

**THE BOOK
OF
GALATIANS**

**LIFE FOR TODAY
BIBLE COMMENTARY**

A N D R E W W O M M A C K

SPECIAL NOTE

These commentary ebooks are just the footnotes from Andrew's Life for Today Study Bible And Commentary. Because these footnotes appear without change from the printed books, there are certain things that may not make sense. For example, the footnotes are numbered in a way that seems confusing in the ebooks; there are references to page numbers and marginal references, etc. These all serve a purpose in the **printed books**, but not in the ebook. Understanding that the footnotes originated in a printed book will help avoid confusion.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

OVERVIEW

Paul's defense of the true Gospel in this letter provides some of the clearest statements about grace found anywhere in the Bible. Romans may be Paul's most detailed treatment of the subject (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Romans), but Galatians was his strongest. Paul minced no words in condemning trust in self-righteousness. He skipped most of the customary politeness of an introduction and got right to the point with a stinging curse placed on anyone who would dare to preach a gospel other than the one the Galatians had already received (Ga 1:8-9).

Paul was very disturbed that the Galatians had been seduced (Ga 3:1) from their faith in Christ through a perversion of the Gospel (Ga 1:7). They had been told that faith in Christ alone wasn't enough for salvation; they had to keep the precepts of the Old Testament Law, specifically the rite of circumcision. He wrote to turn them back to a pure faith in Christ alone for salvation.

Paul revealed that trusting in anything other than Christ alone for salvation voids the death of Christ (Ga 2:21). He also said in Ga 5:4 that the work of Christ can be made of no effect unto those who are trusting in their own keeping of the Law in order to produce justification. They are fallen from grace.

Aside from the obvious purpose of this letter--to bring the Galatians back to a pure faith in Christ--Paul gave some personal information about himself and his beginnings in ministry that is not recorded elsewhere in Scripture (Ga 1:13-2:21).

AUTHORSHIP

The very first verse of this letter to the Galatians clearly states that Paul was the author. It is amazing that any scholars would doubt such an obvious point, but some do. However, those who doubt the inspiration of this first verse are few in number. The letter itself definitely declares Paul as the author.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

Galatia was the name of a region (see note 1 at Ac 16:6) in Asia Minor (biblical Asia - see note 3 at Ac 16:6). The earliest recorded inhabitants of this area were Gauls (now French). They invaded Macedonia and Greece around 280 B.C. and then migrated to this area. The Gauls were called Galatia by the Greeks, thus the name Galatia.

The chief cities of the original Galatia were Ancyra (modern-day Ankara), Pessinus, and Tavium, which are not mentioned in Scripture. Due to war, the region varied in size from time to time. Under Galatia's last king, Amyntas, Galatia's borders were extended to include parts of Phrygia (see note 15 at Ac 2:9), Pisidia (see note 1 at Ac 13:14), Lycaonia (see note 6 at Ac 14:6), and Isauria. This put the cities of Lystra (see note 4 at Ac 14:6), Derbe (see note 5 at Ac 14:6), and Iconium (see note 3 at Ac 13:51) in what became the Roman province of Galatia. Paul visited these cities on his first (circa A.D. 46-48, see note 2 at Ac 14:26), second (around A.D. 51-53 - see note 1 at Ac 18:22), and third (circa A.D. 54-58 - see note 2 at Ac 18:23) missionary journeys.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

There is no consensus among scholars as to when and from where this epistle was written. It is evident, from the letter itself, that the book of Galatians was written after one of Paul's visits to this area, but which visit? He went through the cities of Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium on all three of his missionary journeys.

Some scholars think that the subject matter and the detailed rebuttal to legalism correspond to that of Romans and make this one of Paul's later writings. The subscript at the end of this letter, which is only contained in some manuscripts, supports this view by saying it was written from Rome. However, Paul said in Ga 1:6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." This would imply that this letter was written shortly after the Galatians' conversion. Also, there is no mention of Paul's bonds as there is in other letters from Paul that we know were written from prison (Eph 6:20; Php 1:7, 13-14, 16; Col 4:3, 18; 2Ti 2:9; Phm 10, and 13).

Dake's Study Bible places the writing of Galatians at A.D. 68, while the Davis Dictionary of the Bible ascribes it to A.D. 55-58. The New International Version Study Bible presents two views that date the

letter between A.D. 51 and 57.

The only thing that is certain is that this was written shortly after one of Paul's visits to the churches of Galatia (Ga 1:6).

The place from which this letter was written cannot be stated emphatically either, since Paul's location at writing was dependent on when he wrote. The subscript at the end of this letter is not included in all copies of the letter, because it is not considered Scripture.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

There are numerous footnotes about Paul in Acts (some of the main notes are note 4 at Ac 7:58, note 1 at Ac 9:1, note 1 at Ac 9:26, and note 1 at Ac 28:30).

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 1

GALATIANS 1:1

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Note 1 at Ga 1:1: Paul is a Latin name that means "small, little" (Smith's Bible Dictionary). It is used first in Ac 13:9. It was probably the name used to identify him more closely with the Gentiles, since this was a non-Jewish name. Paul could have been small in stature, or he may have wanted to identify himself as small in comparison to the magnified name of Jesus that he was preaching.

