a nation not because of a desire from a group of men to assemble together to form a new clan, but by the unique plan of the Most High desiring to make for himself a nation who would bear his name (Num. 6:27; Isaiah 43:7). So 'by nature' they were 'not sinners from among the Gentiles'. I would not suggest that this phrase is very kind but remember Paul is trying to get a point across to the Judaizers; the ones who are trying to impose circumcision and following the Law of Moses as a prerequisite for obtaining salvation. Yes you are not like them (the Gentiles) but you and the Gentiles can only be saved by the same means – the Messiah!

**(16)nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.**

This is 'the gospel of truth' in a nut shell! Paul begins by speaking about something that is known 'knowing' (EIDO) meaning: to see, to know, to be aware of. Paul will not expose some hidden truth or unveil a secret only known to the initiated few! He speaks openly like Jesus did:

#### **John 18:20**

**Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.  
(NKJV)**

The following phrase is probably the most important statement that every person needs to know and accept: 'man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ'. If man is not justified (become just before God) through the Law (all 613 commandments of God) why was it then given? We will answer this in chapter three. One thing that Paul stresses is that no one can be JUSTIFIED by the works of the Law. Now the word justified, like many others in the Bible does not always mean the same thing. It depends on the context. In his commentary on Galatians William Hendriksen gives this definition of the word justification: *When used, as here in Gal. 2:15,16, in dominant forensic sense, justification may be defined as that gracious act of God whereby, on the basis solely of Christ's accomplished meditorial work, he declares the sinner just, and the latter accepts this benefit with a believing heart.*

*In defense of this definition see, besides Gal. 2:15,16, the following: Gal. 3:8,11,24; 5:4; Rom. 3:20,24,26,28,30; 4:3,5; 5:1,9; 8:30; Titus 3:7. Justification stands over and against condemnation (Rom. 8:1,33).*

No one can be justified before God by the works of the Law. I stress the word ‘works’ because there is a difference between the Law and the *works* of the Law. We all know that the Law is the reflection of the character of God. Through the Law God manifests his holiness. As we will see later the Law was never given as a means of becoming *just* before the Lord. Let’s just say that (as for now) the Law was given so mankind could know the person of God.

### **(16) ...but through faith in Christ Jesus**

If the Law does not offer any justification what or who does? The answer is Jesus Christ! What man can not do for himself, Christ has come to do. What was impossible for man to reach (justification) Christ has done in his place. That was Christ’s mission towards mankind.

#### **John 10:15**

**"As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.  
(NKJV)**

This reminds me of the story when Abraham was told to sacrifice his son Isaac. At the very last moment God substituted Abraham’s son with a ram (Gen. 22:13). This substitution was a ‘type’ that foretold of the messiah to come and how he was going to die in substitution for all who would believe.

**(16) ...even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.**

Paul continues with the ‘we’ (being the Jews). He reminds the Judaisers, Peter and the Jewish believers in the churches in Galatia that THEY also had to do exactly the same as the Gentiles had to do to receive salvation – ‘*believe in Jesus Christ so that we may be justified by faith in Christ*’. For the second time Paul declares that salvation is through the person of Christ. Salvation is given ‘*not by the works of the Law*’. The men from James that had come to Antioch seemed to have forgotten this basic truth. May I ask if you have consented to this truth? Are you still trying to please God through some type of ‘works’? Is your Christianity a system of ‘do’s and don’ts’?



Is Jesus Christ your ONLY means of justification before God the Father? Have you surrendered your life and asked Christ to save you from the judgment to come? If not, do not lay this book down before you do so!

**(17)But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!**

Paul brings an argument that he also wrote about in Romans. If salvation is through Jesus Christ, does this give us a license to sin? Or does Jesus promote sin if salvation is NOT by works but through his atoning work? Obviously the answer is no!

**Romans 6:1,2**

**(1)What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

**(2)Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

**(NKJV)**

This would have been an argument that the Judaisers would probably have given against faith only in Christ and no works at all. It fascinates me that even though two thousand years have passed today there are still people who use the same argument against 'faith in Christ alone'. Salvation in Christ is given to free us from the power and condemnation of sin not to empower us to sin!

**(18)For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.**

**(19)For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.**

Paul continues his thinking by giving an example of what the Judaisers are actually doing. What was it that they were trying to rebuild that was once destroyed? In this context it is the place or the role of the Law. They were putting the Law back into a function that it was never designed for – the giving of salvation. This is what Jesus had said about himself concerning the Law:

**Matthew 5:17**

**"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul points out that the Judaisers were doing exactly the opposite of what they had set out to do. By saying that the Law must be followed in order to be saved they were destroying the redemptive work of Christ.

By teaching to keep the Law (to be saved) then they were saying that Christ is not sufficient, that his atoning work on the cross lacked in some way or another. By thinking or teaching this they *'prove myself to be a transgressor'*. They became transgressors before God by keeping the Law as a means of receiving forgiveness of their sins! Do you see how sin can twist the minds of people! And how important it is to keep the *'truth of the gospel'* pure!

In verse nineteen Paul teaches why it is impossible to have both the Law and Christ as a means of salvation.

**(19) For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.**

A true believer in Jesus Christ has *'died to the Law'*. He is no longer under the obligation to live by it. Amen to that because if the Law was still in effect today – NO ONE would ever be saved because the law only brings condemnation. The Law shows us that we are sinners (Rom. 7:7-9). That is why Paul writes *'For through the Law I died to the Law'*. Being dead to the Law is necessary so that we can *'live to God'*. One can not live for God when he is still under the Law.

This is exactly what the 'men from James' were teaching. They taught that you need to keep the Law as well as having Christ as your Savior in order to please God. Paul says 'you can't do that'. He even says that it is not 'the Law' OR 'Christ'. It can only be Christ since the Law brings condemnation. In John 1:17 it is written that the Law came from Moses BUT grace came through Jesus Christ. If you have Law then you can not have grace as a means of becoming righteous before God. The only way to live for God (and that is what the Judaisers wanted to do) is by dying to the Law through the Messiah. For some this is very clear but for others it is apparent that there is a veil before their eyes and they just can't seem to understand that Christ has done it all for us. Dear friend if you are that person to whom it is very clear may I encourage you to *'live to God'*.

**(20) I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**

We have come to a very well-known verse it even has been made into a song! It is an anthem that should resound in the hearts of every true believer. This could easily be the 'Christians Code of Life'.

*'I have been crucified with Christ'* speaks of our death with him. But how have I been crucified with Christ? By some manner which only God understands fully he sees all the Redeemed as having died with the beloved Son.

In Rom. 5:15 Paul teaches that all have died in Adam because Adam sinned. Adam represented all of humanity in dying unto sin. On the other hand when we have saving faith in Jesus Christ we now die in him – to sin. When Christ died because of sin, we (in him) also died to the penalty of sin. So being *‘crucified with Christ’* liberates us from the power and penalty that sin brings.

*‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me’* speaks of the new reality that every born-again believer can appropriate. There is a new life that fills the believer. As God breathed life into Adam so does God breathe unto the believer a new life in us through the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul wrote it this way:

**2 Cor. 5:17**

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

(NKJV)

Paul teaches that because we are in Christ we are an entirely *‘new creation’*! God does not ‘patch us up’ but creates a ‘new us’ in Christ Jesus. This verse is also important because it teaches that Christ is ‘in us’. If Christ is ‘in us’ then the capacity to live a life that pleases God the Father is also ‘in us’. Far too often we see ourselves as being too feeble to overcome sin or as not able to persevere. But that is not so – Christ lives in me. What I need to do is to draw from Christ the capacity to do so.

*‘And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.’* Paul says that it is possible in *‘the life which I now live in the flesh’* to live a life that pleases God. There is no mystical aspect to living for the Lord or pleasing him. I can (because Christ is in me) do it. Actually God has done everything for me so that I can be pleasing unto him. But the key that the Judaisers had lost is *“by faith in the Son of God”*. They had pushed aside what Christ had done at the cross and were replacing it with works of the Law. It also seems that they had forgotten *‘who loved me and gave Himself up for me’*. Once we forget the foundation of salvation – the love of God for the sinner then it is very easy to slip into a system of ‘works’.

**(21)I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”**

As you may know the apostle Paul is very logical in his approach of theology and the application of it to daily living. Here he brings an argument that no one can contradict not even the Judaisers! He first of all makes a statement *‘I do not nullify the grace of God’*.

That is what the ‘men from James’ and the false teachers that had crept into the Galatians churches were doing. They were taking away the power and the deliverance of the grace of God. They were erasing all the love, care, pity, compassion, concern, kindness and grace that God had poured unto the believers through Christ. If you ‘nullify’ (ATHETEO) meaning: cast off, bring to nought, the grace of God, what do you have left – the opposite of grace – the Law! On one side you have GRACE (a free and unmerited gift of God) and on the other you have the LAW (which only condemns). These Judaisers were choosing the LAW which left out or cast out GRACE. May I say that all religions cast out the grace of God! Because a religion is what a man can do (a system) to please God and appease his wrath. Since this exclude Christ as being the sole way of salvation (John 14:6) it exclude automatically the grace that the Father offers in the Son. May we never nullify the grace of God!

The argument I spoke about is the following: *‘for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly’*. In other words if I can obtain salvation, the forgiveness of my sins, through keeping the Law, if I can do it myself, if observance of God’s laws and regulations are the way to righteousness – then why did Christ die? More than that – his death had no meaning in itself! If system ‘A’ works why bring in system ‘B’? The point that Paul is making is that there is no other ‘system’ of salvation – Christ died because we are totally incapable of following the Law. Those who taught (and are still teaching today) that you can please God through following a ‘set off rules’ forget what they truly look like in God’s eyes!

### **Romans 3:10-19**

**(10)As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;**

**(11)There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.**

**(12)They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."**

**(13)"Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit";  
"The poison of asps is under their lips";**

**(14)"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."**

**(15)"Their feet are swift to shed blood;**

**(16)Destruction and misery are in their ways;**

**(17)And the way of peace they have not known."**

**(18)"There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

**(19)Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

**(NKJV)**

If you desire to keep the Law instead of trusting Christ then you will be guilty before God as verse nineteen proclaims! May we all bow down and accept the grace of God that is found in Jesus Christ. May we all stand on Jesus as our solid and unique foundation for our salvation.

**GALATIANS**  
**9 - 'Foolish Galatians'**  
**3:1-9**

**(1) You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? (2) This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? (5) So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (6) Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. (7) Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. (8) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.” (9) So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.**  
**(NASB)**

After declaring the wonders of the gospel of truth, the foundation of our salvation that is found in chapter two verse sixteen:

**(16) nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.**

After explaining that both Jew and Gentiles were sinners and both needed to be justified through Christ the Messiah, apart from the Law, Paul now continues to confront them. He calls them *'foolish'* (ANOETES) which means: unintelligent, unwise. They lacked spiritual wisdom or discernment. They were not able to identify the false teachers and their deceitful instructions! Over and over again the New Testament warns of false teachers or prophets and the ravage that they bring with them. Jesus warned of these wolves that would soon appear after his death.

**Mt 7:15**

**"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.**  
**(NKJV)**

Paul also told the brethren:

**Ac 20:29**

**"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.**

**(NKJV)**

Peter cautioned the Disciples of Christ:

**2 Peter 2:1**

**But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.**

**(NKJV)**

The apostle John wrote the following concerning false prophets:

**1 John 4:1**

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

**(NKJV)**

This seemed to be the problem with the believers in the Galatian churches – they just could not identify false teachings and they simply believed what was told. They did not put ‘to test’ these men. They just took for granted that what they said was simply the truth – after all are they not supposed to be Christians! The warning from John should ring just as loud today as it should have in his days. Far too many simply believe ANYTHING that is presented to them. Where has the spirit of critical thinking gone? Many leave their discernment at home when they go to their church, or go to a rally, a conference or a meeting! Don’t believe everything you see on the Web. Don’t accept everything that you read. Everything has to pass the test of the Scriptures - in its context. The Galatians should have been like the believers in Berea:

**Acts 17:10,11**

**(10)Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.**

**When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.**

**(11)These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**

**(NKJV)**

I wonder why the Galatians had let their guard down. Why they did not readily identify the false from the truth. Paul says that they had been *'bewitched'* (BASKAINO): meaning fascinated by false representations. This word is only used ONCE in the New Testament and as you can tell it is right to the point. The Christians had literally been under the spell of the Judaizers. They must have been very smooth talkers to bring about such a twist concerning the 'truth of the gospel'. They brought new thoughts in their minds without them really understanding the immense change that it would bring.

**(1) ...before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?**

This was the Christ who they had learned to accept. This was the way of salvation. This was the Christ who had suffered in their place. He was the Savior and the cross was where the Father met mankind in forgiveness. This was also the Christ that the Judaizers aimed at demolishing. He no longer was sufficient they thought, the keeping of the Law was necessary along-side the sacrifice at the cross! Which of the two do you believe in? In whom do you place your confidence to obtain your salvation? Is it Christ alone OR Christ and something (or someone) else? If you believe that you can add to Christ's sacrificial work then you also have been *bewitched!*

In verses two to five Paul will bring out arguments against 'the works of the Law' – he will speak of the Holy Spirit and his work with them.

**(2) This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? (5) So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

His first argument against the keeping of the Law to obtain salvation is the gift of the Holy Spirit. How had they received the Holy Spirit? Was it a *gift* bestowed on the person who placed his *faith* in Christ Jesus to be saved OR was it through applying the Law in their life? In other words 'Why did God give you the Holy Spirit'- because of your *faith* or because of your *works*? Asking the question is answering it. The Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost as a promise made to those who would believe (John 7:39; 14:26; Acts 1:5,8). And when it did happen it was because of the promise of God that he applied to those who had faith in him as we see in Acts 1:4,5:



**(4)And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;**

**(5)"for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

**(NKJV)**

A second argument Paul brings out has to do with a change of switching back to what was believed before Christ had come.

**(3)Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

Again Paul states that they are fools (unintelligent, unwise). But why were they called fools for a second time? Because *'they had begun by the Spirit'*, Paul refers to the very beginning of their spiritual birth. They had come to Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit in them. He was the author of their enlightenment.

#### **Titus 3:4-6**

**(4)But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,  
(5)not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,  
(6)whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**

**(NKJV)**

Please notice what Paul wrote to Titus: *'not by works of righteousness which we have done'*. But salvation comes through: *'the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit'*. This was how they had begun their journey with the Lord but because of a twisted new gospel given by Judaizers they now had turned to a different gospel – and actually quite an old one!

**(3) ...are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

The Galatians had switched from 'living in the Spirit' and 'walking in the Spirit' to being *perfected* (EPITELEOS) meaning: fulfill further or finish 'by the flesh'. In other words they accepted the lie that the flesh can bring you closer to the Lord God. They believed that you could please God through the flesh. That the flesh was now a better path to a life of harmony with God! This was so far from the truth as we see in John 4:23,24!

- (23)"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.  
 (24)"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."  
 (NKJV)**

The Galatians had forgotten the words of Christ concerning true worship. It needed to be done *'in spirit and truth'* not *'in flesh and truth'*. These are the worshippers that the Father is looking for – those who worship *'in spirit and truth'*. The Galatians were not worshipping the Father in one or the other, because they now desired to worship the Lord God *'in the flesh and in error'*. You cannot be perfected by the flesh for it is because of the flesh that you sin!

**Romans 7:5,6**

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

We died to the flesh and were delivered from the Law so that *'we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter'*. The Galatians were coming back to the *'oldness of the letter'* having discarded the Holy Spirit. How many disciples can have the same temptation? Believing once more that what you do for God, your efforts, your labours and your hard work has some merit, worth or value to PLEASE God. Please don't get me wrong! What we do *'in Christ'* has merit and the Lord will reward us for doing them (Mat. 10:42). But what we do *'in the flesh'* is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7).

- (4)Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? (5)So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

Still another argument was their suffering. Like all Disciples of Christ the Galatian churches had suffered because of their witness of Jesus as being Lord and Savior. For some it meant death for others banishment or imprisonment. Had they forgotten all the suffering that they had gone through? Had they suffered because they *'walked in the flesh'* or because they now *'walked in the Spirit'*? If they had walked in the flesh (following the Law of Moses and the traditions of the Elders) then there would not have been any problems at all because they would have lived just like the Jews under the Law. It was the new liberty that Christ gave to the believer that brought suffering.

Were your sufferings in vain, Paul asks? Have you forgotten why you suffered so much? Why then are you going back – could it be it is because you do not want to suffer for Christ any longer?

Paul now turns to God as an argument against this twisted gospel. Paul is asking the Galatians the following question: Why does God '*who provides you with the Spirit*' and also '*works miracles among you*' do it? Why does God manifest himself with works of wonders and also the gift of the Holy Spirit? Does he do these things because you work so hard at keeping the Law? Does he do it because you have brought the sacrifice of Jesus down from its rightful and unique place? Was it because of your '*works of the Law*' or rather '*hearing with faith*'? Just asking the question point to the obvious answer. It was because of your *faith*! Before faith there WERE NO MIRACLES and there was no giving of the HOLY SPIRIT. So stop what you're doing and think about it – how does God see things?

This section has to do with faith winning over works (the flesh). After speaking of Christ (v.1), the Holy Spirit (v.2-4) and the Father (v.5) Paul now brings an argument that has to do with the 'father of faith' – Abraham. As a Jew you had a singular admiration for Abraham.

- Was the Most High not called the God of Abraham (Gen 28:13)
- Were not the Jews the descendants of Abraham (2 Chron. 20:7)
- Were they not also called the seed of Abraham (Ps. 105:6)
- Was Christ not also called the son of Abraham (Mat. 1:1)
- Were the Jewish women not called the daughters of Abraham (Luke 16:13)
- Were they not also known as sons of the family of Abraham (Acts 13:26)

The Jews were deeply rooted in the person of Abraham so Paul very wisely brings his last argument by bringing Abraham to the stand.

**(6)Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.**

**(7)Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.**

**(8)The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."**

**(9)So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.**

In verse six Paul establishes the relationship between Abraham and God and as we will see it was not through 'works' but through the faith Abraham had.

**(6)Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.**

Paul uses this same argument in his letter to the Romans (Romans 4:3) and comes to the same conclusion 'his faith is accounted for righteousness' (Rom. 4:5). James also uses the same argument (James 2:23) speaking of the faith of Abraham that was manifested by doing what God had asked him to do but not for righteousness. Paul is simply saying that when God sees a person who has real faith in what he says then he applies righteousness unto him. You see that by adding on works to what Christ had done at the cross these false teachers did not believe what God was telling the entire world.