Note 2 at Ga 1:1: The word "apostle" is a transliteration of the compound Greek word "APOSTOLOS." APOSTOLOS is comprised of "APO" ("from") and "STELLO" ("to send") (Vine's Expository Dictionary), thus referring to the act of sending someone on a commission to represent the sender. It was used of a messenger who was provided with credentials. Our word "ambassador" would be a good translation ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 28).

It was important that Paul defend his apostleship, for if the false teachers, called Judaizers, could have discredited his apostleship, they would have also discredited the message he was preaching. Therefore, in the very first verse, Paul established his apostleship as the authority from which he spoke.

Note 3 at Ga 1:1: The point Paul was making is that his calling was divine. He didn't call himself, nor did any other person or group. God Himself called Paul to his ministry. Therefore, those who resisted Paul were resisting God, who sent him.

Paul was saying these things to prepare the Galatians so that they would not take what he was about to say lightly. He was going to be very blunt with them, even to the point that they could have been offended very easily (Ga 4:16). But Paul wanted them to know that he was speaking God's heart, not just his own heart. Hopefully, this would cause them to think twice before dismissing Paul's rebukes. As Paul said in 1Th 2:13, "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." This was

what he wanted for the Galatians and why he stressed that his instructions in this letter were from God and not from man.

Note 4 at Ga 1:1: Paul's apostleship was not bestowed upon him from the earthly Jesus, as was the case with the other apostles (Mt 10:1-5). His commission was from the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised the Son of God in power (Ro 1:4).

GALATIANS 1:2

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

Note 5 at Ga 1:2: In Paul's greeting, he mentioned "all the brethren which are with me." Although Paul was the composer of this letter, he was relating the fact that he was not alone in stating the doctrinal truths set forth in this letter. There was an "amen" from many concerning what Paul shared with the Galatians.

Note 6 at Ga 1:2: Notice that Paul used the plural "churches" in addressing the Galatians. This was a circular letter that went not to a city but rather to a region. There were four major cities in this area: Pisidian Antioch (in Pisidia at one time but incorporated into Galatia, see note 1 at Ac 13:14), Iconium (see note 3 at Ac 13:51), Lystra (in Lycaonia at one time but incorporated into Galatia, see note 4 at Ac 14:6), and Derbe (also in Lycaonia at one time but incorporated into Galatia, see note 5 at Ac 14:6). (See Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Galatians, The Recipients of Paul's Epistle "Galatians.")

GALATIANS 1:3

Grace [be] to you and peace from God the Father, and [from] our Lord Jesus Christ,

Note 7 at Ga 1:3: It's almost amusing that within Paul's salutation, he said, "Grace be to you...from God" (emphasis mine). He was writing this letter because the Galatians had fallen away from the principles of grace (Ga 5:4). He was stating within his greeting that the source of grace is God. So, who is legalism from? Obviously, the devil.

Notice that grace is from God the Father (see note 29 at Mt 6:9) and

from our Lord Jesus Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Joh 1:17).

Note 8 at Ga 1:3: True peace that comes from God only comes through grace and faith. Those who are seeking to obtain right standing with God by their own efforts will never have God's peace (2Pe 1:2-3, see note 2 at Ro 5:1).

GALATIANS 1:4

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Note 9 at Ga 1:4: Notice that Paul did not say Jesus gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the evil world to come. He said "this present evil world." That means that our salvation is effectual in this life, too, not just in the one to come. Some of us have relegated all the benefits of salvation to "when we all get to heaven." But that's not so. Through the atonement of Jesus, we have been delivered from sickness (see note 2 at Mt 8:17), poverty (see note 5 at 2Co 8:9), and demonic control (Lu 10:19), as well as sin, in this present life. To the degree we believe that, we will begin to experience the physical benefits of our salvation in the "rough now and now," not just in the "sweet by and by."

The same Greek word for "deliver," "EXAIREO," was used in Ac 12:11 for Peter's deliverance out of the hand of Herod (Ac 12:1-11) and also in Ac 23:27 of Paul's rescue and narrow escape from death by the hands of the Jews (Ac 21:20-36). The point is that the Gospel of grace is a "rescue" and "deliverance" out of the hand of sin (Ro 6:6 and 8:2). The Gospel has been given to set us free so that we do not have to live like unsaved people in this present "evil age." This is God's will for all His children (see note 10 at this verse).

Note 10 at Ga 1:4: It is God's will to deliver us from this present evil world (see note 9 at this verse). The Lord didn't save us from our sins so that we could be "saved and stuck" until we go to heaven. He made provision for our success in this life as well as the one to come. This verse makes it very clear that is God's will for us to prosper in spirit, soul, and body (Ps 35:27).

GALATIANS 1:5

To whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Note 11 at Ga 1:5: If you really understand the Gospel, you will break out in praise as Paul did.

GALATIANS 1:6

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Note 1 at Ga 1:6: Normally, Paul opened his letters with thanksgiving, prayer, and praise for the saints within his salutation (1Co 1:1-5, Php 1:1-5, Col 1:1-4, 1Th 1:1-3, 2Th 1:1-3, and 2Ti 1:1-3). In this letter to the Galatians, Paul dispensed with polite introductions after only one sentence (Ga 1:1-5). He quickly delivered a stinging curse against anyone who would dare to preach a gospel other than what Paul had preached (Ga 1:8-9). This, no doubt, shocked the Galatians and held their attention throughout the rest of the letter.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul basically dealt with the same truths as presented in Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews, but he delivered these truths in a near-brutal way that he didn't employ in those other letters. Paul was very concerned that the Galatians had, or would soon, fall from grace (Ga 4:11 and 5:2-4).

Note 2 at Ga 1:6: The Greek word translated "marvel" in this verse is "THAUMAZO," and it carries the idea of that which would evoke surprise. It is rendered in various translations as the phrases "I marvel" (King James Version), "I am amazed" (The Living Bible), "I am astonished" (New International Version), and "I am surprised at you!" (Today's English Version). Why was Paul surprised? Not because they were deserting some doctrine of theology, but because they were deserting God himself. Whenever people remove themselves from the grace that is revealed in Christ, they remove themselves from God Himself.

Note 3 at Ga 1:6: Certainly, Paul had experienced people falling away from their faith in Christ to follow the self-salvation that he denounced in this letter. However, he was shocked to see how soon it had happened with the Galatians.

Note 4 at Ga 1:6: In the Greek, the removing that Paul was rebuking is in the present tense; this indicates that the removing is in progress but is not yet complete. In other words, the Galatians were in a state of double-mindedness with their ears turned toward a false gospel. Paul was going to do everything he could through this letter to turn their hearts back to God.

Note 5 at Ga 1:6: Paul used the words "grace" and "gospel" interchangeably in this verse. The grace of God is the Gospel (see note 5 at Ac 20:24). Without grace, there is no good news for a sinful world.

Note 6 at Ga 1:6: Two different Greek words were used in Ga 1:6-7 for the English word "another." In Ga 1:6, the Greek word for "another" is "HETEROS," and it means "another of a different sort" (Vine's Expository Dictionary, emphasis mine). That's why the New International Version translated this phrase as "turning to a different gospel" (emphasis mine). The Greek adjective used in Ga 1:7 for "another" is "ALLOS," and it means "another of the same kind" (Vine's Expository Dictionary, emphasis mine). The Galatians were not turning toward a gospel that was similar in nature to the one they had already received. They were turning to a totally different gospel that Ga 1:7 states "is really no gospel at all" (NIV).

Paul made it very clear in Ro 11:6 that we are either saved by grace or by works, but not by a combination of the two (see note 2 at Ro 11:6). So, any gospel that combines works of the Law with grace for justification is no longer the same Gospel. In other words, Paul was saying that there is no room for additions or corrections to the Gospel of grace that he preached. It is perfect as presented. Any change perverts it.

GALATIANS 1:7

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Note 7 at Ga 1:7: Notice that Paul said, "There be some that trouble you" (emphasis mine). The New American Standard Bible translated this as "disturbing you" (emphasis mine). The New International Version says, "throwing you into confusion" (emphasis mine) (1Co 14:33). How was this happening? It happened by perverting (King

James Version), twisting (The Living Bible), changing (Today's English Version), and distorting (NASB) the Gospel of Christ; i.e., the good news about Christ.

Note 8 at Ga 1:7: The Greek word for "pervert" ("METASTREPHO") in "pervert the gospel" means "to change" the Gospel, not by denying it but by mixing something with it ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest). The Galatians were perverting the Gospel by (1) observing special days (Sabbaths), months, seasons, and years (Ga 4:10); (2) demanding circumcision along with belief in Jesus for salvation (Ga 5:2, compare with The Living Bible); (3) thinking that part of their righteousness came through observing the Law (Ga 5:4); and (4) believing that righteousness could be obtained by the strength and ability of their own flesh (Ga 3:3).

If they had observed these things voluntarily, they would not have been guilty of perverting the Gospel (Ro 14:1-6). But when they made the observance of these things mandatory in order to obtain righteousness (justification), at that point, the Gospel was perverted.

Today most people don't observe these same rituals that the Galatians did, so they miss the comparison between what the Galatians were doing and what much, if not most, of "Christianity" is doing today. The vehicle has been changed, but people are still traveling the same road to the same destination. We could say, "Pray, fast, go to church, read your Bible, tithe, and believe in Jesus, and you will be accepted in God's sight." That would be a perversion of the Gospel just as much as what the Galatians were doing. If observance of these things were encouraged but not required, it would be good and well pleasing to God. We should do those things. However, when these things become mandatory to receive righteousness (justification), it perverts the truth (Ga 2:21).

GALATIANS 1:8

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Note 9 at Ga 1:8: Paul's curse in Ga 1:8-9 comprised the strongest statements he made in Scripture against those who opposed his Gospel. Some points of doctrine were negotiable--i.e., nonessential for

salvation (see note 1 at 1Co 1:10)--but the grace of God could not be compromised. Paul said that even if an angel appeared preaching any other gospel than what Paul preached, he should be accursed (see note 10 at this verse). This left no room for anyone to preach something different.