**John 3:36**

**"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."  
(NKJV)**

Righteousness is only given on the basis of our faith in God not by adding or subtracting from it. There is even a curse for those who do so (Rev. 22:18,19).

**(7)Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.**

All Jews thought that they were 'sons of Abraham' they even glorified themselves in it! But the argument that Paul brings is showing that not all are true sons of Abraham but only those who have faith (as Abraham did) can be truly called sons of Abraham! Paul also wrote in Romans that the true circumcised (Jew) was not the ones of the flesh but of the 'circumcised heart' (of the Spirit).

**Romans 2:28,29**

**(28)For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**

**(29)but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul will now switch from an Abraham-Jew relationship to an Abraham-Gentile relationship.

**(8)The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."**

**(9)So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.**

In bringing the Scripture, Paul uses an argument that no one can refute – not even the Judaizers! Paul speaks of how the plan of God included both Jews AND Gentiles! They would both become righteous by the same means – faith! To a Jewish person this would have been difficult to accept. Not because God said that it would be so but because of their pride. The Jews thought that God’s love was entirely for them! They had forgotten what God had said to the father of their faith ‘*All the nations will be blessed in you*’. ALL the nations and not only the Israelites! Paul concludes with the following:

**(9) So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.**

Who are the blessed ones – ‘*all who are of faith*’. How do they receive this blessing – because of their ‘*faith*’. Where is the place for works – nowhere? Abraham was saved by faith and all who have faith are just like Abraham. Let no one teach you different! After all, are not the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the Scriptures sufficient to testify that righteousness comes from faith and not works of the flesh?

What about you my friend? Where do you stand? On whom does your salvation entirely depend; on yourself, Christ or a mix of both of them? The Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Scriptures all give the same witness. Salvation is only through Jesus (John 14:6). If you have not received Christ as your Savior why not bow your head right now and ask him by a simple honest prayer.

**GALATIANS**  
**10 - 'The curse of the Law'**  
**Galatians 3:10-14**

**(10)For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” (11)Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” (12)However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.” (13)Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us— for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”— (14)in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**  
**(NASB)**

Paul continues to tell the Galatians how foolish they are by having turned back to the Law instead of continuing with faith in Christ. Please notice that Paul refers to the ‘Law’ on five occasions and to ‘faith’ on three occasions. They will be constantly be juxtaposed.

**(10)For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”**

The first comment Paul makes concerning the Law is the total ABSENCE of forgiveness, compassion and tolerance. Paul actually says that if a person places himself under the rule of the Law then he has automatically placed himself under a curse (KATARA) meaning: imprecation, execration. A curse is the opposite of a blessing (Heb. 6:7,8). Paul is telling the Galatians that by placing themselves under the rule of the Law they are actually rejecting the blessings that the Lord desires to shower them with! The problem with the Law is that it demands perfection. Since there is no forgiveness, compassion and tolerance nothing else but perfection is acceptable! The apostle James wrote a very descriptive verse concerning the Law that must never be forgotten:

**James 2:10**

**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**  
**(NKJV)**

Paul says that *'cursed is everyone'*. There are no exceptions to the rule! If you break the law, even the slightest slip, then you are cursed! It's a question of being righteous before the Lord God. One needs to be 100% holy to enter His presence. Some taught that it was through the observance of the Law others through faith in Christ who offers his righteousness to those who have faith in him (Rom. 1:17; 3:21,22,26; 4:5; 5:17, etc.). Think of all the people today who believe that they can be with God BECAUSE they have kept his Law! They are all mistaken and fool themselves by believing that they can actually keep the Law perfectly all the time!

Paul continues by writing *'who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them'*. Keeping the Law of God does not mean that you pick and choose what you want to do and forget about the rest! It means that you do ALL that the Law says ALL of the time without ever missing one miniscule aspect and if you don't then you are *'under a curse'*. Another aspect of this verse that I would like you to consider is *'to perform them'*. We live in a world where wishful thinking is acceptable. We are full of excuses for not doing what we should have. 'I didn't have time' or 'I almost did it' or 'I really wanted to but...'. With the Law this 'I really wanted to do it but just couldn't' does not exist. The Law is there and demands to be performed. Anything short of that brings a curse upon us. One wonders why one would ever want to go back to a system of keeping Laws after you have tasted the grace of God! May we never, ever think that keeping the Law is more worthy than living by faith.

**(11) Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."**

Another aspect of the Law that Paul reminds the Galatians is that the Law was never meant to bring justification *'no one is justified by the Law before God'*. The law never makes the person become righteous before God. The word *justified* (DIKAIOS) means: to render just or innocent. The innocence lost in the Garden of Eden can never be regained by following Laws given by God. All have now been infected by sin, it is in our nature, the very fabric of our being. It is in us and controls our members. Even if we could follow the Law perfectly (and we can't) that does not erase our past sins and does not eradicate our sinful nature. We still are who we are – sinners before God. Since the breaking of one Law brings judgment (James 2:10) I am condemned! The Law never justifies it just condemns. Where is the solution for my dilemma?

**(11) ..."The righteous man shall live by faith."**

Here we see the clashing of the two again. What the Law cannot bring - faith offers! What the Law cannot give (forgiveness, compassion and tolerance) faith abounds in. If anyone desires to be righteous before God there is only one way to obtain it – faith in Jesus Christ. Faith that he has perfectly fulfilled ALL the Law in your place. If this was evident for Paul it seems that this was no longer the case for many Galatians. Once you are enlightened by the Holy Spirit how can you desire to turn back and place yourself under the rule of the Law? Can you now see how twisted this ‘new gospel’ was? Dear friend if you are still working to do what the law commands to be justified before God – STOP! Turn to Christ and let him be your justification!

**Rom. 5:18**

**Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul will now introduce the Savior in his argument in favor of faith. For our faith is to be found in the person of Christ and Christ alone.

**(12)However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.” (13)Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”— (14)in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

Have you ever tried to mix water with oil? You can shake the container all you want adding more and more vigor. You can change the container from plastic to glass. You can change the color of the container. You can change what you wear while shaking and even change place the result will still remain the same. The water and oil will never, ever ‘become one’. They will always separate themselves from each other. The oil will land up ‘floating’ on the water. Don’t try to mix Law and faith together, they will also never ever ‘become one’. Paul say’s it: *‘the Law is not of faith’*. No matter what combination you try to get them to work together – it will never happen. Paul explains why in Romans:

**Romans 3:27,28**

**(27)Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.**

**(28)Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

**(NKJV)**



Paul will continue to speak about the '*curse of the Law*'. We know when we break the Law our conscience bothers us. We know that we ought to turn away from sin and sometimes we fail – we all do. If we fail to keep the Law then there is a judgment upon us. So what am I to do?

**(13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—  
for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”**

That's where Christ comes in – that's why he is called the Savior. He came to save us from the '*curse of the Law*'. But how does he do this? '*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law*'. He '*redeemed us*' (EXAGORAZO) meaning: to buy up, to rescue. There was a legal transaction between the Father and the Son. The Son did something in return for which the Father would also do something. What the Son did was to *redeem* (to buy up) therefore rescue those who would come to him for salvation. The price of the redemption (the buying) was his bloodshed on the cross. It is the death of Christ that paid for my sins. In turn the Father would give total forgiveness for those who placed their faith in Christ Jesus.

**Rom. 5:9**

**Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from  
wrath through Him.  
(NKJV)**

**Col 1:20**

**and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or  
things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.  
(NKJV)**

What Paul teaches is that Jesus actually '*became a curse for us*'. The sin factor in the individual was transferred unto Christ and he became sin in our place. This is the wonder of God's grace!

**2 Corinthians 5:19-21**

**(19) that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing  
their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

**(20) Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading  
through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**

**(21) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the  
righteousness of God in Him.**

**(NKJV)**

When and where did this act of transferring my sins unto Jesus take place? Paul writes: *'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'* (Deut. 21:22). When Jesus was nailed on the cross he became a curse in our stead. It is at that moment that the wrath of God fell upon him and that sins were judged. Do you remember the words of Christ when he was on the cross?

**Matthew 27:46**

**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"**  
(NKJV)

He was *'forsaken'* (EGKATALEIPO) meaning: to leave behind, to desert - by the Father. The Father turned his face away from him. The perfect harmony they had tasted from all eternity past was broken. The Father's wrath fell upon the beloved Son! The Son received the judgment of all my sins. At the cross Jesus was forsaken as I should have been.

Have you ever thought how difficult it must have been for the Father to strike his own Son with your sins? Do you actually believe that the Father did this out of pleasure? Do you remember what the Father had said about the Son?

**Mat. 3:17**

**And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**  
(NKJV)

This speaks of the Father's relationship with the Son: *'my beloved Son'* (EUDOKEO) meaning: to think well of, approve. The Father approved all that the Son did, perfect harmony between both of them. When the Father struck the Son it was not because of anything that the Son had done it was to save your soul from eternal damnation! We see in verse fourteen that there are two reasons why the Son redeemed us from the curse of the Law:

**(14)in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

The first is that the believer would receive the blessing of Abraham. There are two verses that I would like to bring to your attention concerning this blessing of Abraham.

**Gen. 18:18**

**"since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?**

**(NKJV)**

This is the original blessing that the Lord God gave to Abraham. A great and mighty nation he shall become (the Israelites) and that through him all the nations shall receive a blessing - Jesus Christ the Messiah (a descendant of Abraham - Luke 3:23-34)

**Ge 22:18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."**

**(NKJV)**

The second blessing has to do with the worth of active faith. Here we see that the blessing that all the nations will receive will be given BECAUSE of the active faith of Abraham. He believed God and was blessed. Now the ones who would later believe would also have their faith accounted for as righteousness (Rom. 4:3-5).

The second reason why Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law is '*we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*'. One of the reason a believer receives the Holy Spirit is because he is the seal of our redemption.

**Eph 4:30**

**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

**(NKJV)**

The seal of the Holy Spirit guarantees the promise of God that you are pardoned and that you have become his child. May we rejoice in confidence knowing that our faith in Christ has given us salvation. May we be eternally grateful unto God for his love manifested unto us at the cross.

**Romans 5:8**

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**(NKJV)**

**GALATIANS**  
**11 - 'The promise or the Law?'**  
**Galatians 3:15-20**

**(15)Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.**

**(16)Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (17)What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. (18)For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.**

**(19)Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. (20)Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.**

**(NASB)**

Let's not forget that Paul is teaching the Galatians the reasons they are foolish for desiring to go back to the Law. He first taught that we need to seek justification in Christ (2:15-21) then he spoke of being justified by faith (3:1-9). He then wrote about the curse of those under the Law (3:10-14) and now he will speak of the promise of God to Abraham. In reality Paul is destroying the arguments that the false teachers were giving in support of needing to follow the Law ALONG with Christ in order to be saved.

**(15)Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.**

He begins to speak 'of human relations' and then will use this as a springboard to speak of divine relations between God and man. In this section we need to know what a 'covenant' is because this is what Paul is emphasising. Nelson's illustrated Bible Dictionary (p. 259) gives us a definition of the word 'covenant':

*COVENANT: An agreement between two people or two groups that involve promises on the part of each to the other. The concept of covenant between God and His people is one of the most important theological truths in the Bible. By making a covenant with Abraham, God promised to bless his descendants and to make them his special people. Abraham, in return, was to remain faithful to God and to serve as a channel through which God's blessings could flow to the rest of the world (Gen. 12:1-3).*

In other words a covenant is a solemn promise that is made. In the case of God it is his solemn word that is given that he will act in a certain way. In verse fifteen Paul speaks of a man's 'covenant' (DIATHEKE) meaning: a contract, covenant, testament (Notice that the Bible is divided in two, the Old and New Testament). What does Paul say about a man's testament?

**(15)...yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.**

When a testament is ratified it can never be changed. What gives authority to a testament is the death of the person who wrote it. A testament cannot be applied before the death of its author. I personally have a testament (a will) and my wife or children cannot inherit before I die. Once I die they can receive what I had left for them. In the case of the covenant God made with Abraham a death had to occur to make it valid – and a death did occur. When God renewed his covenant with Abram he asked God how he would know that he would receive the inheritance promised (Gen. 15:8) God told him the following:

#### **Genesis 15:8-11**

**(8)And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"**

**(9)So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."**

**(10)Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.**

**(11)And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.  
(NKJV)**

As you can see blood was shed and a death occurred. The death of these animals sealed the covenant that the Lord God made with Abram. The Lord went one step further:

#### **Genesis 15:17,18a**

**(17)And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.**

**(18a)On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram,  
(NKJV)**

The Lord himself confirmed his covenant with Abram by passing through the divided carcasses. We will come back to this later on. What Paul points out is that when a person dies the testament becomes valid. What he also specifies is that a valid testament cannot be either 'set aside' or 'conditions added to it'. Let's look at these two interesting facts.

First of all Paul writes that a man's covenant cannot be 'set aside'. This word (ATHETEO) means: to set aside, disesteem, neutralize. In other words when you write a testament no

one can modify it. You are the only person that has authority to do so. If this is true of man, (and it is) how much more of the sovereign God of the universe! By saying this Paul is explaining that no matter what you hear, or what people say and do – nothing that they teach changes anything because they have no authority over God’s covenant!

Second Paul writes that no one can have *‘conditions added to it’*. This term (EPIDIATASSOMAI) speaks of: supplementing or adding to. Not only can a man’s covenant not be changed by anyone else but himself but no one can add different conditions to the said covenant. As an example, if I give you \$1000 dollars once I die as an inheritance no one can add a condition by saying: ‘You can only receive the \$1000 if you give up Internet! Again this was to teach the Galatians that no man can add to what God has written in his covenant with them. In other words no one can take away or add to God’s covenant. This is exactly what these false teachers were trying to do in the Galatian churches.

**(16)Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.**

The promises of God (or covenant) towards Abraham (which can never be changed or added to) was also for *‘his seed’*. Paul is directly speaking of Christ. This meant that all of God’s promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled by Christ who came through the lineage of Abraham (Luke 3). It also meant that only those ‘who are in Christ’ are eligible to partake in God’s eternal covenant with Abraham. That is why it is imperative to be saved by Christ so that we can benefit in God’s promises of being blessed by Him. By pointing out that the word ‘seed’ is in the singular form Paul points out that there is only ONE that can fulfill the covenant’s requirements – Jesus of Nazareth.

**(17)What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. (18)For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.**

What Law is Paul speaking of? The law that was given to Moses, which is called the Ten Commandments. Not only that but also all the other Laws given by God to Moses as they ventured in the desert. In all there are 613 laws that the Jews received from God. But what about the covenant (promise) that God had made with Abraham, was it abolished because of the 613 laws given four hundred and thirty years later? In other words was the covenant of grace given to Abraham changed into a covenant of works (Laws).

**(17) ...does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.**

Paul's answer is NEGATIVE! The word *'invalidate'* (AKUROO) means: to disannul, make of none effect. So the covenant of God to Abraham WAS NOT annulled by the Laws that God gave Moses for the Israelites 430 years later. God kept his promise to Abraham – remember he became righteous because he believed God.

**Rom. 4:3**

**For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."  
(NKJV)**

All the believers can say 'Amen' to that. Amen that it is not by the works of the Law but by the promise God has given.

**(18) For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.**

Paul continues his argument in favor of the first promise, the one given to Abraham. What is the inheritance that Paul is speaking about? It is the covenant that God made with Abraham. The promise of the inheritance of a land that he had never seen. What later would be known as the land of milk and honey. He was also promised descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky – all of this because of his faith in God. The word *'inheritance'* (KLERONOMIA) means: a patrimony. Paul testifies that Abraham's inheritance if it was to be given because of the 'works' that he would do THEN it was no longer a promise but something that was due to him. Paul explains this well in his letter to the Romans.

**Romans 4:1-5**

**(1) What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?**

**(2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

**(3) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

**(4) Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.**

**(5) But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,  
(NKJV)**

The point is that Abraham DID NOT DO ANY WORKS and he received the inheritance PROMISED by God simply because he honestly believed God. Placing this in the perspective of the Judaisers that were in Galatia we can understand the following. The Judaisers were teaching that the promises of God were no longer promises but something that you had to work for. Therefore these false teachers were annulling the covenant of God by adding on works that had to be done to inherit from God. This is the foundation of every cult, every religion, and every spiritual philosophy: that you must not accept that all is done by the person of Jesus Christ (it is insufficient) that you absolutely need to ADD something to what he has done to obtain salvation. So is the inheritance granted by the promise or by the Law?

**(18) ...but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.**

This puts an end the discussion. Salvation was not, is not and it shall never be by the Law but it will forever be by the solemn promise that God pledged to Abraham. And never forget that God does not lie!

#### **Hebrews 6:16-18**

**(16)For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.**

**(17)Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,**

**(18)that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.**

**(NKJV)**

Never accept the lies of so many around us today. They approach you under sheep's clothing but they are ravaging wolves. They even may have the same 'language' and have the same 'terms' as you do. Then like vipers they will bite you with their venom hoping to enslave you with their doctrines of works.

A logical question must be answered. If the inheritance is not given through the Law why did God give the Law and tell his people to follow it? What then is the legitimate purpose of the Law?

**(19)Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would**



**come to whom the promise had been made. (20)Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.**

The Law needed to be given because of the transgressions of the people. Since there was no written Law people could almost do as they pleased. Certainly God had placed his laws in people's hearts (Rom. 2:13-16) but because the hearts of the people were twisted (Jer. 17:9) they automatically twisted God's perfect Law. So the Law was given to manifest God's character and his perfect will. NO WHERE is it written that the Law REPLACED the promise. Actually the law was given so that we can see ourselves as sinners and run to Christ for salvation.

**Rom. 3:20**

**Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.  
(NKJV)**

Paul says that the law was given *'until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made'*. We just learned that the promise had been made to Christ, who was the *'seed of Abraham'*. So the Law was given because of the many sinful ways of man. It did not take away the promise given to Abraham. The Law was there until Christ came. Why so? Why did the bondage of the Law not continue AFTER Christ had come? Simply because Christ accomplished all the demands of the Law!

**Mat. 5:17**

**"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.  
(NKJV)**

Christ came to fulfill the Law and he did! Do you remember what Christ said on the cross?

**John 19:30**

**So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.  
(NKJV)**

I would like you to know that this is the only place in the entire Bible where it is written 'it is finished'. Christ has done it all – his sacrifice is perfect.

Verse twenty ends by speaking of the mediator.

**(20) Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.**

This is in reference with the mediator of the law which was Moses. As great as Moses was the mediator of the New Covenant is superior in all ways.