Note 10 at Ga 1:8: Here, Paul was stressing the importance of preaching the true message of the Gospel of Christ. If anyone tampers with the true message of the Gospel of grace, Paul stated, "Let him be accursed." The Greek word for "accursed" here is "ANATHEMA," and it means "a person or thing doomed to destruction" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Today's English Version translates this as "May he be condemned to hell!" This statement will certainly be true of those who have turned away from the good news of Jesus unto another way of salvation.

The counterparts for this word in the Hebrew mean to be appointed to utter destruction and to be completely destroyed. These words were used in Nu 21:3 to describe the children of Israel utterly destroying the Canaanites, and also in Jos 6:16-17 concerning the city of Jericho and its inhabitants being an accursed thing unto the Lord and appointed to utter destruction.

GALATIANS 1:9

As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Note 11 at Ga 1:9: Paul's curse in the previous verse was so strong and so startling that some of the Galatians could have thought, "Surely he couldn't mean what it looks like he means." To leave no doubt, Paul was, in a sense, saying, "I said it once and I will say it again, if anyone preaches a gospel to you that is different, let him be accursed--eternally condemned!" No one could misunderstand that.

Today it is not politically correct to be absolute about anything. Instead, phrases like "I believe," "it's possible," "probably," "most likely," etc., are used. But the Gospel is absolute. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Ac 4:12, emphasis mine). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the

Father, but by me" (Joh 14:6).

We need to be as sure that we are preaching the true Gospel as Paul was. Then once we have no doubts, we need to be as bold in defending the Gospel as Paul was. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1Pe 4:11).

GALATIANS 1:10

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Note 12 at Ga 1:10: Paul was stating, "I'm not preaching man's gospel. I'm not trying to please man." The Greek word for "persuade" here is "PEITHO," and it means "to win over, and render friendly to one's self" ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest). Paul was not trying to win people over and make friends by preaching what people wanted to hear. If that were the case, he would not have been a true servant of Christ.

Paul stated in 1Th 2:4, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing man, but God, which trieth our hearts." As a "servant" (this verse), Paul had only one master, and that was Christ (Mt 6:24). Therefore, he spoke only the message the Lord laid on his heart.

All of this was being said to make the point that the Gospel Paul had brought to the Galatians was directly from God, not man. He elaborated on this point all the way into the second chapter. The reasoning was that if God truly gave Paul this message, then there could be no room for change. The Lord is always the same, and His message never changes.

Likewise, there is no room for a gospel today that fits the culture we live in. It's the same Gospel Paul preached—the power of God unto salvation today (see note 1 at Ro 1:16). Methods can change, but the message must remain the same.

GALATIANS 1:11

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Note 1 at Ga 1:11: The phrase "I certify" means "to make known" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was elaborating on the point he made in the previous verse--that the Gospel was given to him through supernatural revelation, not human teaching (see note 12 at Ga 1:10).

GALATIANS 1:12

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Note 2 at Ga 1:12: Paul did not receive his Gospel from any human source; it was revealed to him by Jesus Christ. The Greek meaning of "revelation" in this verse carries the idea of taking off a cover (i.e., an unveiling or disclosure) of Jesus Christ. It wasn't that Paul had no human knowledge of the historical facts that Jesus had died prior to his Damascus road experience (Ac 9:3-19), but at this point, he had a spiritual understanding of the historical facts that revealed that salvation was by faith in Jesus alone.

GALATIANS 1:13

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Note 3 at Ga 1:13: The Galatians had heard about Paul's former conduct and manner of life in Judaism. The Scriptures do not make it clear how they knew this. They may have heard by word of mouth or from Paul himself.

The phrase "in time past" refers to his former life before meeting Jesus Christ. Paul's religious zeal is referred to in Php 3:5-6 where he described himself as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as...touching the

righteousness which is in the law, blameless"; i.e., he "tried to obey every Jewish rule and regulation right down to the very last point" (Php 3:6, The Living Bible). He was in a religious system, like all of the world's religious systems, that tried to achieve righteousness before God by human effort. When confronted by the claims of Jesus Christ and the real truth proclaimed in the Law, he realized he was the chief of sinners (1Ti 1:15). He learned that by the works of Law, no person could ever be justified (Ga 2:16) and that the Gospel was a Gospel of grace (Ac 15:11 and 20:24).

Notice that his religious zeal led to the persecuting of those preaching the Gospel of grace. Paul went on to speak more about this later in his epistle through the illustration of Ishmael and Isaac (Ga 4:21-31). False religion has always persecuted true religion, and it will continue to be this way until the end of the age. Law and grace are two different ways of approaching God with opposite results (see Ro 9:30-10:10). They are not two different ways of receiving the same thing.

In the Greek, the imperfect tense is used of both "persecuted" and "wasted." This implies the persecution that Saul brought against the church was consistent, in excess, without mercy, and continued for some time. The imperfect tense of the verb for "wasted" indicates an attempt, as well as an action, to "destroy" the church that continued for a period of time (UBS Handbook, p. 19).

GALATIANS 1:14

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Note 4 at Ga 1:14: Paul advanced within the ranks of Judaism. In the Greek, the word for "profited" literally means "to drive forward (as if by beating), i.e. (figuratively and intransitively) to advance" (Strong's Concordance). Just as in a race, a person might beat an animal to drive it forward and cause it to advance over the others, so Paul was driven by religion. Paul was speaking here of his youth when he advanced and drove himself forward in the Jewish religion beyond many of his own age (Ac 22:3). He was superabundantly zealous for the traditions of man. A good definition for religion would be the description found in Mr 7:9-13 and summed up as "making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mr 7:13).

GALATIANS 1:15

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called [me] by his grace,

Note 5 at Ga 1:15: In Ga 1:15-17, Paul spoke about three things that God's grace did for him: (1) he was separated unto God from his mother's womb (see note 6 at this verse), (2) he was "called" by God's grace, and (3) Jesus was revealed in him. All of this was done by the Lord so that Paul would preach Jesus among the heathen (Ga 1:16).

In Ga 1:17, Paul stated what he didn't do and what he did do. He didn't go to Jerusalem to consult with the original apostles about the Gospel. What he did do was to go into the deserts of Arabia (maybe to study the Old Testament scriptures without tradition) and then return back to the city of Damascus.

Note 6 at Ga 1:15: Paul wasn't the only one who the Scriptures reveal was separated unto God's service from his mother's womb. This was also said of Isaiah (Isa 49:1 and 5), Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), and John the Baptist (Lu 1:15). By example, we can see this was also true of Samson (Jdg 16:17), and certainly, this was true of Jesus.

Other scriptures reveal that each one of us was specifically designed by God with a purpose. We didn't just happen or evolve. Ps 139:13-16 says, "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Paul, along with these others, simply recognized what is true of us all: God has a pre-designed purpose for each one of our lives. Our gifts and talents are uniquely designed to accomplish that purpose. However, that does not mean we have no freedom to choose and that whatever we become is God's will (see notes 1 and 2 at Ro 8:29). No, God has a plan for each one of us, but we have the choice to walk in that plan or

not.

Even though Paul was separated from his mother's womb to preach the Gospel, he didn't always walk in that calling. Instead, he perverted that God-given drive to the point that he actually tried to destroy the faith that he later embraced (Ga 1:23). Therefore, he had to be separated again unto the calling of preaching the Gospel (Ac 13:2).

Note 7 at Ga 1:15: God's calling is by grace, not according to our works (2Ti 1:9). We were created with a specific purpose for our lives, and our God-given gifts and talents are uniquely fitted for accomplishing that purpose. All of this was given by grace before we had any good or bad actions (see note 6 at this verse). But even though the calling is by grace, Paul said that he labored more abundantly than all the other apostles and that kept God's calling from being in vain (see note 19 at 1Co 15:10). So, God calls and equips us by grace; we can either take advantage of God's grace, or we can frustrate the grace of God (Ga 2:21).

GALATIANS 1:18

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Note 8 at Ga 1:18: The mention of three years here is probably implying that three years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem (see note 1 at Ac 9:26). The reason for this visit was to get acquainted with Peter. He stayed with Peter for fifteen days.

There may be a couple of reasons that Paul mentioned this visit: (1) He was only with Peter a brief period of time and could not possibly have been instructed fully in the Gospel so quickly. The Judaizers were saying that Paul had learned his Gospel from the apostles and had now defected from its original message. This makes Paul's point that the Gospel was revealed to him not by man but by God (Ga 1:11). (2) The Judaizers could claim Paul's message was different than Peter's, and Paul wanted his readers to understand his acquaintance and harmony with Peter and James, the brother of the Lord (Ga 1:19), who was the overseer of the Jerusalem church.

GALATIANS 1:20

Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Note 9 at Ga 1:20: Paul wanted to strengthen the points of his letter by stating before God that he was not lying, but obviously someone was lying to the Galatians. Paul made it very clear in this letter that the legalistic Jews, who taught that an individual had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved, were the ones who were deceiving the Galatians.

GALATIANS 1:21

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Note 1 at Ga 1:21: Cilicia was the region where Paul's hometown of Tarsus was located (see note 5 at Ac 6:9).

GALATIANS 1:23

But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

Note 2 at Ga 1:23: In the Greek text, this word "heard" means "they kept constantly hearing" ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 55). In Ga 1:24, the Greek verb translated "glorified" is used in the same way. It denotes continuous action. So, these verses are saying that the testimony of Paul's conversion from persecutor to preacher was consistently being told among the Christians and was constantly causing the saints to glorify God. We can only speculate about how much encouragement this brought to the saints, but there is no doubt that Paul became a trophy of God's grace (1Ti 1:16).

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 2

GALATIANS 2:1

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with [me] also.