**Hebrews 3:1-6**

- (1) Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,**
- (2) who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.**
- (3) For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.**
- (4) For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.**
- (5) And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,**
- (6) but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.**

**(NKJV)**

**GALATIANS**  
**12 - 'The Law that leads to Christ'**  
**Galatians 3:21-25**

**(21)Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. (22)But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (23)But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. (24)Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (25)But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**  
**(NASB)**

The apostle Paul just finished teaching that salvation is through faith and not by works. God has made a solemn promise to Abraham which cannot be set aside or added to by man. The Law was given because of man's sinful heart and because he needed to know how corrupt he was and how that effected his relationship with the Lord God. In this section Paul will answer yet another question that arises concerning the Law.

**(21)Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.**

We have seen that in a way the Law and faith are like water and oil – they just don't mix together. We may wonder why God would place so much importance on the Law since it does not bring righteousness. Why then were the Jews given the Law? Are there any advantages in relationship with the keeping of the Law? As you may know Psalm 119 is all about the commandments of God and we can find in it so many benefits that a true believer can receive. I wrote down a few:

- There are blessings in keeping the law (v.1)
- It keeps us on the right path (v.3)
- It establishes our life (v.5)
- It keeps us from being ashamed (v.6)
- We will worship with upright hearts (v.7)
- God will not forsake us (v.8)

There are five benefits for keeping the Law found in the first eight verses and there are one hundred and seventy-six of them! Imagine how many benefits you will find if you do an in-depth study of this Psalm!

In a way the Law that is kept by a pure heart brings blessings upon the believer but it NEVER BRINGS righteousness before God! Only Christ can do that (Gal. 2:21; 3:6).

**2 Cor. 5:21**

**For He (the Father) made Him (the Son) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.  
(NKJV)**

So, *'Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God?'* In other words does the law work against the promises (covenant) of God? Is the Law an enemy towards the faith? This is very important because even today there are those who disregard 'the law' saying that it is useless since we are 'under grace'. I believe they say this because they do not understand the role that the law plays in the plan of God. We have seen that it is not the role of the Law to bring salvation. Here we will see what the Law was meant for.

**(21)Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be!**

In some older translations Paul answers is 'God forbid' which gives it a very clear sense. The Law will never, never, never be contrary to the promises of God! The idea of being *'contrary'* means to be against. Like a boxing match is the Law fighting against the faith as if they were adversaries. One is not against the other. They actually have two different roles in salvation. We must never get mixed up – the Law is not a means of salvation.

**(21) ...For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.**

Here Paul states what the Law is not able to do – *'impart life'*. This term (ZOOPOIEO) means: make life, give life, quicken. This is what the Law can never do – it can never give true spiritual life. Simply because the Law activates sin, Paul explains this in Romans.

**Romans 7:5**

**For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.  
(NKJV)**

**Romans 7:8**

**But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.**

**(NKJV)**

**Romans 7:11**

**For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.**

**(NKJV)**

The Law in man: bears fruit to death (7:5), all manner of evil desire (7:8) and it killed me (7:11). As you can see the law does not impart life but rather spiritual death.

**(22) But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

Paul uses the Scriptures as the foundation to his teachings – and so should all of us. It is never what I believe to be right but what the Bible says is true. So what is the witness of the Scriptures? It has *'shut up everyone under sin'*. Paul says that sin shuts together (or includes) EVERYONE. All of mankind has been marked or branded by sin, there are no exceptions. If there is one thing that unites all of mankind whatever the color of their skin, their language, traditions, and physical appearance – it is SIN. But why is mankind shut up under sin?

**(22) ...so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

What God does is that he places everyone under the rule of sin and then offers salvation to those who believe in Christ. There is one cause of spiritual death and that is sin. There is also only one remedy to cure us from our spiritual death and that is Jesus Christ. There is no confusion or misunderstanding. All are sinners and all need Christ to be saved. Please notice what is written *'Jesus Christ might be given'*. Jesus is a gift from God – the Father to all of those who repent of their sins. Given (DIDOMI) means: to bestow, grant, offer. By faith the Son is given to the believer. If someone says that he is not a sinner then he is not given the Son as his Redeemer simply because he does not believe that he needs him! But what happens to the person who rejects the Son?

**John 3:36**

**"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (NKJV)**

The person who has no need for Jesus because he is trying to be justified by the Law, receives the wrath of God! What he is trying to get rid of by the Law only amplifies it! He who lives by the Law shall never see life and the wrath of God abides on him! How foolish are those who are filled with pride and set Christ aside! I hope, dear friend, that you are not one of them – that you have placed your faith in the person of Christ to justify you before the Father.

**(23)But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.**

Paul is painting a picture of what a person looks like before faith gave him a new life. Have you ever seen a ‘before’ and ‘after’ picture of someone? It can be quite revealing! If you would see some of my ‘before’ pictures as a teenager or a young man you would not believe that it was me. There is so much difference between the two! Paul speaks of ‘*before the faith*’. What did a person look like, well he was two things:

1. Kept in custody under the Law
2. Shut up to the faith

As sinners ‘*we were kept in custody under the Law*’. We were in custody (PHROUREO) which means: to mount guard as a sentinel, to keep. It gives the picture that we were under the watchful eye of the Law. A bit like prisoners in the courtyard. There are guards all around them keeping a watchful eye on all that they do. And if they do something wrong, instantly, they suffer the consequences. The law keeping a close watch on sinners instantly pours the wrath of God upon them when they transgress it. The second picture is one of being ‘*shut up to the faith*’. This is the same term that we have seen in verse twenty-two. It means to shut together, to include. The reason why the Law keeps us in custody has to do with faith. We are all together under the heading of the Law (as sinners) so we can also be under the heading of faith (as redeemed). All are under the Law but not all are under the faith. One has to come to Jesus to receive redemption. We are invited to come to Christ and we need to make the personal choice to do so. Jesus said:

**Mat. 11:28**

**"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**  
(NKJV)

**John 5:40**

**"But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**  
(NKJV)

As you can see some are not willing to come to Christ. They resist, they fight, and they battle with the Holy Spirit refusing to repent and abandon their lives at the cross.

Some who were invited to the wedding were not willing to go (Mat. 22:3). Most of the people of Jerusalem were not willing to be gathered by Christ under his wings (Mat. 23:37). Are you still resisting the call to repentance? Do you still believe that you can make it on your own? Are you still under the custody of the Law which only brings death?

**(24)Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (25)But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

In these final two verses we see the main reason why the Law was given (apart from serving as a testimony of the character of God). The first is that the Law *'has become our tutor'* (PAIDAGOGOS) MEANING: instructor, schoolmaster. We have seen what the Law teaches us – we fail over and over to keep the standards of God. It also teaches us that the wrath of God is upon sinners.

We absolutely need the Law because it teaches us that we are not like we think we are. I personally did not know that I was such a sinner until the Law was opened to my understanding by the Holy Spirit. Only then did I see my spiritual ugliness! The Law *'shined a light'* on all of my flaws as a human being. So the Law is a *'good thing'* because it can *'lead us to Christ'*. The Law points to Jesus as the unique solution for my spiritual sickness. What the false teachers were pointing to was the exact opposite of what the Law was meant for. They pointed to the Law as a means of securing salvation. When in truth it only brought judgment! The proof that the Law does not save is the end of the phrase:

**(24) ...so that we may be justified by faith.**

Justified by faith not by the works of the Law. Now the word *'justified'* (DIKAI00) means: to render just or innocent, be righteous. I am rendered just or innocent, I become righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. Amen for that! Christ has perfectly done all that I was called to do but that sin kept me from being able to do. This is the call of all true believers *'Salvation by faith alone'*. May God be blessed forever! What a wonderful gift he has bestowed upon all that believe. May we forever be grateful that he has kept his promise given to Abraham.

**(25)But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

This verse explains the consequence of having faith in Jesus as your Savior. Although there are many benefits and blessings that are given unto the child of God. Paul specifically speaks of this one because it has to do with the false teachers he is battling. The true believer is *'no longer under a tutor'*.

Remember we have seen that the Law acts as a tutor that points to Christ. Once we belong to Christ by faith in Him the tutor is no longer necessary. Have you ever passed through a road that is under construction or repair? On both sides of your car there are ‘cones’ that guide you. But once the construction or repairs are finished the ‘cones’ disappear! The Law disappears once you have been brought safely to Christ. The law disappears because you have now arrived at your destination – safe and sound in Christ. Braces are taken off when your teeth have been straightened. A cast is taken off when your bones have mended. And the Law is taken away when Christ is your Savior. The believer is no longer ‘under the Law’ but now is ‘under grace’. Paul writes the following:

**Romans 8:1-3**

- (1) There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**
- (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**
- (3) For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.**

**(NKJV)**



**GALATIANS**  
**13 - 'The sons of God'**  
**Galatians 3:26-29**

**(26)For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (27)For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (28)There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29)And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise**  
**(NASB)**

This section is the conclusion of the series of arguments that Paul has presented to the Galatian churches. On one side it is mind boggling and on the other so re-assuring.

**(26)For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

Have you ever thought of the countless numbers of people around the world and what they would do to have this security? I believe that every single human being deeply desires to know what will happen to them once they leave this world and yet so few really know. Notice that Paul says '*you are*'. He does not say, you might, you could, or you may if.... It is in the present tense '*you are*'. There is no question about it. In the eyes of God you are no longer an enemy.

**John 1:12,13**

**(12)But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**

**(13)who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

**(NKJV)**

Other verses also confirm that those who are in Christ have become children of God (Rom. 8:14; Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1,2). In a way the story of mankind has come full circle. In the beginning while our first parents were in the Garden of Eden there was perfect unity between God and Adam & Eve. It was lost because of their sinning against the Almighty. Because of sin man fell under the curse of God's judgment. Christ came and offered himself as a sacrifice substituting himself for us. The perfect sacrifice was accepted by the Father and all of those who repent and place their faith in Christ as their substitute are re-established as children of God. Not the Law nor any works that they may do but only through the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus was the 'Lamb that takes away the sins of the world'

(John 1:29). Oh, what great depths can our thoughts plunge into when we read the following words concerning those who have become children of God!

**Romans 8:35-39**

- (35)Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**  
**(36)As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."**  
**(37)Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**  
**(38)For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,**  
**(39)nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**  
**(NKJV)**

May God be blessed forever! May his glory shine on earth as it is in heaven! May we lift our hands and exalt his name! He has made all who repent his redeemed who shall reign with him for all eternity (Rev. 22:5). Friend are you a child of God? Have you received forgiveness? Has the blood of Christ covered your sins? If you are not certain, please stop reading and bow your head and ask Christ to forgive you and give him your life.

**(26)For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

Paul reminds the Galatians HOW they had become *'sons of God'* it was *'through faith in Christ Jesus'*. There was and there is only one way to become a child of God and this is through faith in Jesus. Once again Paul is pounding this truth simply because the false teachers were bringing a 'new gospel' which we can call 'the gospel of twisted truth'! They said: 'through Christ and the Law', the Scriptures said: 'through Christ only' (John 14:6). They said 'your works have a part in your salvation', the Scriptures said 'we are all unclean and our righteousness is like a filthy rag' (Isaiah 64:6). They said 'you can lose your salvation', the Scriptures said: 'there is no more condemnation' (Rom. 8:1). How can we set aside faith to be saved and substitute it with personal works or the Law? Remember what the writer of Hebrew wrote:

**Heb. 11:6**

**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**  
**(NKJV)**

With the following verse Paul will introduce a new theological aspect of our redemption in Christ Jesus.

**(27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ  
 (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Again we see that Paul writes *'For all of you'*. He first writes *'For all are sons of God'* (v.26) and now he writes *'For all of you'* (v.27). There are NO EXCEPTIONS concerning who has become a child of God and who was baptized *'into Christ'*. ALL means ALL. Each and every one: man, woman and child. Everyone who come to Christ for salvation receives forgiveness and become a child of God. Some say that there are two different types of Christians: Those who have fully received the blessings of God and those who have not yet. The more spiritual and the less. This is not true and never has been. There is only one type of Christian for they all stand in Christ and his sacrifice was the same for all – his death on the cross. But what does Paul mean when he writes: *'baptized into Christ'*?

The term *'baptized into'* is typically from Paul. Baptized (BAPTIZO) means: to immerse, submerged. Imagine plunging into a pool. When you do this you become immersed into the water. You are literally submerged. Keep this picture in mind and try to imagine what Paul is stating. You are baptized (immersed) in Christ or you have *'plunged into'* Christ. We know that it is the Holy Spirit who has baptized the believer into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). When we believe we are spiritually placed into Christ to become his living body here on earth. Paul also uses this term *'baptized into'* in:

- Rom. 6:3 in regards to the believers being plunged into the death of Christ.
- 1 Cor. 10:2 in regards to the believers being plunged into Christ's body.

As for verse twenty-seven it is self-explanatory. Here being baptized in Christ means: *'have clothed yourselves with Christ'*. The believer has been fully dressed with Christ. The word *'clothed'* (ENDUO) means: to invest with clothing. Do you remember the parable about the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)? He was with his father, then he sinned against him and abandoned him. When he repented he came back and asked forgiveness. Have you noticed what the father did towards his son?

#### **Luke 15:22**

**"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.'"**

**(NKJV)**

He got rid of his dirty and smelly clothing (having worked with pigs) and brought to him a new set of clothing. When the son came back to the father he was given new clothing in which he slipped into. The father gave him the 'best robe' (notice best) and also notice that it is the father that put it on his new found son! Then he received a ring and sandals for his feet. It is the same with the believer God the Father gives the believer the honor of wearing Christ's righteousness. We are 'in Christ' as the prodigal son was 'in his new clothing'. We have received a newness of life because of Christ and we should now live this newness (Eph. 4:1; 17; 5:2;8).

**(28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

In this verse Paul explains who the 'all' that have been baptized and clothed into Christ are. This verse was quite revolutionary (and still is). It is revolutionary because the world has divided itself into different compartments. Things have not changed, just look around and you will see. Society is divided between the wealthy and the rest, the fit and the sick, the very intelligent, intelligent and those who lack intelligence, the different races, those who are royal and those who are common, the strong and the weak, men and women, the gifted and those who lack talents and so forth. In the days of Paul this was even more accentuated. But something unbelievable happens when one is redeemed. Yes he is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) but his standing has also changed. Before the world was divided by race, the Jews & Greeks. Now in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. The world was divided by civil status, slave or free man. Now in Christ there is neither. The world was divided by sexual identity, male and female. Now this no longer exists. What we see is that race, civil status and sexual identity no longer create any barrier or discrimination before God (it never did). All these barriers which infect humanity and cause so many hardships do not stand before the Lord. Some may say certain races are superior to others but not so with God. Others may see some as their slaves but this is absent in God's eyes. Others may segregate between men and women. This is not the way God sees things. The reason given is the following:

**(28) ...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

The reason being that every believer is '*one in Christ Jesus*'. I would like you to once again notice the word 'all'. This is the third time that Paul uses this word!

- All sons of God through faith (in Christ)
- All baptized into Christ
- All one in Christ

In Christ, there are no more worldly distinctions. There are no more barriers. The walls have all broken down. In Christ there is perfect unity not only with the Father, Son and Spirit but also perfect unity between true believers. Now when I look around I honestly do not see this perfect unity between believers. Why is this so? It is because we have not yet become perfected in Christ. We still have this fallen nature in us that constantly rebels against the Lord. We still are sinners and our sins are manifested in different forms and fashions. But one day believers will become truly Christ-like and for this to happen we must pass from this world unto the Father's, from this side of eternity to the next. This is how John writes it:

**1 John 3:2**

**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.  
(NKJV)**

A day will come when all the redeemed will be revealed as who they really are in Christ. On that day we will be 100% who we should be, because we have been baptized and been clothed in Christ (v.26). Until then we need simply to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into his image as a potter transforms a lump of clay into something beautiful (Isaiah 64:8; Jer. 18:6).

**(29)And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise**

To end this section Paul returns to the beginning of his argument concerning Abraham and his faith that made him righteous before God (3:6). He told us that the promise made to Abraham concerned his 'seed' (3:16) which was Christ. We were also told that those who believe become children of Abraham (3:7). What Paul now teaches is that those who *'belong to Christ'* are *'Abraham's descendants'*. And what does this give us? Why is it so important? It is important because of the *'promise'* made by God to Abraham. Since we are spiritual descendants of Abraham we ALSO have inherited the promise (covenant) of God. The spiritual blessings promised to Abraham have become ours. All of this is because of Christ and his redemptive work at the cross. Believers in Christ have become *'heirs'* like Abraham was. The word *'heirs'* (KLERONOMOS) means: getting by apportionment. Believers have become heirs of God and we will get our portion when we come into his presence.

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

**(3)Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

**(4)to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

**(5)who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**(NKJV)**

**GALATIANS**  
**‘The chosen time’**  
**Galatians 4:1-7**

**(1)Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, (2)but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. (3)So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. (4)But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, (5)so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (6)Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (7)Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.**

**(NASB)**

In our last chapter we have seen that the true believers have become children of God (3:26) and that by faith they have inherited along with Abraham. In this section Paul will give the Galatians more details about what it entails to be a child of God.

**(1)Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, (2)but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.**

Paul is speaking concerning children that have not yet become adults with all the rights, privileges and duties this involves. This is no ordinary child for he is an heir. There were different ‘classes’ of children in the Roman empire just as there are today. There was the first born who would normally be the heir, then what I would call the ‘normal’ children, and finally there were also the adopted children. All the children played different roles and had different expectation from their parents. We will look more specifically at the adopted child later on in this chapter.

What Paul teaches in the first verse is that as long as a child, even though he is heir, has not yet become an adult he is treated as a slave *‘he does not differ at all from a slave’*. So what does the child look like? We see that *‘as long’* (HOSOS) meaning: as much, great, long as. This gives the idea of a time period in one’s life. Many parents say to their rebellious child: ‘As long as you’re in our house it’s our rules’. Meaning that for the time period that you enjoy living in our home you are to follow our rules. It also means that when you will leave our home our rules will no longer have authority over you. A child does not remain a child forever. In time he will become an adult.

The word child (NEPIOS) means: not speaking, giving the idea of an infant, being immature or a babe. This is the type of person that Paul is talking about. In the Roman Empire when a boy became an adult depended on his maturity, schooling and intellect. There was no official ‘set date’ as in our modern countries. Normally it was around the age of sixteen that he passed from childhood to adulthood. The boy who became a man changed clothing. As a child he wore a *Toga Praetexta* but was given by his father a *toga virilis* which manifested to everyone that he had now become an adult.

As a child of God until this time of becoming an adult comes we ‘*do not differ*’ (DIAPHERO) meaning: to differ from, be of more value than a slave. We are looked upon with different eyes because we have not yet reach the state of maturity. In our culture we see this all the time. Children are not looked upon as being capable of being adult. This is simply because they lack knowledge and experience that only time can give if the child is receptive. By the way some grownups are also not looked upon as being adults because they also lack in knowledge and mostly maturity! This child, even though ‘*he is owner of everything*’ has not yet received the authority over his inheritance – he is like anyone else.

**(2)but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.**

If we go back to Paul’s day, an heir would be given over to a tutor who would teach him how to be a good citizen. The child would be taught morality, what is honorable, the laws of the land, the traditions of the family and country and so forth. The father would give his child over so that he could learn from his tutor and then become worthy of being an heir. This is the picture that Paul is giving the Galatians, which they understood very well from living in the Roman Empire.

This child was under the authority of a ‘*guardian*’ (EPITROPOS) meaning: a commissioner, tutor, guardian or ‘*manager*’ (OIKONOMOS) meaning: a house manager, overseer. We are getting closer to the point that Paul is trying to get across to the Galatians. These tutors had authority over the child ‘*until the date set by the father*’. At one point the father of the child would step in and determine that time had come for his child to pass unto adulthood.

**(3)So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.**

Notice that Paul uses the word ‘*we*’, he includes himself in the process that he is speaking of. Even though Paul had quite the experience when he was born-again he does not see himself as being any different than all the other children of God. This reminds me that I should always see myself as equal to my brothers and sisters.



I am no greater or more important than they are. The blood of Christ was shed for them as well as for me. I am loved by the Father, Son and Spirit just like they are. I may have different spiritual gifts or ministries but these were also given to me.

### **1 Corinthians 12:4-6**

**(4) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.**

**(5) There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.**

**(6) And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul speaks of '*while we were children*' which means that they were no longer children. They had passed from childhood to manhood spiritually speaking. So what was the life like when they were children?

**(3) ...were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.**

When we were children we were '*held in bondage*' (DOULOU) meaning: to enslave. We were literally chained, bound, trapped by something, as though we were in prison, unable to escape, with no one to set us free. But what are these things that ensnared us? Paul calls them '*the elemental things*' of the world. The word '*elemental*' (STOICHEION) means: element, principle, rudiment. We can see this as the very basic things that make up this world. Paul writes about them in Colossians:

### **Colossians 2:8**

**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

**(NKJV)**

Here we see that Paul gives four examples of what the fabric of this dark world is made of: human philosophy, empty deceit, tradition of men and basic principles of the world. Notice that Paul states that these four things are NOT based on Christ. So as a child we were held captive by things that are not of Christ but rather from the opponent of everything that is of the light – Satan. In Ephesians Paul speaks of Satan and his government and how he uses sin, the world, lust and the flesh to keep all of mankind enslaved by his power.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

**(1)And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,  
(2)in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the  
prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,  
(3)among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh,  
fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of  
wrath, just as the others.  
(NKJV)**

As I said these are the things that have kept people in bondage. But God did not leave the world in a hopeless situation. He did what he alone could do.

**(4)But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,  
born under the Law, (5)so that He might redeem those who were under the Law,  
that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

God intervened in human history. He stood up and the plan that he had decreed before time existed was about to be revealed. Paul calls this *'the fullness of time'*. The word *'fullness'* means: repletion, completion. The time had become complete, in other words *'time had come'*. Imagine you have to wait for one hour before you receive a desired gift. You wait and you wait and finally the hour has passed – it has been completed – and now you can open your gift. Paul speaks of this *'fullness of time'* in his letter to the Ephesians.

**Ephesians 1:10**

**that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one  
all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.  
(NKJV)**

God had a plan and that plan was to *'gather together in one all things in Christ'*. Paul explains what God did when time had finally come.

**(4) ...God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law**

This is the mystery of the incarnation: God sending forth his son to be born of a woman. The Son of God was *'born of a woman'*. The word *'born'* (GINOMAI) has a variety of meanings some of which are: to become, to come into being. Have you ever thought of the impact on God – the Son becoming a man(*born of a woman*)?The first I see is that God kept his promise to Adam and Eve. Neither the sins of man nor the opposition from Satan and his hosts of fallen angels could oppose the plan of God for man's salvation.

**Genesis 3:15**

**And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."**

**(NKJV)**

God had said that from the seed of the woman would come someone who would crush the head of the serpent and he did come. Our God always keeps his promises, he keeps them in his 'fullness of time'!

A second implication is that being born of a woman makes Jesus perfectly man. When Jesus came he was not God in disguise or God playing a game imitating that he was a man! Being a man meant that he was subject to everything other people were. Here are some examples:

- Jesus was tired (Mat. 8:24)
- Jesus was hungry (Mat. 4:2)
- Jesus wept (John 11:35)
- Jesus was tempted (Heb. 2:18)
- Jesus suffered (Luke 22:15)
- Jesus bled (John 19:34)
- Jesus agonized (Luke 22:44)
- Jesus died (Mark 15:37)

Because he was perfectly man, Jesus could represent mankind and become the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). This point is extremely important. Adam represented mankind and Christ also represented mankind (Rom. 5:12-19). Adam represented man in his fallen state because of sin and Jesus represented man to make him righteous because of his sinless state. In other words if Christ had not been perfectly man he could not have represented mankind and taken his punishment upon himself to save them from the wrath of the Father.

Now Jesus was not only born of a woman including all that entailed but he was also '*born under the Law*'. Just as Jesus being born of a woman is crucial for salvation so is being '*born under the Law*'. Being under the Law meant that Jesus (just as all mankind) was subject to the consequences of the Law. If Jesus would have broken one Law then he would have been considered as having broken all the Law!

**James 2:10,11**

**(10)For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (11)For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder."**

**Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.**

**(NKJV)**

If Jesus would not have been subject to the Law then his death at the cross would have had no bearing on our salvation. Let's not forget that Christ was our substitute and because of this we have gained his righteousness. But for this to have taken effect, he absolutely needed to be under the Law. For it is the Law that needs to be perfectly kept before God.

**Romans 8:3,4**

**(3)For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,**

**(4)that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

**(NKJV)**

Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) and for this to be accepted by the Father it had to be done 'in the flesh' or as a man if you prefer. Why is it so? Simply because God condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). So Amen that Jesus was both born of a woman and born under the Law!

**(5)so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (6)Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (7)Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.**

There are many glorious benefits that can be found in salvation. In verse five the apostle Paul presents two of them. The first being: *'redeem those who were under the Law'*. For those who have been saved by Christ redemption is as sweet as it can get. Notice that Jesus was placed *'under the Law'* (4:4) so that he could redeem those who are *'under the Law'*(4:5)! The word *'redeem'* (EXAGORAZO) means: to buy up, to rescue from loss. Jesus actually paid a price for our salvation – The cost was his shed blood and death at the cross (Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:12-14; Rev. 7:14). The second benefit flows from the first one: *'we might receive the adoption as sons'*.

In the very beginning of this present chapter I wrote that we will be looking at the ‘adopted children’ further on and here we are. Paul teaches the Galatians that because of the redemption which is only found in Christ, those who believe ‘*receive adoption as sons*’. First of all adoption is given because of what Christ has done in favour of the believer. Adoption is never given because of the Law that one may be able to keep. This automatically is a ‘jab’ given to those who taught differently to the Galatian believers. One may wonder why Paul speaks about being ‘*adopted*’ by God. Isn’t becoming a child of God important enough? Yes, it is but it doesn’t tell the whole story. Let me explain.

In the Roman Empire (like in our society) one is able to adopt a child. If a Roman couple was unable to procreate adoption was a way to fulfill their dream of having a family. Suppose a couple had children who were foolish, thoughtless, and irrational being incurable. Or maybe the heir would be a drunk, always in trouble and wasting his father’s wealth – what would you do? You could also adopt an older child that was worthy of your family’s name. When time came to write your will you could give an inheritance to any child you wanted (or anybody else for that matter). You could also dis-inherit a child because you felt that he was not worthy of it. What was unique (and this is Paul’s point here) was that you **COULD NOT** dis-inherit an **ADOPTED** child – Roman law forbade it! The adopted child was certain to receive an inheritance, he did not have to worry or fret about it. This is the point of writing that God adopts believers as his children – they can not lose their inheritance (salvation if you prefer). Again this was aimed straight at the teachings of these false teachers who said that you have to keep the Law to maintain your redemption.

Isn’t it wonderful to know that you can rest because you are safe and sound because of Christ? He has done it all and done it all perfectly. His sacrifice is eternal and so is the redemption that he offers.

**Hebrews 10:10**

**By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ  
once for all.**

**(NKJV)**

**Hebrews 10:14**

**For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

**(NKJV)**

**Romans 5:1**

**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ  
(NKJV)**

May we be forever thankful unto God for his mercy given unto those who believe. May we love and serve him – respecting his holy name and glorifying him through our lives. Redemption is not given to fallen angels. Becoming a child of God is not given to the angels that kept their original state. It is only given to those who receive salvation through faith! What an immense privilege! Think about it!

The next two verses teach us about the grace that is given unto this child of adoption. If you have been born again he is speaking about you!

**(6)Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (7)Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.**

In verse six we see that being an adopted child of God gives you the privilege to receive *‘the Spirit of His Son into your hearts’*. I must take a line or two to explain why this is important that Paul writes this. I have spoken about this before but since the Holy Spirit deemed important for Paul to write it I guess I can comment on it also. Paul says that when you become a child of God – He gives the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. You do not receive the Holy Spirit by a later experience in life! This is a false teaching that has no correct foundation in an historical-grammatical approach of interpreting the Scriptures. There are no two classes of Christians: the ones that have the Spirit and those that do not. Now God sent the Spirit *‘into your hearts’* and there is a reason for this. Because it is through the Holy Spirit that you can cry *‘Abba! Father!’*. This teaches us that there is now a completely new relationship between the believer and God. Before adoption we were the following in our relationship with God:

- Children of the flesh (Rom. 9:8)
- Children of a bondwoman (Gal. 4:1)
- Children of wrath (Eph. 2:3)

Now that we have become children of God through adoption we can now cry out *‘Abba – Father’* because that’s what we have become. We are no longer under the judgment of God. God has now become the Father of all of those who have repented of their sins and have cried out to Christ to come and save them. Are you one of them? Is God your Father?

**(7)Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.**

This is the second grace that is given to all the adopted children of God. We have passed from being a slave to being a son (a child) of God. What a difference there is between being a slave in a household and a son. The main difference is the fact that the son is the heir of all that his father has.

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

**(3)Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

**(4)to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

**(5)who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**(NKJV)**

Peter says that this inheritance is according to the '*abundant mercy*' of God (not the Law). This inheritance is '*incorruptible*' and it is '*undefiled*'. It also '*does not fade away*' and it is '*reserved in heaven for you*'. Notice what Peter then writes '*who are kept by the power of God*'. The believers are kept by the power of God. In other words God is making sure that you will receive all that he has planned for you. No one can take away your inheritance! No one!

**GALATIANS**  
**15 - 'Is Paul the enemy?'**  
**Galatians 4:8-16**

**(8)However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. (9)But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? (10)You observe days and months and seasons and years. (11)I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.**

**(12)I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; (13)but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; (14)and that which was atrial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. (15)Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. (16)So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**  
**(NASB)**

We left our last chapter with Paul stating that now as children of God you are no longer slaves. It could be that he meant we are no longer slaves in a household but rather children and heirs. But in verse eight he bring another aspect of *'slavery'* that we are no longer under.

**(8)However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.**

There was a time – a BEFORE time. A time when things were not the same as today. If history is divided as before Christ and after Christ there is such a division in the believer's life also. There is a 'before' I was born-again and an 'after' I was born-again. Paul teaches that these were two very different positions that believers were in.

The first position was *'when you did not know God'*. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that the world can not know God through human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:21). He also writes that people do not know God because of their lustful passions (1 Thes. 4:5). And finally he reminds the Thessalonians that Jesus will take vengeance on those who do not know God and disregard the gospel message (2 Thes. 1:8). So 'not knowing God' has absolutely no good side to it. In our present text Paul says that because *'you did not know God'* you were *'slaves to those which by nature are no gods'*. Not knowing God leaves the person to be a slave even to those who were not gods!



These would probably be heroes of the day, mighty warriors and legends of the past. It may be people of power or fame. We do not know but what Paul is saying here is that when you do not know the only true God you are a slave to people or things of the earth. You follow their teaching or their way of life. You imitate them and care for them. You may even make gods out of them when they themselves never wanted to be idolized! Not knowing God only brings bondage – never liberty.

**(9)But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?**

This is the second position of the believer '*now that you have come to know God*'. This is the spiritual birth that Jesus speaks about with Nicodemus in John 3. We come to know God not by some kind of worth or act on our part but '*to be known by God*'. This gives the idea that we have been approved of God. Since we can not know him he has given the redeemed the knowledge of knowing him. So again we see that salvation is a gift from God.

The question is the following: If you understand that God has done such a great work in you why do you desire to '*turn back*' (EPISTREPHO) meaning: to revert or turn about. The new birth causes people to '*turn about*' and follow the Lord. The Galatians believers once more were '*turning about*' and abandoning God! They were turning from the grace of God found in his Son to something else. Paul calls what they had turned to as '*weak and worthless elemental things*'. Imagine leaving the glory and power of God and accepting to follow something that is: '*weak*': (ASTHENES) meaning: impotent, sick and also '*worthless*' (PTOCHOS) meaning: a beggar or pauper. Galatians, you are leaving the One who has all and is all powerful to be with something that is weak and worthless! What is happening to you? What has happened to your mind? We need to be very careful because we still see this today. People who rejoice because of their salvation in Christ, who taste the freedom of being a child of God. People who, then meet someone with a twisted view of Law that ensnares them into believing that they are to be justified by keeping it!

Paul says that this weak and worthless thing is called the '*elemental things*' (STOICHEION) meaning: fundamental rudiments or principal things of this world. In other words they were returning into darkness, a darkness that has always kept people from becoming a child of God and becoming his heir in Christ. I can not imagine a person that was blind and received his sight desiring to live in darkness again. Yet this is what the Galatians were doing spiritually! How could they desire to be enslaved once more?

**(10)You observe days and months and seasons and years.**

Paul gives an example of their enslavement, he speaks of observing the different feasts or festivals given for the Jewish nation to follow. Here we see another hint of what the false teachers were proclaiming was needed in addition to Jesus in order to be saved. The Galatians had gone back to observing these laws of Moses. These laws that the very sacrifice of Jesus had liberated them from! Don't forget that he calls these things (in comparison to the sacrifice of Christ of course) as '*weak and worthless elemental things*'. The word '*observe*' (PARATEREO) means: to inspect, scrupulously observe. They were obligated to do so, they were afraid not to do so! When you abandon grace you fall automatically into the trap of the Law!

**(11) I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.**

This verse is the opening of the heart of Paul towards his beloved Galatians. He is terribly afraid for them and is pleading with them. '*I fear for you*', Paul was actually fearful of the outcome of their new path. This is actually the second (and last) time he uses the word PHOBEO (to be alarmed, to greatly fear) in his letter. The first was in Gal. 2:12 when he spoke of Peter who separated himself from the Gentile Christians because he 'feared' the men that came from James. Paul even wonders if this labour (KOPIAO) meaning: to feel fatigued or to work hard with them was in vain: was all my work with you ineffective and unsuccessful? Had he failed as a messenger of the Good News? Paul must have felt like the prophets of old that labored so hard with so little success. Some, like Isaiah and Jeremiah labored all their life and the people of God still did not turn back to their Creator.

**(12) I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong;**

Paul is calling to his brothers in Christ. He is making a request unto them. '*I beg of you*' (DEOMAI) to beg, petition, beseech. He is crying out to them as one who needs help from another. This is his call to them '*become as I am*'. Paul had been liberated from the fruits of the Law – death and condemnation. For no one can bear its weight. Remember what Jesus said to the Jewish religious leaders:

**Luke 11:46**

**And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers."  
(NKJV)**

This was exactly what these false teachers were doing to the Galatian Christians. They were loading them with burdens that were hard to bear. This question of keeping the Law in order to be saved was discussed in Acts 15. It is what we call 'The council at Jerusalem'. For the first time Disciples of Christ gathered together to discuss a theological issue that had risen amongst them – 'Are we to still keep the Law while having Christ as our Messiah in order to be saved?' This was the outcome of the dispute.

### **Acts 15:1-11**

- (1) And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."**
- (2) Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.**
- (3) So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.**
- (4) And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.**
- (5) But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."**
- (6) Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.**
- (7) And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.**
- (8) "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,**
- (9) "and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.**
- (10) "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"**
- (11) "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."**
- (NKJV)**

The conclusion was that it was 'testing God' by putting the yoke of the law back on the neck of the believers. Notice that Peter says: '*which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear*'. They knew very well that no one can fulfill the Law not or justified through it. These false teachers were truly irritating God by teaching that one needs to come back to the Law!

When Paul writes *'I have become what you are'*, he means that he also had changed from believing in the Law to believing in Jesus Christ. 'Don't turn back' was Paul's cry – 'remain in Christ'. No one can follow the Law like the Law demands!

**(13)but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; (14)and that which was atrial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. (15)Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. (16)So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**

Paul reminds them of how they had met. No one is certain of the illness that he is speaking about or how he became ill. But this illness was the reason why he preached to them. May I remind you that illnesses are part of the human journey? Some believe that no true Christian should be sick, but once more we see that this is not so. Quite the contrary we see that the Lord God uses Paul sickness not only to open a door to evangelize but to bring souls into his kingdom! Far too many times we hear believers pray to be relieved from their sicknesses instead of asking God to use their sickness as a means to glorify Him! I was once the pastor of an elderly lady who often had to go to the hospital. Each and every time she went there she would evangelize people around her. She would make certain that all the nurses and doctors that came to see her would hear about her wonderful Savior. She saw her diminishing health not as a thing to get rid of but as an instrument she used to evangelize. So the next time you are sick be like Paul or the lady I spoke about and use this predicament as a springboard to glorify God as his messenger of grace.