Note 1 at Ga 2:1: The book of Acts records five definite visits that Paul made to Jerusalem: (1) the visit after Paul left Damascus, approximately three years after his conversion (Ac 9:26-30 and Ga 1:18-20); (2) the famine relief visit (Ac 11:27-30); (3) the visit to attend the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15:1-30); (4) the visit at the end of his second missionary journey (Ac 18:22); and (5) the final visit that resulted in Paul's imprisonment and trial (Ac 21:15-23:35).

It is not certain which visit he was referring to here, or if this is a unique visit that is not referred to in other passages. Likewise, it is not certain if Paul was referring to the fourteen years after his conversion that he spoke of in the previous verses, or if this is fourteen years after his first visit, which was also mentioned in the previous verses (that would be seventeen years after his conversion).

If Paul and Barnabas taking the famine relief offering to Jerusalem is the instance being referred to here, then this passage adds quite a bit of information to what is recorded in Ac 11:27-30. The Acts account only mentions Paul and Barnabas delivering the offering to Jerusalem. There is no mention there of Paul sharing his message with the Jerusalem saints or leadership, as recorded here. In fact, Ga 2:2-10 more closely resembles the account in Ac 15:27-30 where Paul and Barnabas attended the Jerusalem Council over the matter of circumcision.

If indeed this second visit is the "Council of Jerusalem" visit recorded in Ac 15, then it would appear that there was a private meeting with the apostolic leaders before the official council (Ga 2:2).

Paul's companions on this visit were Barnabas (see notes 1 and 2 at Ac 4:36), a Jewish brother who helped evangelize and establish the Galatian churches on Paul's first missionary journey (Ac 13-14), and Titus (see note 4 at 2Co 2:13), a Gentile convert to Christ but not

submitted to the Jewish rite of circumcision.

GALATIANS 2:2

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Note 2 at Ga 2:2: Paul traveled to Jerusalem to defend the Gospel that God had given him to preach. He made it clear that this Gospel was not "learned" through man but given by a direct revelation of God (see note 2 at Ga 1:12 and note 12 at Ga 1:10).

Note 3 at Ga 2:2: Paul didn't compromise, but he didn't seek to offend either. The fact that he had this private meeting with the leaders of the Jerusalem church shows that he cared about how they received his message and the impact that their opinion would have. He sought peace with these leaders and he obtained it. If they would have refused to listen to the Holy Spirit and had rejected the Gospel, then it can be assumed that Paul would have heeded his own instructions in Ga 1:8-9.

There are many people today who have a truth from God and promote that truth at the expense of all other truths. They totally ignore the admonitions for unity among the body of Christ (see notes 1 and 2 at 1Co 1:10) and justify their actions by bragging on their refusal to compromise. This was not the way Paul conducted himself. His actions here should serve as an example to us all.

Note 4 at Ga 2:2: Three of these leaders were mentioned by name (Ga 2:9): James, the Lord's brother and overseer of the Jerusalem church (see note 2 at Joh 2:12); John (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to John, About the Author), the apostle and son of Zebedee; and Cephas, or the Apostle Peter (see note 3 at Mt 16:18), who had already been called before the Jerusalem church for his work among the Gentiles (Ac 11:1-18).

So, the "big four" are together--Peter, James, John, and Paul--to discuss the problems of the Gospel and the Law among the Jews and Gentiles. They came into unity and presented a united witness to the truth of the Gospel.

GALATIANS 2:3

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

Note 5 at Ga 2:3: There are two things in this section of Scripture (Ga 2:1-10) that would verify the validity of Paul's message of salvation by grace: (1) Titus, who was a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised (this verse), proving that salvation was through faith without the works of the Law (Ga 2:16); and (2) Paul's Gospel of grace was approved by the leaders of the "home" church, the church of Jerusalem (Ga 2:6-9).

Note 6 at Ga 2:3: The key word here is "compelled." Previously, Paul had circumcised Timothy because of the offense that his uncircumcision would have been to the Jews (Ac 16:3). It is possible that Paul would have encouraged Titus to be circumcised also if it hadn't been for the false brethren who were making an issue out of this.

Paul sought to do whatever was necessary to win people to Jesus (see note 7 at 1Co 9:20 and note 9 at 1Co 9:21), but he wouldn't compromise. If Titus wanted to voluntarily submit to circumcision for the purpose of not offending the Jews, that would have been okay. But when Titus chose not to be circumcised and the Jews tried to make an issue out of it, Paul sided with Titus because of the Gospel.

We should not intentionally try to offend the religious traditions of others. Yet, when adherence to religious tradition is substituted for or added to the Gospel, we cannot condone that. Paul didn't yield to that kind of pressure, not even for an hour (Ga 2:5).

GALATIANS 2:4

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Note 7 at Ga 2:4: Paul had taken Titus with him to Jerusalem as a test case of a full-fledged converted Gentile to faith in Jesus Christ. No

doubt Titus manifested all the fruit of salvation without the Jewish rite of circumcision. Would the leaders of the Jerusalem church reject such a trophy of grace because of a ritual? Titus was received by the apostles, and the truth remained that people are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not by the works of the Law (Ga 2:16).