**(14)and that which was atrial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself.**

Paul speaks of a *'trial'*. In a sense this trial was for both Paul and the Galatians. As for Paul it was a trial not to have perfect health. As a missionary, life was difficult and you needed all the strength you could have. As we will see his trial (health issue) was of great importance. But it was also a trial for the Galatians in the sense how would they react towards a person who had this sickness. We all know that the world is filled with superstitions and errors concerning those who are sick. I have heard of some African tribes who kill babies that are albinos believing that they are cursed by evil spirits and are a real danger to them. What we see is that the Galatians reacted well in their trial. They did not reject Paul but rather received him – as an angel, as Christ himself! That must have been quite a reception! I wonder if we also pass the different trials that we face concerning those who are different from us. Are we loving and caring towards those who are sick or different like we would be if Christ himself appeared unto us?

Do we turn away from those who beg on the street, those who are intellectually slow, who are handicapped, of a different race or background? I wonder if we understand that like the Galatians we also are placed in certain situations so we can be judged. And do we pass the test? The Galatians certainly did!

**(15)Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. (16)So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**

Where has your sense of blessing gone? What happened to it? Who has taken it away from you? Have you lost what God had so richly given to you? Paul reminds them of how far they would have gone if they would have been capable to do so – *'you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.'* They now had grown cold towards Paul. It just didn't feel right any longer. This is one of the signs of being in a cult. The relationship you once held so dear are now nowhere to be found. There is a 'break' in family ties and other relations. These false teachers had the Galatians under their spell, they were in their control. They were able to separate them from their beloved ones which included Paul and other Christians who did not want to follow them on their journey back to the Law. Verse sixteen still rings true today.

**(16)So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?**

Telling the truth often does not make friends but rather enemies. Jesus was condemned and crucified because he told the truth concerning the false religion taught in his day. The apostles and Disciples that came after him also suffered greatly because they were lights in a very dark world. Things have not changed because people have not changed. Still today if you stand for your faith you will be persecuted one way or another – some even unto death. We have a choice to make. If we refuse to tell the truth in order to remain friends with people, then we dishonor the One who saved us and told us to spread the gospel. So what are we to do? With whom do we stand: with the crucified or the ones who reject and mock him?

**GALATIANS**  
**16 - 'Those people'**  
**Galatians 4:17-20**

**(17)They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them. (18)But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you. (19)My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you (20)but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.**

**(NASB)**

The *'they'* that Paul is speaking about are the ones who are troubling the Galatians concerning the gospel that Paul had brought to them, the gospel that they had received and the one that they had lived by until these men infiltrated their gatherings. If you have ever seen a film that deals with espionage there is always someone who infiltrates the enemy camp in order to be able to gather information. The ultimate goal of this 'double agent' is to destroy the enemy. These false Christians had infiltrated the gatherings of the Galatian believers and their goal was also to destroy the freedom that the believers had found in Christ Jesus.

So what did these false teachers do to reach their goal of proselytizing – *'they eagerly seek you'*. It seems that they had a great zeal in what they were doing. The word *'eagerly'* (ZELOO) means to covet or desire. They had great enthusiasm in wanting to make Galatian Christians the disciples of 'their own' view of Christianity. Do you remember what Jesus said to the Pharisee of his day, the very ones who twisted God's words and intents to blend it with the traditions of the Elders?

**Matthew 23:15**

**"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**

**(NKJV)**

Jesus placed a curse on them for they were spiritual hypocrites. If there is one thing that Jesus can not tolerate it's hypocrisy. I believe it is the same today. When people distort the true gospel, when they change its meaning the judgement of God is upon them. I certainly wouldn't want to have God's wrath resting upon me! Have you noticed what the last verses of the book of Revelation say?

**Revelation 22:18,19**

**(18)For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;**

**(19)and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

**(NKJV)**

The Word of God is something that we should not be ‘playing with’. When someone asks a question and we are not certain of the answer it is always better to say: ‘I’m not certain, I’ll look it up and get back to you’. So when you speak of God or the things concerning Him make sure you know what you are speaking about!

**(17)They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.**

*‘They eagerly seek you’*, sometimes it’s a good thing that people seek you (if you are late or missing, etc...) but in this case it was not good that they did. They sought the Galatian believers *‘not commendably’* (KALOS) which means: honestly. Their approach wasn’t honest, their goal wasn’t honest and their desires were not honest. Their intents towards the Galatians were evil, wicked and malicious. They had a plan in mind, they had prepared a way to catch them in their nets.

**(17) ...but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.**

Their plan consisted in two phases the first was to *‘shut you out’* (EKKLEIO) giving the idea of excluding. Here we see that they got their ‘victims’ to be taken away from the original group. Like wolves, they seek a prey and try to separate it from the flock where there is safety because of the numbers. These false teachers would probably take time with an individual, get him to be with them instead of the others. They would lure him away from sound teaching. Do you know why they did this – *‘so that you will seek them’*! This is the second phase. Once you were more and more with them and naturally less and less with your brothers and sisters in Christ you began to *‘seek them’* (ZELOO) meaning to have a warm feeling for or against. You began to like them and enjoy them even more and you became attached to them. And that’s when they really ensnared you! You became their disciple and they your master! Still today that is exactly how cults operate. They seek the individual, separate him from family and friends and he becomes attached to them.

**(18)But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.**

Paul doesn't argue that being sought after is not a good thing. He himself sought after people to tell them the Good News. He did all he could to spread the message of salvation as we see in the following verses.

### **1 Corinthians 9:18-23**

**(18)What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.**

**(19)For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;**

**(20)and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;**

**(21)to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;**

**(22)to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.**

**(23)Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul sought people but in a '*commendable manner*'. He also had warm feelings towards those where around him. He sought them with the love of Christ not with bad intentions. We know the life of Paul and we also know all the sufferings he went through to bring the gospel message outside of Israel. So his good intentions towards the Galatians were openly seen when he was with them but he also says that even when they were apart he kept the same feelings towards them.

**(19)My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you**

**(20)but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.**

Paul end this short segment with a cry from his heart. You can see how tender he is towards them – '*My dear children*'. Paul is truly an example for all of us. The Galatians are in 'deep trouble' they have turned away from the true gospel. But how does Paul treat them? What does he think of them? Imagine you have labored greatly to bring people to Christ and a small church has opened its doors. You see them grow in wisdom and they follow Christ. After a few years they turn away and abandon the truth they had held so dear. They now walk on a different road. What would you say to them or how would you react? We see that Paul calls them '*My children*'. He is still filled with affection towards them.



Is this how we react with people who deeply disappoint us? Or do we have a tendency to be harsh with them? Paul speaks of being *'in labor until Christ is formed in you'*. Giving birth to a child is no easy affair and neither is taking care of Christians!

For Paul it was as though he had to begin all over again. He had worked and labored and toiled. He thought everything was going well and then one day he feels as though he has to begin all over again with them. This shows me that he had perseverance and certainly a lot of faith in the Lord God. He could have just abandoned them and said: 'Take care of yourself – you should know better'. But he didn't, he actually really loved them and was afraid for them for they were now in the hands of evil men.

**(20)but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.**

Paul, as you know, has been speaking to them as a father towards a troubled son; a son who had been taught but turned away from his father's warnings. So Paul's letter is filled with strong intents. Here we see that this was not what Paul preferred to do. He would have liked to be with them: *'I could wish to be present with you'*. In Greek it gives the idea that he would have preferred to be with them. If he could have jumped in a plane to go and be with them he would have! He would have dropped everything to be at their side – but he was not able to! It's as though he felt hopeless to personally be able to do something! But amen that God was there and that all things were in the hands of the Lord. It's a wonderful thing to be able to place all things in His hands and trust that He is controlling the events.

Paul says that he wanted to *'change my tone'*. Instead of writing with harsh words and telling them to wise-up and do the right thing he would have loved to have a different discourse. It is never pleasant to discipline someone the way that he has to with them. He ends by saying that *'I am perplexed about you'* (AFOREO) meaning to be mentally at a loss! He just couldn't figure it out. Why had they turned away from the gospel? Why were they following those false teachers? Why had they returned to be under the Law? How could someone who has tasted the grace of God, ever want to place themselves under the Law – but they did!

**GALATIANS**  
**17 - 'What does the Law say?'**  
**Galatians 4:21-31**

**(21)Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? (22)For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. (23)But the son by the bond woman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. (24)This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. (25)Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. (26)But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (27)For it is written,**

**“REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR;  
BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR;  
FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE  
THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.”**

**(28)And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. (29)But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. (30)But what does the Scripture say?**

**“CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON,  
FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE  
WOMAN.”**

**(31)So then, brethren, we are not children of a bond woman, but of the free woman.  
(NASB)**

Freedom is the subject of this section. Freedom that they were unfortunately leaving to embrace captivity. As we have seen earlier the Law does not bring freedom but rather condemns and brings an everlasting judgment. Paul begins with a question that all who reject Christ as the unique foundation for salvation should answer – *'Tell me, you who want to be under the Law, do you not listen to the Law?'*. Are you not hearing what the Law actually says is what Paul is writing. Sometimes we hear a person but we don't listen to what is being said. The Galatians were hearing but not actually following the words and demands of the Law. We also need to be very careful and attentively listen to what Paul will explain to his beloved Galatians. It seems that the false teachers had done their evil work very well, for the Disciples of Christ had been mesmerized into believing the very opposite of what was written!

**(22)For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. (23)But the son by the bond woman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.**

This is the ninth time that Paul speaks of Abraham and all the other times were in chapter three. This is also the last time where Paul mentions Abraham in his letter. As you may already know Abraham is the human central point of faith for he is called the following:

**Rom. 4:16**

**Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all  
(NKJV)**

Abraham is called the father of all who would have true faith. So it is natural that Paul refers to Abraham in his quest to remind the Galatians how wrong they are to desire to turn to the Law as the foundation of their salvation. God had established through Abraham an eternal covenant which still stands today!

**(22)For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.**

To make his point, Paul refers to the Holy Scriptures *'for it is written'* and we should always do the same. If there is a discrepancy between what one says and the Scriptures there is absolutely no doubt that the Bible has the final say. We are literally flooded with self-proclaimed 'bible experts' who teach lies and twist the Word of God. They are everywhere and they prosper. The only reason this is so is because people are making the same mistake as the Galatians did – they do not verify the authenticity of what is taught. Never accept a teaching that is not collaborated (in its context) with the Scriptures. I fear too many people believe when someone simply says 'The Lord told me...'.

Paul speaks of Abraham having two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. These are probably the most well-known brothers in the Bible along with Cain and Abel and also Moses and Aaron. In a sense their story is much more important for it speaks of the promise of salvation. The first important thing to notice is that *'one by a bondwoman and one by a free woman'*. This ought to strike a picture in your mind in relation to the subject of redemption. Two important words to remember 'bondwoman and free woman'.

**(23)But the son by the bond woman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.**

We all know the story, Sarah could not have any children and God had promised that she would. Sarah got tired of waiting for God to do what he said he would (lacked faith) and she told her husband to give her a child through one of her maids (bondwoman). On the other hand Abraham did not stand up and say “NO” we will believe that God will do what he has promised” – so he failed there also. Hagar did have a child and he was called Ishmael.

Paul writes that the son of the bondwoman is NOT the child of the promise because he *‘was born according to the flesh’*. This means that he was born not out of the promise of God but by the human desire. And he also writes that Isaac (the natural son born of Abraham and Sarah) was the son *‘through the promise’*. Meaning that he was the one that was born out of the promise God had made to both of them. You might wonder why Paul is mentioning this. What does this have to do with being under the Law?

**(24)This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. (25)Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.**

Paul says that these two women represent a spiritual symbol or a metaphor. Don’t get me wrong Sarah and Hagar did exist but they also represent the Promise and the Law of God. These women represent two covenants, let’s look at them.

The first has to do with Hagar the slave woman. Since she is a slave she represents a covenant that can only enslave you, a covenant that does not offer any freedom because it only brings condemnation.

### **Rom. 3:19**

**Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (NKJV)**

Remember that the Galatians wanted to be under the Law and they had turned away from grace. By doing so the only harvest they would reap is finding themselves being guilty before God. So Ishmael represents being under the condemnation of the Law because he is the fruit of the flesh and not of the promise. The slave woman also represents what happened at Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God (Exodus 19 and 20).

The covenant of the Law was given at Mount Sinai and is represented here by Hagar the bondswoman. Paul goes further and writes that Mount Sinai (the Law) represents the present day Jerusalem which *'is in slavery with her children'*. The Jews of Paul's days lived in Jerusalem which was under the slavery of the Law. Let's not forget that they had massively rejected Jesus as their Messiah! Since they rejected the grace of God manifested through the beloved Son they remained under the Law. By doing so they remained under the coming judgment.

**(26)But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (27)For it is written,**

**“REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR;  
BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR;  
FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE  
THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.”**

**(28)And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.**

Paul speaks of another Jerusalem not the one that is under the Law represented by Hagar but rather the Jerusalem that Sarah represents - the one that is free. Please notice that Paul says that the Jerusalem from above *'she is our mother'*. This is in contrast with the mother of slavery Hagar. What we are learning is that there are only two kinds of children in the world. The ones that are free (because of the promised son – Jesus) or the ones that are slaves (because they are under the Law). Where do you stand? Is your mother a freewoman or a bondswoman? Are you of Christ or of the flesh? Are you under grace or under the Law? It all comes back to the same thing – are you saved only by Christ or trying to be saved by the flesh!

Paul refers to the heavenly Jerusalem as being our mother. Verse twenty seven is a quote from Isaiah 54:1 where this section speaks of a perpetual covenant of peace. So you see that the symbol given to the Jerusalem from above is one of a new covenant made by God that includes everlasting peace between Him and his covenant people. What is beautiful is that Paul states *'And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise'*. Believers in Christ are part of this eternal covenant because we are the promised children just like Isaac was! May all believers rejoice and be eternally grateful unto God for his mercy. He has made those who have real faith in his Son to become children of promise.

The Galatians needed to be reminded of the immeasurable favor God had given and so do we! We can often forget what God has done in our favor. We can sometimes even live as though it had never happened. May this reminder inspire us to do the following:

**Ephesians 4:1**

**I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,  
(NKJV)**

But there is another side of the story, a side that still is true today.

**(29)But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. (30)But what does the Scripture say?**

**“CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON,  
FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE  
WOMAN.”**

**(31)So then, brethren, we are not children of a bond woman, but of the free woman.**

In verse twenty-nine and thirty Paul refers to what happened at the celebration of the passing of Isaac from infancy to childhood.

**Genesis 21:8-10**

**(8)So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.**

**(9)And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.**

**(10)Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."  
(NKJV)**

The older brother Ishmael (the child of the flesh) scoffed at (this is an intensive form of the Hebrew for laughing) his younger brother Isaac (the child of the promise). So Sarah got upset and told Abraham to get rid of the child and his mother (Gen 21:10). What is interesting is the following phrase *‘for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son’*. There is only one who will inherit and it is not Ishmael, who is the son of the flesh, who represents those who are under the covenant of Mount Sinai which is where the Law was given.

Paul makes it very clear that those who are under the covenant of the Law will NEVER inherit with the son of the Promise. Even for us today things have not changed. All who believe that it is through the Law that one can be accepted by God are doomed to failure for they cannot inherit with Isaac.

On the other hand all who do place their faith in the promise of salvation by the works of the beloved Son of God, will be saved because they are children of the promise.

To make this perfectly clear Paul states the following:

**(31)So then, brethren, we are not children of a bond woman, but of the free woman.**

Our 'mother' is called 'Faith' and not 'Law'. We are saved by faith and not the Law. We live by faith and not the Law. We are made righteous by faith and not the Law. The big question still remained 'Why have you abandoned faith to place yourself under the Law?'

Paul also writes that those who are under the Law (like Ismael) will also persecute those who are under grace (Isaac) in verse twenty-nine. This has not changed. All over the world those who believe that the Law is the way to God persecute those who say that faith is the only acceptable access before the Lord.

**GALATIANS**  
**18 - 'Freedom in Christ'**  
**Galatians 5:1-6**

**(1)It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**

**(2)Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. (3)And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. (4)You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (5)For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. (6)For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.**

**(NASB)**

The first phrase (*It was for freedom that Christ set us free*) might sound obvious but when we stop and think about it we see that it is very profound. My first thought is that believers were 'set free'. I can ask myself – from what?

The death of Christ set me free from:

- Condemnation (Rom. 8:1)
- Wrath (Rom. 5:9)
- Judgment (Rom. 5:18)
- The second death (Rev. 20:6)
- The power of darkness (Col. 1:13)
- The power of sin (Rom. 6:7)
- The bondage of the elements of this world (Gal. 4:3)

Christ has set me free from all these things (and the list could go on)! So what am I to do with this new found freedom? I have heard stories of people who have lived for years and years in prison and then were set free. The tragedy for many of these inmates is that once they come out they are UNABLE to live outside! They just can't handle the freedom that they received! For the most part they go back to a criminal activity and willingly plan to go back to captivity – where they feel safe and taken care of! In some way this is the picture that Paul is drawing for the Galatians. You were once under the Law and were set free by Christ.

**(1)It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**



Christ has set you free for FREEDOM. He did not set you free so you would run back to the Law. He died so you can be dead to the Law and live in His freedom.

**Rom. 7:4**

**Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.**

**(NKJV)**

These Galatian believers were running back to the Law – after Christ had set them free. They preferred the bondage, slavery and servitude that the Law brings rather than the freedom offered by Christ at the cross. Many Christians suffer from this very twisted thinking. Having been set free they willingly (or not) offer their bodies as an instrument of unrighteousness and by doing so they dishonor the Lord. They rationalize - I am saved and since I can not be condemned I can allow myself to ‘live as a pagan’.

**Romans 6:11-13**

**(11)Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**(12)Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**

**(13)And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

**(NKJV)**

It is very difficult to keep walking in freedom – there is a price to pay. Unfortunately many believers are not willing to pay the social price of refusing to walk like others do. This is what Paul tells the Galatians to do.

**(1)...therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**

*Standing firm* (STEKO) meaning: to persevere, is what they were told to do. They heard the good news, they believed the good news but they did not persevere in the good news. For after a while they went back to being under the Law. Have you ever tried to help someone to get out of deep trouble. You might have paid his debts, found him a place to stay or even a job. He is ‘all set’ and for a while he is enjoying his new found freedom. Then one day you find out that he has been skipping work, not paying his rent and has gone back to his old ways. How disappointed you must feel.

Imagine how Christ feels when after setting his child free he goes back to where he was! Remember the words of Peter who writes about such people.