Note 8 at Ga 2:4: There were zealous Jewish believers (Ro 10:2) who had acknowledged Christ as their Messiah but believed a person must still keep the Old Testament Law in order to be right with God. They taught faith in Christ alone was not enough. This was in direct opposition to the Gospel that Paul taught. Paul called these men false brethren. These are the ones whom he referred to in Ga 1:8-9.

These men were saying that faith alone was not enough; holiness was needed as well. Yet, in an effort to promote holiness, look at what they were guilty of. They were spying on Titus to see if he was circumcised! That's a very private matter. It can't be determined by just looking at a person. They had to have been spying on him in the latrines. They had become "peeping Toms" in the name of the Lord. They were committing a much greater sin in the name of holiness than the one they were accusing Titus of.

Likewise, legalistic Christians today often operate in anger, hatred, and cruelty with a judgmental attitude, and that is much worse than the petty traditions they accuse others of violating. Churches have been split and lives devastated over points of doctrine that were nothing more than tradition.

Note 9 at Ga 2:4: Paul made the motives of these legalistic Jews very clear. They were not motivated out of love. They were on a witch-hunt. They had already made up their minds and were looking for some way of discrediting Paul and the Gospel he preached. Ga 2:5 shows Paul's reaction.

GALATIANS 2:5

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Note 10 at Ga 2:5: The Greek word that was translated "gave place" literally means "to be weak, i.e. yield" (Strong's Concordance). How was it that Paul showed himself strong and refused to yield to these false brethren? He never submitted any of his authority to them. That's what he said: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an

hour."

Many leaders, in misguided efforts to love everyone, have actually empowered false brethren by giving them recognition. Paul didn't do that, and neither should we. We need to heed the instructions of Paul to "lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins" (1Ti 5:22).

Note 11 at Ga 2:5: There is a time for standing strong against those who oppose us, as Paul did here, and there is a time for turning the other cheek, as Jesus instructed us to do in Mt 5:39. Sometimes, it is very hard to know which is the right reaction. Ultimately, we have to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in each individual case. But Paul gave us a general rule to follow in this passage of Scripture. He declared that the motivation for his actions against these false brethren was not selfish.

Paul was not defending his own reputation or sowing strife because of pride-related issues. His only concern was that the Galatians might continue in the truth of the Gospel. Pride is always the root of all strife (see note 2 at Ac 4:17), and unless we can truthfully say that there is no selfishness in our motives, then we are probably wrong in pressing the issue. At least, we should deal with the speck in our own eyes before trying to cast the beam out of someone else's eye (Mt 7:3-5).

However, pacifism is not always the appropriate reaction either. Paul warned the leaders of the church of Ephesus that grievous wolves would come against the flock, and they would have to resist them (Ac 20:29). Jesus rebuked the pastors of the churches of Pergamos (Re 2:12-17) and Thyatira (Re 2:18-29) for not taking action against the false teachers in their churches. Paul's actions here provide us with an example of resisting those who seek to pervert the Gospel.

There are many factors to consider, but one of the primary tests must always be our personal motives. Pride, envy, and self-advancement must be ruled out of our motives before we "flex our muscle."

GALATIANS 2:6

But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed [to be somewhat] in conference added nothing to me:

Note 12 at Ga 2:6: The New International Version translates this verse as, "As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message." Paul was saying that the greatest leaders of the church in his day didn't have any additions or corrections to the Gospel that had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. Paul's Gospel was accurate and complete, even by the judgment of Peter, James, and John, the leaders of the church.

Note 13 at Ga 2:6: Paul was not intimidated by men who had walked with Jesus and had been a part of His inner circle of disciples. This was not because of self-confidence or pride; it was because Paul had an intimate relationship with God, and he knew the Gospel he preached came by direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. Those who are overwhelmed in the presence of man have not spent enough time in the presence of the Almighty.

Note 14 at Ga 2:6: The perversion of the Gospel that Paul was rebuking in this letter was not a deletion of some truths but the addition of more requirements than faith in Christ alone. Paul made it clear that this was not the judgment of the leaders of the Jerusalem "home" church. They heard his message and added nothing to it. It was accurate and complete just the way Paul presented it.

GALATIANS 2:7

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as [the gospel] of the circumcision [was] unto Peter;

Note 15 at Ga 2:7: Instead of Peter, James, and John correcting Paul's Gospel, they approved it and encouraged Paul in his work. Paul was citing this as an additional proof that the Gospel he preached to the Galatians was correct and that the additions the legalistic Jews were trying to add to his Gospel were wrong.

Note 16 at Ga 2:7: Peter and Paul did not preach two different gospels--a gospel of the circumcision and a gospel of the uncircumcision. There is only one true Gospel, as stated very emphatically by Paul in Ga 1:6-7. God was simply using Peter in a mighty way among the Jews, and He was using Paul in a mighty way among the Gentiles.

The phrase "the right hands of fellowship" (Ga 2:9) implies a united missionary partnership to work together for the spreading of the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles. Peter took the good news of salvation primarily to the Jews, and Paul ministered primarily to the Gentiles.