### **2 Peter 2:20-22**

**(20)For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.**

**(21)For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.**

**(22)But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."  
(NKJV)**

Some had gone back *'to a yoke of slavery'*. This is the outcome of not *'standing firm'* one falls into sin and becomes once more a slave to it. I believe that trying to keep the Law as a foundation for salvation when you have been enlightened concerning the Messiah is actually a sin! When you refuse what God says is the truth (liberty and freedom in Christ) and you substitute it with anything else (works, religion, even the Law) then you are making God a liar! You are saying that he is actually leading you astray by presenting His Son as the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). What we can see is that all believers can once more *'be subject to a yoke of slavery'*. So be careful. The enemy is crafty and desires to deceive you.

**(2)Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. (3)And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.**

Here Paul makes two statements concerning circumcision. Before we go on we need to understand that circumcision was the physical proof that a man was part of the Abrahamic covenant. God had given circumcision as a sign for all males to have when they entered into the covenant (Gen. 17:10-12). It was to be done on the eighth day of a boy's life (Lev. 12:3). Jesus being 'under the Law' was also circumcised as all the other Jewish baby boys (Luke 2:21). What Paul is saying is the following: If you receive circumcision (meaning that some non-Jewish believers were being circumcised) *'Christ will be of no benefit to you'*; meaning that all that Christ has done for obtaining redemption for you was of no avail. If you place yourself under the Law then you AUTOMATICALLY REJECT the atoning work of Christ! The word *benefit* (OPHELEO) means to be useful.

Christ is not useful for you – so all he has done for you is set aside (discarded) for something else that you have chosen – circumcision (the Law). There may be no better way to reject Christ than to say – I want to be under the Law of Moses!

The second statement also deals with the law and our responsibility towards it when we want to be under its wing.

**(3)And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.**

Paul is calling himself to the stand of God's court, he is testifying (MATUROMAI) meaning: to be a witness. He is witnessing to the Galatians what God intends them to hear: if you are circumcised you are *'under the obligation to keep the whole Law'*. If you want to be redeemed by your own self-righteousness then here's the deal. If you keep all the Law at all times whatever the circumstances then you can enjoy my presence for all eternity and I will welcome you by my side. That is what the Law demands – perfection. You are *'under obligation'* (OPHEILETES) meaning personally indebted. As we have seen, no one is capable of keeping the Law. It was only a measure to manifest that you are a sinner and it should lead you to Christ to save you.

**(4)You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**

This is the outcome to all who try to be justified by anything (or any one) else but Christ. If your religion or church tells you that you can go to heaven through anything else than Jesus you need to read the following. If your religion or church tells you that you need to ADD to what Christ has done for you at the cross, either by some type of works, giving alms, following church rules and regulations and so forth you also need to look very carefully at what Paul is writing. If you seek to be justified by the Law, two things have happened to you. The first is that *'you have been severed from Christ'*. The word *severed* is very cutting (KATARGEO) means: to abolish, cease, do away, come to nought. Listen to the severity of this word! You have been cut off from Christ. You are no longer (or have never been) attached to him. Christ is out of your life, you have nothing to do with him. So don't fool yourself like some Galatians were doing. You can not have the Law and Christ both working for you. The second thing that has happened is that *'you have fallen from grace'*. In Greek it means to be 'cast off' or to 'drop away'. Again we see that there is no true relationship between the person and Christ IF the basis of his salvation is faith in what he does (the Law). You are cut off from the ONLY source of salvation which is found in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Grace is an unmerited gift that is offered – the Law is something that is due because of ones works.

Accepting the Law is rejecting God's grace! Before continuing this commentary, please reflect on what you are trusting in order to be accepted by God!

- (5) For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.**  
**(6) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.**

What is the believer's *'hope of righteousness'*? It certainly is not the Law for it only brings condemnation and it never offers any righteousness. We see that it is not through the flesh (things that I do, I earn, I work for) because it is written that *'we through the Spirit'*. But it is something that comes *'by faith'*. Remember how important faith is:

**Heb 11:6**

**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**  
**(NKJV)**

It is impossible to please God if we set faith aside. This was exactly what some Galatians were being taught and were practicing. Notice the word impossible (ADUNATOS) meaning: could not do, unable. You absolutely can not please God if you have no true faith in him. So what is the believers *'hope of righteousness'*? Well we only have one and he is named in verse six – Christ Jesus. He is our hope of righteousness. And what Paul will say is again very important.

- (6) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.**

Remember the subject is being circumcised and the importance of it. Paul is very direct. Being circumcised or not means NOTHING! He is destroying the very foundation of what these false teachers were teaching – you need to keep the Law and circumcision is needed because it is a sign that you are under the Law of Moses. However the truth is that if you are a circumcised Jew who has come to the faith – your circumcision no longer means anything. If you are a gentile that has come to the faith – do not get circumcised because it means nothing. If circumcision was the sign of being in covenant with God (and it was) there is now a new sign for all believers *'faith working through love'*. Listen to what Paul writes concerning true circumcision.

**Romans 2:28,29**

**(28)For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**

**(29)but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**

**(NKJV)**

True circumcision is that of the heart and not of the flesh. May I ask if your heart has been 'circumcised' by the Holy Spirit? Are the laws of God in your heart? Do you have a deep desire to follow Christ and reflect his character? Are you walking in the 'narrow path' to please God or are you trying to obtain salvation from your own efforts? Christ has given true freedom to his disciples! Don't turn your back on him by living 'under' the Law.

**GALATIANS**  
**19 - 'Running the race'**  
**Galatians 5:7-15**

**(7)You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? (8)This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. (9)A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. (10)I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. (11)But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. (12)I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves. (13)For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (14)For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (15)But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.**  
**(NASB)**

This section is packed with meaningful thoughts that are literally thrown at us. There is a modern tendency in the Christian world to downplay knowledge. As though searching to understand what the Bible says in its original language and in its context is somehow encouraging legalism! The Lord God has always spoken to us so that we can UNDERSTAND and APPLY his desires. When you write a letter you want the recipient to comprehend what you're saying to him – don't you? In Isaiah 1:18 the Lord says: 'Come, let us reason together'. When God speaks to Job in chapters 38 – 41 he is looking for an intelligent answer from him. In this section of Galatians, Paul wants his readers to think about what he writes. One of the worst things we can do when we read the Bible is simply to put it down when we are finished and never give it a second thought!

**(7)You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?**

What happened? This is what Paul wants the Galatians to reflect upon. If you don't think about your failures, how they came about or when the 'breaking point' was then you will always continue to fail. It seems that the Galatians were doing just fine. They followed the gospel teachings, their lives honored the Lord and they walked in the light. They weren't just walking they were '*running*' forward. TRECHO means: to run or to walk hastily. These Christians were not dragging their spiritual feet, they were not slumbering – they were moving forward. It is also written that they did it '*well*' (KALOS) meaning: honestly or morally well. They walked 'straight' before the Lord. But something happened, something changed their '*running*'.

**(7) ...who hindered you from obeying the truth?**

Like a car hits a tree and is involved in an accident – so these Christians had a spiritual calamity. They were the ones that got hit by the instructions of these false teachers! Who hindered you (ANAKOPTO) means: to beat back. As though they were bullied into doing something they didn't want to. Who, in the world, has done this to you? Who has turned you from the gospel? Who has changed your mind? Why have you stopped '*obeying the truth*'? Here we see the importance of obeying the truth of God. Some believe that knowing something is all that counts. The Bible always places in perspective the 'knowing' and the 'obeying'. Imagine your child tells you 'I know I shouldn't have done that' but I just didn't want to obey! Would you say 'Now, now son, that's alright because you knew what to do and after all that's what really counts?' Absolutely not! You would be even more infuriated! Knowing and not obeying is manifesting that you don't care and that really hurts your parent or friend.

So '*who hindered you from obeying the truth?*' Later on (verses 10 and 12) we will see that it was these false teachers. But when you think of it: who really hindered them? We must also place part of the fault on the Galatians themselves. They were the ones that did not stand against this new gospel. They did not challenge this new teaching. They allowed themselves to be taught knowing that this was contrary to what they had been taught and believed in. The Galatians should have done what the Bereans did.

**Acts 17:10,11**

**(10)Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.**

**When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.**

**(11)These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**

**(NKJV)**

We must understand that we can not blame others for our own spiritual failures. God does not accept this as an excuse for going against his will – never! Think of the story of Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. When God asked what had happened Adam pointed his finger at Eve, then Eve pointed her finger at the serpent. God did not accept their excuse of pointing to another. They had both wilfully accepted to do wrong. Even if they had been influenced the fault was basically their own. Yes, the Galatians had been *influenced* but it was their choice not to verify if these other teachings were correct or not. They should have known since this was a gospel that was totally different than the one they had first received.

**(8) This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.**

Paul sets the record straight. The one (or ones) who hindered them from running forward WAS NOT GOD. I wonder how many people believe 'sugar coated spiritual lies' and believe that these comes from God! This '*persuasion*' (PEISMONE) means: conviction or to convict. So this new conviction that settled in their hearts did not come from God. They did not meditate on God's word and compare it to what the false teachers were offering them. This is what Paul encourages Timothy to do:

**1 Timothy 4:15,16**

**(15) Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.**

**(16) Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul tells Timothy to meditate (MELETAO) meaning: to revolve in the mind, to think over. It is so important to think and analyse what you hear concerning the spiritual world. Your eternal life depends on it! When David wrote Psalm 119 he often wrote about what he meditated about.

- Ps 119:15 I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.
- Ps 119:27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts; So shall I meditate on Your wondrous works.
- Ps 119:48 My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes.
- Ps 119:148 My eyes are awake through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.
- Ps 145:5 I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works.
- Ps 145:5 I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works.
- All the above are from the (NKJV)

These Galatians had failed and how many Christians today still fail to analyse what they hear and compare it to the written Word of God. May we ever be watchful and not get ensnared by smooth spiritual liars.

**(9) A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.**



Here Paul reveals how these false teachers are able to trap people into believing what they want. *'A little leaven'* is their instrument of choice. These false teachers did not suddenly arrive with volumes of new theology. No, they came and using truth they slipped in small amounts of lies. Small enough that they passed with the rest of their teachings. One may have said: 'It's not that important' or 'it doesn't really matter that much' – well it does because the outcome is a twisted, flesh glorifying religion! Paul writes that just a *'little leaven'* brings catastrophe, it *'leavens the whole lump of dough'*.

**(10) I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.**

Paul is a remarkable man. Even when facing such a serious situation where people have turned away from the pure gospel he is still filled with hope. He believes that the situation can be turned around. But where does he get this hope – *'I have confidence in you in the Lord'*. He knew that the Galatians believers could come back BECAUSE of the Lord. His confidence was not in the people themselves BUT in Christ who was in the believers. This is encouraging for all who believe in Christ. In ourselves we do not have the power to follow the Lord in an honoring manner. But because he is in us – he enables us to be capable to walk in the Light. Remember what Paul had said earlier in his epistle:

**Galatians 2:20**

**"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.  
(NKJV)**

There was no doubt in Paul's mind that Christ could change the situation for the good. I hope you understand that in the true believer lies the power of the resurrected Christ. Unfortunately the Galatians had ceased to let Christ live through them. Paul's hope was that *'you will adopt no other view'*. He desired that they come back to what they had first believed. Here Paul is speaking of repentance. As believers we so often need to ask the Lord for forgiveness when we wander away. Just like the prodigal son needed to examine himself and repent so did the Galatians also needed to realize they were wrong and come back to their Father.

**(10) ...but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.**

When I read this phrase, I wonder why Paul is not hoping (since this is the subject) that the false teacher(s) will also repent? All that I see is Paul desiring that *'judgment'* (KRIMA) meaning: a decision, avenge, condemnation would be given. I don't have an answer for this. All I can say is that Paul did not regard WHO the person was. This is a lesson that we all should keep in mind. When someone does wrong we should not 'turn our face away' because of who did it. Paul had already given proof of this for when Peter was a hypocrite (2:11) he stood up to him.

**(11)But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?  
Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.**

Here Paul makes a direct relationship concerning the cross of Jesus and being persecuted. It might have been very tempting for the Galatian believers to accept circumcision (to follow the Law) and by doing so cease to be persecuted by the Jewish religious authorities. At one point Christianity was outlawed in Rome but being Jewish was not. So what do I do? Do I get circumcised and have peace with those around me or do I stay the way I am? Paul says that he is still persecuted – he is not ashamed of the cross and the one who had been nailed on it. In a very real way believers in Christ still live this dilemma today. At work, in school, with my circle of friends do I act like them so that I will not be rejected or do I stand up for my faith?

**(12)I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.**

This verse is very strong, it manifests the deep desires of Paul. Again I have difficulty trying to reason why Paul has such strong feelings against these false teachers. I wonder if his emotions are getting the better of him. When I think of the cross and what Jesus said concerning those who were killing him, I do not see a Christ-like mind in Paul.

**Luke 23:34**

**Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.**

**(NKJV)**

I believe this is what Paul should have had in his mind for them. But what I see is that he wants them to be judged (v.10) and now that they mutilate themselves (v.12). We all fail in being like Christ is and I believe this is one of those times that Paul failed. This is probably an example of what Paul meant when he said:

**1Tim. 1:15**

**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**

**(NKJV)**

What Paul desires for these false teachers is that they *'mutilate themselves'*. I can assure you that he is not wishing the best for them! The word *'mutilate'* (ATOKOPTO) means: to amputate, to cut off. What he is saying is that these men should not only be circumcised – but rather they should cut it all off! This is probably the harshest I have ever seen Paul be. Yes we should desire people to change their ways but I would not encourage you to have such thoughts as to wish people to mutilate themselves.

**(13)For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (14)For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (15)But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.**

Paul comes back to the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ which is in direct contrast with the enslavement of the Law. We were set free but this freedom that we have received should not be used as a 'free pass' to live for the flesh. This is probably one of the most difficult aspect of being set free and knowing that 'in Christ' we have received the forgiveness of all our trespasses.

**Ephesians 1:7**

**In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.**

**(NKJV)**

Now that true believers are forgiven, now that the Law has no condemnation towards them, now that they have been set free – how difficult it is not to presume upon God's grace. This is what Paul reminds the Galatians *'do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh'*. What is meant here is the turning back to the Law to satisfy the *'flesh'*. For many, it is very gratifying to be able to think that 'I am doing something towards my acceptance by God'. But it only serves the flesh and it is not acceptable before the Lord. For sin has its power in the flesh (Rom. 7:5) anyways it is quite clear that we can not please God through our flesh (Rom. 8:8). Rather than using the flesh for their own good Paul writes the following: *'but through love serve one another'*. Use your new found freedom to love and serve others. That still stands today. Have we not been saved to be able to love God as we should and to love our neighbors as ourselves?

**Matthew 22:36-40**

**(36)"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"**

**(37)Jesus said to him," 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'**

**(38)"This is the first and great commandment.**

**(39)"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'**

**(40)"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**

**(NKJV)**

Paul refers to these very words of Jesus. Being set free is for ourselves – we are no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Now that the believer is set free he is truly free to be the person he ought to be. And that is to place God first in his life and then to love those around him.

**(14)For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (15)But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.**

May I ask if you have been set free? Have you received full forgiveness of your sins? Has Christ taken them with him on the cross? Are you a new creation? Have you been sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption? If so are you living for yourself or for the glory of God and helping those around you?

Paul ends this section with a stern warning in verse fifteen. It seems that there were serious troubles between these Christians. It probably comes from the fact that some were turning back to the Law and others resisted. There were tensions and I can understand. Imagine if one preacher teaches that you need to fulfill the Law even if you are saved and another teaches that Christ has fulfilled all the requirements of the Law and we can now rest in his finished works at the cross. This is why unity of theology is absolutely necessary for having peace within God’s people.

How many ‘church splits’ have you seen – many I presume. Most of them have to do with theology and not seeing the word of God the same way. Because of this division occurs and churches break up. I can understand when it deals with cardinal points but when it has to do with subjects that even the Bible does not give us an exact answer (as the exact time Jesus will come back) we need to accept that the other party may have a better insight than we do. So Paul warns the Galatians to be careful because their biting and devouring will have a devastating effect on them – *‘consumed by one another’*.

In verse thirteen Paul speaks of serving one another and in verse fifteen he speaks of being consumed by one another. The word *consumed*' (ANALISKO) meaning: to use up or to destroy. The Law will destroy you! When the Law is used outside its context it brings condemnation between God and man and between man and man.

**GALATIANS**  
**20 - 'The fruits of the flesh'**  
**Galatians 5:16-21**

**(16)But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (17)For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (18)But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (19)Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20)idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, (21)envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**  
**(NASB)**

There is a war that rages inside of every true Christian and his conscience is the battle field. Paul expressed himself with these words:

**Romans 7:22-25**

**(22)For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. (23)But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24)O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25)I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**  
**(NKJV)**

In this section Paul will expose the fruits of walking in the flesh and in our next section we will look at the fruits of the Spirit. Paul has been speaking about how the Galatians have turned from the true gospel to walk once more under the Law. Paul reminds them once more that this is not the plan of God for them.

**(16)But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**

Verse sixteen will open the lock to understand how Christians can stop living in the flesh (follow their earthly desires). In one way it is very easy to understand, yet it is also very profound.

**(16)But I say, walk by the Spirit**

Walking in the Spirit should have become the normal way of living for the Galatian Christians (as for all true Christians)for the following reasons.

- They had been born of the Spirit (John 3:3,5,6)
- Their heart had been circumcised by the Spirit (Rom. 2:29)
- The Spirit of God dwelt in them (Rom. 8:9)
- Their minds had been renewed by the Spirit (Eph. 4:23)
- They worshipped God in the Spirit (Phil. 3:3)
- They manifested love in the Spirit (Col. 1:8)
- They served in the newness of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6)

In other words when Christ becomes our Savior our whole being is renewed (or regenerated) by the Holy Spirit and as Paul writes: If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul is telling the Galatians to simply live according to their new nature and to leave the old one alone. If we do this, then something wonderful will happen to us:

**(16) ...and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**

It has to be one or the other – the flesh or the Spirit. Living for the flesh or walking in the Spirit. Two different roads with two different destinations. The words ‘*carry out*’ (TELEO) means: To complete, to execute or accomplish. Are you having trouble with the flesh then turn around and walk in the Spirit. It’s a bit like having two plates of food before you. One has potatoes, vegetables and chicken while the other has rice, vegetables and fish. If you are eating one plate then you are not consuming the other.

**(17)For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.**

Many Christians believe that they can have a taste of both worlds. On Sunday they live like a Christian should and the rest of the week they live like someone who is not regenerated. The ones that do this are living in hypocrisy, for Christ said that we need to live as children of Light and as the Salt of the world (Mat. 5:13-16). Just as water and oil DO NOT MIX so living in the flesh and in the Spirit do not mix! Paul states two facts to show this truth. The first is that one ‘*sets its desire against*’ against the other. And second one is ‘*in opposition*’ to the other. So one wants to ‘turn right’ while the other wants to ‘turn left’ and they actually both oppose each other which means that they will never be in harmony! How can this be otherwise since one way pleases the Lord while the other doesn’t!

The reason this is so is the following:

**(17) ...so that you may not do the things that you please.**

To make you walk in His ways God has given the believer his Holy Spirit. If we were abandoned or left to ourselves (after being saved) we would still delightfully walk in the flesh – simply because of our fallen human nature. God has taken us out of sin's mud and has given us his Spirit so that we can now stop doing the things that please our flesh. This is another aspect of God's grace unto his children. He empowers them to turn away from their life of sin to embrace a life of sanctification.

**(18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.**

Remember what Paul wrote concerning the Spirit in verse sixteen: *'walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'* Now he writes that if you are *'led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.'* If you allow the Holy Spirit to lead you (AGO) which means: to lead, pass time with, you will no longer be under the Law. We have seen that the death of Jesus destroys the condemnation of the Law. All who are born again no longer live under the threat and condemnation of the Law (Rom. 5:1; 8:1). What Paul is telling the Galatians is this: When you allow yourself to be led by the Spirit (walk with him) you will not be doing things that are condemnable before God. Paul gives a short list of the fruits of walking in the flesh.

**(19) Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20) idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, (21) envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Paul begins by saying that the *'deeds'* (ERGON) meaning: works or toil of the flesh are *'evident'* (PHANEROS) meaning: shining, apparent or outward. The fruits that bear the desires of our flesh are easily seen by others. Jesus had already warned his disciples at the very beginning of his ministry concerning people who bear fruits of the flesh.



**Matthew 7:16-20**

**(16)"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"**

**(17)"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**

**(18)"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.**

**(19)"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**

**(20)"Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

**(NKJV)**

They are easily spotted, simply look at their lives and listen to what they say. They will expose their fruits. This is where the Galatians failed – they did not verify the fruits of these false teachers. If they would have they would have seen that these teachers did not meet the standards given by our Lord. So Paul gives a short list of what fruits of the flesh look like. In his expository notes on Galatians, Dr. Thomas Constable divides this series of sins into five groups.

**Sexual sins (Galatians 5:19)**

Immorality, fornication (Gr. *porneia*, all types of forbidden sexual relationships)

Impurity, uncleanness (Gr. *akatharsia*, all moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed)

Sensuality, licentiousness, indecency debauchery, lasciviousness (Gr. *aselgeia*, the open, shameless display of these sins)

**Religious sins (Galatians 5:20)**

Idolatry (Gr. *eidololatria*, worship of anything but God and the practices associated with that worship)

Sorcery, witchcraft (Gr. *pharmakeia*, attempts to aid the powers of evil and the practices associated with that)

**Societal sins (Galatians 5:20-21)**

Enmities, quarrels, hatred (Gr. *echthrai*, hostilities)

Strife, discord, variance (Gr. *eris*, antagonism)

Jealousy, envy, emulation (Gr. *zelos*, self-centered animosity)

Outbursts of anger, fits of rage, wrath (Gr. *thymoi*, temper eruptions)

Disputes, strife, factions selfishness, selfish ambition (Gr. *eritheiai*, putting others down to get ahead)

Dissensions, divisions, seditions (Gr. *dichostasiai*, disputes over issues or personalities)

Factions, heresies, party spirit (Gr. *haireseis*, divisions over issues or personalities)

Envyings, jealousies (Gr. *phthonoi*, wrong desires to have another's possessions)

"The general impression created by these words is one of chaos."

### **Intemperate sins (Galatians 5:21)**

Drunkenness, drinking bouts (Gr. *methai*, excessive use of intoxicants)

Carousings, revelings, orgies (Gr. *komois*, parties involving excessive eating and drinking)

### **Other sins (Galatians 5:21)**

Things like these (similar violations of God's moral will)

"The common feature in this catalogue of vices seems to reside not in the precise ways in which these fifteen items manifest themselves but in the self-centeredness or egocentricity that underlies all of them.

Verse twenty one ends with a stern reminder:

**(21) ...of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

What does Paul mean when he writes that *'those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God'*? Does he mean that the believer can actually lose his salvation? Are there sins that can not be forgiven? We all know that there is ONE sin that can not be forgiven and all the gospel writers but John speak about this (Mat. 12:32; Mark 3:29 and Luke 12:10). This, of course, is rejecting the testimony by the Holy Spirit that we are sinners and need to repent. Refusing to repent is the only sin that can not be forgiven because it is the only way to be saved from judgment! It is like a prisoner who rejects the clemency of a judge who has ordered his liberation. He will not leave his cell, therefore he will remain in it by his own fault!

The key word is *'practice'* (PRASSO) meaning: to perform repeatedly or habitually. This speaks of a person who does these sins time after time, whose very nature sees no wrong in practicing them. As we see in the following verse it speaks of people who have not been renewed in their minds:

**Romans 12:1,2**

**(1)I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

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

**(NKJV)**

Paul writes concerning these people simply because the Galatians were surrounded by them. These people did not have the mind of Christ and because of this they did not bear the fruits of a life filled with his Spirit. This still stands true today. If you live in the flesh day after day and really are not bothered by it – You should seriously reconsider if you truly have been born-again! As Paul writes, if you conform to this world and are not transformed by the renewing of the mind then there is something VERY WRONG with you.

**GALATIANS**  
**21 - The fruit of the Spirit**  
**Galatians 5:22-26**

**(22)But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23)gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (24)Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25)If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (26)Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.**  
**(NASB)**

After describing the fruits of the flesh, Paul now turns to the fruits that all born again believers should manifest. In a way we are like fruits! Jesus explains that he is the vine and we are branches that should bear good fruit (John 15:1-8). The conclusion that Christ came to concerning his disciples is the following:

**John 15:8**  
**"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**  
**(NKJV)**

Bearing much fruit so that the Father will be glorified is what it's all about. Speaking about fruits, have you ever tasted a fruit that looked so good on the outside but as soon as you bit into it you knew that it wasn't ripe enough? As Christians we can be like those 'not yet matured' fruits. Good looking on the outside but not ripe (mature) on the inside. A lot has been written concerning the fruits of the Spirit and I will not re-invent the wheel about this subject. The one thing that Paul is stating in Galatians is that these are the fruits that you are called to bear. This is what is expected of you. These are what you should spiritually 'taste like'.

There is one thing that I would like for you to understand – all nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are TRAITS OF CHARACTER. God is much more interested in who you become as a person than what you can do. You do not need a godly character to become a mathematician, an astronaut, an Olympic champion, a billionaire or a president of a country. But you absolutely do need a godly character to resemble Jesus Christ and bear good fruits!

The first thing that you should notice is that all of this is through the working of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

**(22)But the fruit of the Spirit...**

This process is called sanctification or the process of becoming holy and separate unto God for his glory. It is the work of the Spirit in you. Contrary to redemption which is God's total and complete work, sanctification needs your co-operation. So the fruit of the Spirit is there for each of God's children but the child himself needs to humble himself and 'walk in the Spirit' in order to bear them. This is what Paul will tell the Galatians in verse twenty-five. So let's take a look at all nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit.

**(22)But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23)gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

Some have divided these traits of character into three division. The first dealing with God, the second dealing with other people and the third dealing with yourself. As humans beings we have a tendency to try to systematically place everything in order and sometimes it is worth it and sometimes there is no real point to this.

**LOVE:** (agape) this is a self-sacrificing love. It is a love that is totally turned from ourselves unto others. This is true God-love towards us. No wonder Paul begins with this trait of character, for without it you take away the power needed to bear all the others. Godly love is the foundation of a believer's entire life.

**Rom. 13:9,10**

**(9)For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

**(10)Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.  
(NKJV)**

**JOY:** (chara) this is not happiness that is founded on events or circumstances of this world; it is a deep-seated gladness which transcends all circumstances. The object of the believer's joy is God himself, his eternal Father who lovingly takes care of his child. This is never a joy that springs from the flesh or the world but rather from the kingdom of God.

**Ps 16:11**

**You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

**(NKJV)**

**PEACE:** (Eirene) this is an inward peace which rests on the sovereignty of God. It is first of all a peace between God and the believer. A peace that was created through the atoning sacrifice of Christ at the cross. A peace that brings a stillness to the mind and a healthy rest to the body. All doubts have dissipated and a rock solid certainty has found its anchor in the heart of the believer.

**Ps. 4:8**

**I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.  
(NKJV)**

**PATIENCE:** (makrothymia) this is restraint under provocation. The capacity to set aside our vexation when we are being aggravated by others. It is the attitude that Christ had when he was at the cross: asking forgiveness for his tormentors instead of desiring revenge. This also gives the idea of being long-suffering in difficult situations.

**2Thes. 3:5**

**Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.  
(NKJV)**

**KINDNESS** (chrestotes) this means benevolence or graciousness. This fruit will dispose the heart of the believer to wilfully do random acts of kindness. After all as children of God has he not prepared for us all types of work so that we may do them (Eph. 2:2-10)?

**Joel 2:13**

**So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.  
NKJV)**

**GOODNESS:** (agathosyne) reaching out to others or a beneficial action. This aspect of the fruit of the Spirit does not only infer that we abstain from any evil but actually includes doing good unto others and doing so with a good heart.

**Mat. 5:44**

**"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (NKJV)**  
**FAITHFULNESS:** (pistis) to be reliable or trustworthy. When we walk in the Spirit we no longer are unfaithful to the Lord. We walk in his ways. We desire to please him.

We believe what the Scriptures say. Being faithful is having been tried and proven a worthy servant.

**2 Timothy 2:20,21**

**(20)But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.**

**(21)Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.**

**(NKJV)**

**GENTLENESS:** (praytes) means to have consideration for others. Giving the idea of being lowly in mind thinking of others before you think of yourself. A disciple will walk humbly with his Lord always remembering the grace that he has received to be called a child of God. Gentleness may be seen in our daily walk but also in the way that we talk and in our relationships with others. To dominate others will not be an ambition for this person.

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**(28)"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**(29)"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

**(30)"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."**

**(NKJV)**

**SELF-CONTROL:** (enkrateia) is the ability to master yourself. What a wonderful aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. To be in control of our emotions, to be able to restrain ourselves in all circumstances. This should be manifest in our eating and drinking. Believers should be moderate people not giving in to excesses.

**2 Peter 1:5-8**

**(5)But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,**

**(6)to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,**

**(7)to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.**

**(8)For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**(NKJV)**

**(23) ...against such things there is no law.**

By saying this, Paul is encouraging the believers to excel in these nine facets of the fruit of the Spirit. In other words Paul is saying this: 'If you want to really walk in the Law then you can spend all your time doing these things'! Because the Law is all for this. He could be saying this to modern day believers. If you're looking to do something why not live these nine traits of character? But how can we really have these nine traits living in our hearts? How can we ever become people who reflect such godly character? I want to do it but I just don't know where to get the capacity to do so. That's why Paul wrote the following phrase.

**(24) Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

As we have mentioned before there are just two types of people on earth. Those who belong to Christ and those who do not. If you are in the category of those who have been born of the Spirit the Bible has great news for you: 'you are capable to become that fruit-bearing person!' But how? Because when you converted to Christ you...

**(24) ...have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

I can become that spiritual person. I can bear the fruit of the Spirit. I can have all the nine facets that Paul wrote about BECAUSE my flesh was crucified with its '*passions*': (PATHEMA) meaning: hardship or pain, emotional influence. Along with Christ my passions and what influences them have also died. I can actually now turn away from them. I can stop feeding them. I can say 'NO' and master them. My flesh was also crucified with its '*desires*' meaning: a longing especially for what is forbidden. My flesh fights my spirit. Before I would lose the battle over and over again. Now my spirit can master my flesh because my flesh has died on the cross. So all of God's children can really bear these nine facets of the fruit of the Spirit. We no longer have an excuse – God has equipped us with a new spirit – his Spirit!

**(25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (26) Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.**

We can not separate our LIFE from our WALK. There is no such thing as living for God on Sunday and living for ourselves on the other days! Paul teaches the Galatians that if they confess to '*live by the Spirit*' then you also need to '*walk by the Spirit*'! Which is contrasted with walking in the flesh. Far too many unbelievers turn their backs on Christianity simply because of what they see in those who call themselves Disciples of Christ. Too many Christians live a 'double life' or are simply hypocrites. Paul gives three things that people that '*live in the Spirit*' or '*walk by the Spirit*' DO NOT DO.



The first is that they *'do not become boastful'*. A person filled with the Spirit will not be a proud person. Remember what the Scriptures says about being filled with pride!

**James 4:6**

**But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."**

**(NKJV)**

**1 Peter 5:5**

**Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."**

**(NKJV)**

The second thing that a Spirit filled person does not do is *'challenging one another'*. This means to irritate or to provoke someone. Jesus told us that we are as lambs (Luke 10:3; John 21:15) and lambs are not violent. They do not provoke like bulls and other animals of their nature. Such a Christian will not cause harm with his words or his actions. He will not deliberately do something to provoke or irritate another.

**Mat. 5:9**

**Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**

**(NKJV)**

Finally a Spirit filled Christian will not be *'envying one another'*. They will be satisfied with what the Lord has given them. If one has more or better than they have they will be thankful unto the Lord for what he has given them.

**1 Timothy 6:6-9**

**(6)Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**

**(7)For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.**

**(8)And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.**

**(9)But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.**

**(NKJV)**

So let us walk by the fruits of the Spirit and honor our Redeemer.

**GALATIANS**  
**'If anyone'**  
**22 - Galatians 6:1-6**

**(1)Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. (2)Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.**

**(3)For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**

**(4)But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. (5)For each one will bear his own load.**

**(6)The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.**

**(NASB)**

This section deals with the attitude we all should have concerning our relationships with other people especially Christians. Churches in Paul's day as well as with the vast majority of churches today are made up of small groups of people that meet week in and week out. After a while it is very easy to get to know the people that congregate. When this happens we can quickly figure out the character of each person with their strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes we need to exhort our fellow brother in the faith and we are even commanded to do so (the word exhort is used 14 times in the N-T). Paul reminds his readers that the way you exhort makes all the difference.

**(1)Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.**

The first thing that I notice is that exhorting others is not for everyone. Paul writes '*you who are spiritual*', one needs to be spiritual to be able to exhort another believer. Have you notice how irritating it is when someone exhorts you to 'walk in the Lord' and you know that the person speaking to you isn't really a role model! It seems that there are people who see themselves as 'spiritual inspectors' always ready to tell you what's wrong with your life. Most of the time they do an awful job at it and their comments are not well appreciated. The word '*spiritual*' (PNEUMATIKOS) means to be non-carnal. Before you expect to be able to actually exhort someone in the faith you need to have certain standards in your own life – you must not live for the flesh. It's essential to be able to analyse your own life and act upon it before you think you can do it with others. Jesus taught about this in his Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:1-5**

- (1) Judge not, that you be not judged.**
- (2) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.**
- (3) "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?**
- (4) "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?**
- (5) "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**
- (NKJV)**

Paul is applying the principle Jesus taught his disciples: *'First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.'* If Paul mentions this I believe it is because there were people in the Galatian churches that did not practice this self-examination before telling others what to do! Notice that Paul speaks of a *'trespass'* (PARAPTOMA) meaning an error, fault or willful transgression. This does not have to do with an arbitrary decision on some menial issue but rather something that is obviously wrong. We must not forget that we have the God-given privilege to make our own choices as long as it is not a stumbling block for others (Rom. 14). If the first thing I see is that we need to be spiritual before going around exhorting others the second thing I see is that we need to make certain that the object of our exhortation is not frivolous!

Now how do we restore the person we are exhorting? Paul tells us that it needs to be with *'a spirit of gentleness'* (PRAOTES) which means humility or meekness. Our attitude is crucial when we encourage or exhort someone in the Lord. If you come with arrogance and harshness whatever you might say (even if you are totally right) will not be well taken. We need to have the right attitude when we exhort others. By the way have you ever wondered why you have the 'need' to exhort others? Why do you want to point out their failures or mistakes? Is it really because you care so much for them? May it simply be because by doing so you get the feeling that you're better or more spiritual than they are? Can you really ask God to do what is written in the following verses?

**Psalms 139:23,24**

- (23) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;**
- (24) And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.**
- (NKJV)**

We come to the aim of our exhorting others. Paul says it is to *'restore such a one'* (KATARTIZO) meaning to complete, repair or adjust. The aim is not to humiliate, embarrass or shame the person. Neither is it to 'break him'. It is to repair the errors, to adjust his thinking and make him complete in Christ Jesus. There is no place for the 'I am right and you are so wrong' attitude in a Christian.

**(1) ...each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.**

There is a warning attached in this first verse *'so that you will not be tempted'*. *'looking to yourself'* means to scrutinize, entice or examine. There is actually a trap that exists for all who exhort others and that is 'of not passing the test yourself!' Paul spoke of this to the Roman believers.

### **Romans 2:21-23**

**(21) You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?**

**(22) You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?**

**(23) You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?**

**(NKJV)**

Verse two of Galatians six is a beautiful example of what we should do when we exhort someone to walk in the light. Is it sufficient to simply tell the person that he should be doing this or stop doing that? The obvious answer is NO! There is something else that needs to go along with our advice.

**(2) Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.**

What we need to do is to walk along-side with the person and help him along the way. We need to lighten the load or carry the load of the person that is being encouraged to change his life. The strong are always encouraged to help the weak. When Jesus was handed a scroll to read a passage in a synagogue he chose the following:

### **Luke 4:18**

**"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;**

**(NKJV)**

Jesus didn't come on earth to tell us 'You better change and repent of your sins' and leave it at that! He came, he spoke and he helped. And for many that made all the difference. People really saw that he honestly cared and understood their plights. When was the last time that you bore someone's burden just because you wanted to bring encouragement to their hearts?

**(3)For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**

**(4)But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. (5)For each one will bear his own load.**

Here Paul speaks of another snare that awaits people that exhort others. After a while we can have a tendency to think that we are better than others. I have seen this in the working place when one is made to become the leader of a small group. This transition is sometimes more difficult for some than for others. Some change character almost overnight. They take themselves very seriously and continuously show that they are new bosses. Once more we are called to reflect on who we really are. Do we think we are something when we are actually nothing? This is the trap that awaits all – *'he deceives himself'*. It is a sin to mislead someone. Do you remember what King Herod told the visitors from the East?

#### **Matthew 2:7,8**

**(7)Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.**

**(8)And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."**

**(NKJV)**

This is the perfect example of deceiving others. Herod did not want to worship the child but rather to kill him! Now it's one thing to deceive others but it is absolutely foolishness to deceive yourself – yet many do this!

#### **1 John 1:6-8**

**(6)If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

**(7)But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**(8)If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

**(NKJV)**

So many Christians today do not see themselves as they really are. They explain away their sinful patterns of life. They set limits that are far beyond what God has given. They are often living on ‘the edge’ of what seems to be acceptable. Because they want to please their own flesh they need to calm their conscience if it bothers them. So they lie to themselves and they come to believe that what they are doing is acceptable. What are we to do then to stop deceiving ourselves?

**(4)But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.**

Each of us needs to ‘*examine his own work*’. This means (DOKIMAZO) to approve, discern or try. We need to look at ourselves and see if what we are doing is acceptable before God. Have you noticed how it is much easier to examine the work that others do? This is the story of Cain and Abel. Instead of looking at his own work (bringing an offering of the fruit of the ground) he looked at Abel’s and became furious.

#### **Genesis 4:3-8**

**(3)And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.**

**(4)Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,**

**(5)but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

**(6)So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"**

**(7)"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."**

**(8)Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.**

**(NKJV)**

After God talked to Cain he still refused to look at his own work and accept that it was not what God had wanted as a sacrifice. By refusing to examine himself he set the fault on Abel and killed him. So when Paul reminds the Galatians to ‘*examine his own work*’ it is very important that we do so simply because we can either change or be encouraged by what we are doing. Paul also teaches us that we should not compare ourselves with others:

**(4) ...and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.**

We should boast not because we are doing more than others but actually beating our own records! As Christians we are not in competition with anyone. We need only to look at our own work in the Lord. Has the Lord given you 1, 2 or 5 talents (Mat. 25:14-30) then use what you have and stop comparing yourself with others! Jesus will ask what you have done with what you have received and never compare you with another servant.

**(5)For each one will bear his own load.**

This ends the conversation, you might say! Each believer will bear his own load before the Lord. Once more we see how compassionate the Lord is. You will not bear my load and I will not bear your load! I am not expected to do more than I can but am expected to do all that I am able to do.

**(6)The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.**

This is the last verse in this section and once more it talks about our attitude in our Christian relationships with others around us. This time (and it is rare in the N-T) it deals with providing for the ones who take time to teach others in the ways of the Lord. I can only imagine it speaks of people that do not have a secular employment and devote themselves to the work of the Lord. These may have been ‘called to the ministry’ and need the financial support of others. So what are we to do with these people? Paul tell the Galatians to ‘*share all good things with the one who teaches him*’. What I notice is ‘*good things*’.

Unfortunately I have seen church people who give (such as for Christmas baskets) for some Christian cause but they give not of the ‘*good things*’ that they have but actually they give to get rid of old unwanted things! Have you noticed that at Pot-Lucks there are always people who bring in great dishes that took time to prepare and others that just buy a bag of chips! Some place their hearts and pride in giving their best and unfortunately others just don’t think twice. What I see is a spiritual principle for all of us to employ:

**1 Cor. 10:31**

**Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.  
(NKJV)**

I know that the examples I have given have nothing to do with financially supporting those who are in ministry. But they all do have something in common. Whatever you do or give springs from your heart and that tells a lot about your priorities and your spiritual health. When you are either stingy with the food you bring or the offering you give it is a clear sign that your treasure is not in the right place! Remember what Jesus said:

**Mat. 6:21**

**"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  
(NKJV)**

So think twice and support those who are in ministry especially those who take time to study and teach you God's Word.



**GALATIANS**  
**'Do not be deceived'**  
**23 - Galatians 6:7-10**

**(7)Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. (8)For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (9)Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. (10)So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**  
**(NASB)**

Wake up and stop fooling yourselves! The Galatians needed a 'spiritual wake-up call' and Paul is doing a great job at it. There are three truths that all believers need to 'wake-up' about.

The first is '*do not be deceived*' (PLANAO) meaning: to roam, go astray or wander off. That's exactly what they had been doing concerning Grace –vs- Law. They had wandered off from their original teachings (grace) to another teaching (law). They had become as sheep that go astray. They had forgotten the sound of the shepherd's voice:

**John 10:27**  
**"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**  
**(NKJV)**

They were listening to other shepherds the type described by Christ:

**Matthew 15:12-14**  
**(12)Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"**  
**(13)But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.**  
**(14)"Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."**  
**(NKJV)**

We also need to be careful and not to wander off. The narrow road is where we should be traveling.

The second is '*God is not mocked*'. As I write these lines I am convicted when I think of my own failures and sins. To '*mock*' God (MUKTERISO) means to ridicule him! How often we can be stiffed necked and refuse to let God reign in our life! How often we can take his grace for granted! How often we love certain sinful desires! How often we can even believe that 'God doesn't really mind' – after all I'm his child. Believers simply can not treat God with contempt, disrespect and derision. I believe we can come to this point when we forget who God is – let's not forget that he holds all judgments in his hands

**Rev. 15:4**

**Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."**  
(NKJV)

The third is '*for whatever a man sows, this he will reap also*'. Paul will speak concerning our sowing in the next phrases. One thing is for certain we are all 'spiritual farmers' for we all sow seeds in life. Our seeds are all of our thoughts and actions in life. I have a cousin who is a farmer and every year he sows. He sows all of his land because he is looking forward to a bountiful harvest. If we reap very little in spiritual life it is simply because we do not sow that much, we are not at work in the Father's kingdom. Remember what is written:

**2 Cor. 9:6**

**But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.**  
(NKJV)

Three are three warnings that the Galatians needed to hear: three warnings that we still need to hear today! In our next verse Paul will explain in greater detail what he meant by sowing.

**(8)For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.**

Here we have two sowers, the first is sowing the wrong seeds and the second is sowing the right ones. The first sower has in his bag seeds '*to his own flesh*'. We have found examples of these seeds in Gal. 5:19-21. These seeds spring from a heart that is in rebellion against God. What will be the harvest that these people will reap? Paul says that they will '*reap corruption*' (PHTAORA) meaning: decay or ruin. The harvest that is waiting for them is corrupted, tainted, ruined. Please notice that Paul speaks of the harvest.

A harvest comes totally at the end of the season. It may be that some may sow for the flesh and many seem to enjoy themselves but one day there will be a great day of the gathering for the harvest of souls. What will be the final and eternal outcome for these sowers?

**Matthew 25:41**

**Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:  
(NKJV)**

That is not to say that the harvest of the flesh will not also be ‘tasted’ here on earth. How many families are destroyed because one of the two spouses has sown for the flesh? How many lives are ruined because wrong choices were made to satisfy the flesh and the consequences wrecked your life? But there is a second sower and he sows seeds ‘*to the Spirit*’. Here we have a person who lives for his Master and is working for him. His thoughts and actions are not of the flesh but of the Spirit. He has truly heard the voice of his Shepherd calling him and saying: ‘Follow-me’. What is the harvest that he will reap – *eternal life* from the Spirit. The seeds sown by the second person will have a beneficial and everlasting effect on him, while the seeds sown by the first person will only bring destruction. We need to examine ourselves and look at the fruits we are reaping in life. Do they glorify the Lord or do they satisfy the flesh? Do they bring true life or devastation?

**(9)Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. (10)So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

One of the great dangers that awaits all believers is ‘losing heart’. Trials and difficulties can sometimes take their toll. Burdens of life become heavy and we may fall under their weight. We may also have false expectations and despair because our desires are not being accomplished. For whatever reason all can face ‘losing heart’. In numbers 11:16-30 because Moses was ‘losing heart’ God gave him 70 men that would share his burden so that ‘*so that you will not bear it all alone*’ (Num. 11:17). If Moses can ‘lose heart’ how much more are we susceptible to this! But Paul tells the Galatians that even though all these things have happened to them – ‘*let us not lose heart in doing good*’. There is something very special and unique about doing good. Life is filled, eyes sparkle, smiles grow and our inside gets all warmed up! The antidote for not losing heart is to continue to do good around you. It is the enemy that desires for you to come to a stop or a dead-end in life. Paul is telling the Galatians to persevere in the faith whatever might happen. Do you evangelize and no one seems to care – persevere. Are you in a small church and it is difficult to keep the door open – persevere. Has your family almost disowned you – persevere. At work you are the laughing stock – persevere. Continue to do good because our Father is good.

**Matthew 5:43-46**

**(43)"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'**

**(44)"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,  
(45)"that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**(46)"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?**

**(NKJV)**

Paul gives us another reason why we should keep on doing good around us: *'in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary'*. We must keep our eyes focused on the ultimate end of things. God will reward his children for all the good that they have done in his name. I see it as having a 'spiritual bank account' in heaven and every time I do good, the Lord makes a deposit in my name. Jesus gives his word concerning this and I can trust him.

**Mark 9:41**

**"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.**

**(NKJV)**

In his last verse Paul continues to encourage the Galatians. We all need to be encouraged to persevere in our doing good. There is a saying that says: God is good all the time and this is true for God can only be himself! If God is good all the time do you think that he desires his children to act the same way unto others? Asking the question is answering it!

**(10)So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

Here Paul answers two question that he thought someone might rightfully ask. First 'when should I do good' and second 'to whom must I do good?' As for the first question 'when should I do good' the answer is: *'while we have the opportunity'*. Be ready to do good at all times whenever it is needed. Listen to what James has to say about doing good:

**James 2:15,16**

**(15)If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,  
(16)and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?**

**(NKJV)**

Here we see that we should not pass the opportunity of doing good. We can not simply close our eyes or turn our heads. If you see an opportunity seize it and let God work through you for the benefit of others. The second question is one that was asked in Luke 10:29-37 and out of this we have the famous parable of the Good Samaritan. The conclusion Jesus taught was that your neighbor (the one you do good to) is the one in need – whomever he might be!

So far we have seen that believers must do good when the opportunity comes and also do good to the one that needs it. But Paul adds another statement: *‘especially to those who are of the household of the faith’*. There should be a special place in your heart for your brothers and sisters in Christ. We are a family and we need to stand up and take care of family. But what about those who do not exactly believe like I do – do good unto them also. There is an emphasis placed upon the godly link between believers. Unfortunately some Christians are ‘wall builders’ instead of ‘bridge makers’.

**GALATIANS**  
**24 - 'Final words'**  
**Galatians 6:11-18**

**(11)See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. (12)Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. (13)For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. (14)But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (15)For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (16)And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (17)From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus. (18)The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen. (NASB)**

We have come to the last section of Paul's letter to the Galatians and I can see that the 'tone' has changed. He is like a grand-father standing on the deck of a train station. And as the train slowly leaves the grand-father waves goodbye wondering what will happen to his children and grand-children that are on the train. He probably wonders if he will ever get to see them again. His heart is heavy, he fears for their spiritual future. Will they come back to their senses?

**(11)See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.**

This is a tender touch from Paul. He could have gotten his epistle written by a fellow brother in the Lord but he didn't. He tells the Galatians that he personally took time to write this letter by his own hand. He's telling them 'I care for you and love you tenderly'. Is there a difference when you get a 'generic letter' from a company with the heading 'Dear friend you will find enclosed' and a personal letter from a friend or family member? Paul did not send a 'generic letter' but a very personal one at that. People have wondered what Paul meant by '*what large letters I am writing*'. Most believe that it had to do with some type of malady Paul was struck with. Either it was because of an earthly sickness or it may have been the 'thorn in the flesh' that the Lord God had given him so that he would not get filled with pride. Could this have been the 'thorn' Paul was submitted to? Were his eyes 'dimmed' so he would have difficulty to go about in life?

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

**(7)And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.**

**(8)Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.**

**(9)And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

**(10)Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**(NKJV)**

I would like to take time here to make a few points concerning these four verses. Growing in the knowledge or revelation of God does not assure us of a safer future. I believe that Satan has little worries with the fleshly Christians, he is more determined to attack the ones that do make a difference for the Lord. A second thought is that this was the will of God that he should suffer this way. God allowed a '*messenger of Satan*' to buffet Paul. Some teach that the true Christians never get ill and everything is fine with their olives and that they only receive blessings from God. As you can see this is totally false. It is even written that the Father willed that the Son suffer (Heb. 2:9,10). A third point is that God does not have to answer our prayers. Here Paul prayed three times for this to go away and it didn't – God said no! This surely goes against the 'name it and claim it' theology. Fourth, grace is greater than anything we can imagine and grace should be what we seek, for God said '*my grace is sufficient for you*'. Fifth, we can be at peace with our infirmities or lack of health because that is when the strength of Christ rests upon the believer.

**(12)Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.**

Paul tells the Galatians the real reasons why the false teachers try to compel them to come back to the Law. First of all, it has to do with the flesh '*a good showing in the flesh*'. Returning to the Law does not come from the Lord for it has to do with the gratification of man's flesh. Why do you think they try to '*compel*' them? Simply because the Holy Spirit is not leading them back to the Law so these false teachers do all that they can to mesmerise (3:1) them. A third reason is that they do not want to be '*persecuted for the cross*'. Still today this is rampant in churches. So many Christians want Christ but they don't want the cross. They don't want to openly identify themselves with Jesus. They are not ready to pay the cost of being grafted in Him. We might call them 'Closet Christians'. This didn't sit too well with Paul.

**Romans 1:16**

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

**(NKJV)**

He was never ashamed of the cross. As I look at the missionary trips of Paul I can see that he never was ‘user friendly’. No matter what the background, language, social status or religion of his hearers Paul told of the cross. Did it get him into trouble – yes it did. Did he heavily pay the consequences – absolutely. Yet Paul took every opportunity to spread the ‘Good News’. I don’t think he would agree with today’s trend in evangelizing – ‘get to really know them first’ or ‘you need to earn their respect’ before giving them the gospel.

**(13)For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.**

I can see in this verse another reason why these false teachers were trying to compel the Galatians back to the Law – it was for the ‘show’ in order to look good in the eyes of others. What would be your first thought concerning a person that is always trying to get people to be ‘religious’? You would probably say ‘That person is truly spiritual’. The thing with these men is that they weren’t - *‘do not even keep the Law themselves’*. On the outside they were so zealous but on the inside they were just as much sinners as anyone else. Even more so, because they pretended to be what they were not. Jesus spoke about them:

**Matthew 23:25-28**

**(25)"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.**

**(26)"Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

**(27)"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.**

**(28)"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**

**(NKJV)**



The second part of this verse tells it all, they wanted to look good through the new converts they had made *'so that they may boast in your flesh'*. A bit like a Tupper Ware party – the more ladies are present the more the hostess looks good! You will notice that once more it has to do with *'the flesh'*. All that they are and all that they do is strictly in line with the desires of the flesh.

**(14) But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

We can see that the main point here is 'boasting' (KAUCHAOMAI) meaning: to vaunt, glory or boast. Paul didn't mind boasting, actually he has nothing against anyone boasting as long as it is *'in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'*. Too many Christians boast in a million and one other things. Things that really do not have any importance at all. Boasting in your financial situation, enterprise, estate, family lineage, civil status, profession, accomplishments, awards & honors received and even family members is only of the flesh and has no worth in the eyes of God. There is only ONE thing that is worth glorifying in and that is the cross of Jesus Christ. There are different reasons why we should glory only in the cross – here are four of them.

- There is power in the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18)
- Reconciliation was made at the cross (Eph. 2:16)
- Christ ultimately gave all at the cross (Phil. 2:8)
- The Law that condemned us was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14)

Something very unique also happened at the cross – the believer also died there!

**(14) ...through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

Not only has Christ died on the cross but by some spiritual means the believer also passed through death and since we have passed through death we will not taste the 'second death'. The book of Revelations speaks of the second death which is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (21:8) some would call this hell! The Scriptures say that the true believer will not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11). It also says that the second death has NO POWER over the believers (Rev. 20:6). This is another very valid argument in favor of eternal security. The point that Paul is trying to get across is that since we have died to the world we no longer should live for it! The truth is before our eyes. God teaches through Paul that: *'the world has been crucified to me'*. His part has been accomplished. What is left is our part *'and I to the world'*. We need to make a commitment to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1).

**(15)For neither is circumcision anything, nor un circumcision, but a new creation.**

Once more Paul give a ‘jab’ to the false preachers that were stirring up trouble in the Galatian churches. As we have seen they said that it was very important for believers to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses so that they could be saved. Paul says that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any worth. And this is a major point in relation with the Abrahamic Covenant. One absolutely needed to be circumcised to be part of God’s covenant. But in the new covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ, circumcision has no worth. What has true worth is *‘but a new creation’*. If you are a new creation then you are a child of God. Paul explains it this way in Romans:

**Romans 2:25-29**

**(25)For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**

**(26)Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?**

**(27)And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?**

**(28)For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**

**(29)but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**

**(NKJV)**

Has your heart been circumcised by becoming a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)? If not then salvation has not made its way into your life and the second death will have power over you. May we all reflect upon what is written in Galatians! We have come to Paul’s final words to his beloved Galatians.

**(16)And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

**(17)From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.**

**(18)The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.**

Verse sixteen is a blessing. A blessing that is not for everyone but only to those whose hearts have been circumcised – *‘peace and mercy be upon them’*. Is that not what we all deeply desire? Imagine if the world would be filled with peace and mercy what would it look like? No more wars, terrorism and social injustice. Harmony between all mankind and the sharing of wealth so all could have enough.

I know it's only a dream, for peace and mercy will only come when the Prince of Peace will come back! We must ask ourselves who is the *'Israel of God'*? For a quick answer, it is those who have become a new creation (6:15). In other words it is all the people that have been born-again, whomever they may be for, God makes no distinction! God's people are those who have received salvation because they have been washed by the blood of the Lamb.

**(17)From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.**

Paul makes one final plea unto the Galatians. We can see that this whole situation was very troubling to him. Those who once walked in the true gospel had exchanged it for a gospel of the flesh. They who had tasted grace wanted to come back to the Law. How devastated Paul must have been. He reminds them that *'I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus'*. This reminds me of what he had written to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 21-28). Contrary to these false teachers (who did not glory in the cross) Paul glorified in the cross and on his body lay the marks of this truth.

**(18)The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.**

One last blessing is found this time, not peace and mercy as in verse sixteen, but rather grace. Paul ends with grace (which is in contrast with the Law). The grace of God is the single most important thing that any person can receive. There is no greater gift. May I ask if you have received it? If not then today is the day of salvation

**2 Cor. 6:2**

**For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

**(NKJV)**

If you have received it, then by His grace live worthy of being called a son or daughter of the Most High.