GALATIANS 2:8

(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Note 17 at Ga 2:8: It is amazing to our way of thinking that God would have chosen Peter to share the Gospel with the Jews and Paul to share the Gospel with the Gentiles. Paul was steeped in Jewish Law and tradition. He could have out-argued any religious Jew. And Peter was a near-pagan himself. Who could have related to the Gentiles better than he? Yet, God's ways are higher than man's ways (Isa 55:9).

The Lord doesn't want to argue people into salvation or get them to associate with those who are saved just because of friendship. Salvation has to be a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1Co 1:27-29, see note 11 at 1Co 1:27).

GALATIANS 2:10

Only [they would] that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Note 18 at Ga 2:10: This agreement that Paul and Barnabas should continue work among the Gentiles while Peter, James, and John concentrated on the Jews ended with a final request and agreement that Paul should remember the poor. In the Greek, the verb tense carries the idea "that we should keep on remembering the poor" ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 68). Today's English Version implies that the "poor" being spoken of here

were the needy saints of Jerusalem and Judea: "All they asked was that we should remember the needy in their group, which is the very thing I have been eager to do." Paul had already done this on a previous occasion (Ac 11:27-30) and continued to do so in his missionary journeys (1Co 16:1-3 and Ro 15:26-27, see note 6 at 1Co 11:22).

GALATIANS 2:12

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Note 1 at Ga 2:12: Peter knew that the Gentiles did not have to conform to Jewish Law for salvation. The Lord had shown Peter in a vision that the Gentiles were to become heirs with those who receive Jesus by faith. Peter acted on this conviction when he shared the Gospel with Cornelius and his household. All of this is recorded in Ac 10. So, Peter was to blame for not standing up for this truth that the Lord had given him.

Here, Paul gave us a little more detail about Peter's time at Cornelius' home. Apparently, Peter and his company did stay with Cornelius as requested in Ac 10:48. During that time, Peter and his Jewish friends ate with the Gentiles, which was against Jewish tradition (see note 2 at Joh 18:28). When messengers from James came to check out what was happening, Peter and company separated from the Gentiles, fearing the Jews. Therefore, Paul said Peter was at fault. He knew better and could not claim ignorance. His actions proved his hypocrisy (see note 4 at Ga 2:13).

All these things happened to Peter prior to the Jerusalem council recorded in Ac 15. This council was to determine if Paul's Gentile converts had to be circumcised (conform to Jewish Law - see note 2 at Ac 15:1). Peter could have made it much easier for Paul to convince the apostles if he had spoken up in Paul's defense, but there was a noticeable silence on Peter's part. Paul didn't say anything to Peter about this in front of the Jerusalem church, but when Peter came to Antioch, Paul rebuked Peter publicly (Ga 2:14).

According to Ac 11:3, Peter eating with the Gentiles was made known anyway, so his hypocrisy didn't gain him any advantage. It never does. He would have been better off to have stood on the truth God showed

him.

Note 2 at Ga 2:12: Pr 29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare." This is a classic example of that truth.

The Lord had already shown Peter that he was not to call Gentile Christians unclean (Ac 10:28). Peter acted on this revelation and broke with Jewish tradition by eating with the Gentile believers of Cornelius' household. But when Jews sent from James arrived, Peter went against the revelation in his heart and operated out of fear of what these Jews might think.

GALATIANS 2:13

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Note 3 at Ga 2:13: This is a new piece of information not recorded in Ac 10. Barnabas was with Peter at the conversion of Cornelius and his household.

Note 4 at Ga 2:13: Paul was saying that Barnabas got caught up in Peter's hypocrisy (see note 1 at Ro 12:9).

GALATIANS 2:14

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before [them] all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Note 5 at Ga 2:14: This says quite a bit about the Apostle Paul. Not many men would have taken on Peter, who was probably the most influential leader in the church in his day. This also says quite a bit about Peter. Surely, with his influence, he could have made Paul pay a price for accosting him, if he had not humbled himself and received Paul's rebuke. The lack of any mention of problems caused by this encounter between Paul and Peter is a good indication that Peter took heed to Paul's admonition.

Note 6 at Ga 2:14: When Paul was on Peter's "turf" (i.e., Jerusalem), Paul was discreet. He communicated the Gospel privately to the leaders of the Jerusalem church so that his effort wouldn't be in vain (Ga 2:2). But when Peter was on Paul's turf, it was a different situation. Paul brought the truth out into the light (Eph 5:13).

Note 7 at Ga 2:14: Paul's point was that Peter was not adhering strictly to Jewish Law--that was proven by his association with the Gentiles--yet he was compelling the Gentiles to live after the Jewish traditions. That was hypocritical. He wasn't practicing what he was preaching. The Jerusalem Bible translation says, "If you, though a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, you have no right to make the Gentiles copy Jewish ways."

GALATIANS 2:15

We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Note 8 at Ga 2:15: Paul was stating to Peter, "We who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that a person is not declared righteous by the works of the law but by faith in Christ" (paraphrase taken from Today's English Version and King James Version).

Paul was using a term employed by Pharisaic Jews that described all people outside the covenant of the Law as being "Gentile sinners." Paul went on to say that no one is declared righteous "by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Ga 2:16). Although the Law of Moses was being spoken of here, this can also be understood as any religious law (what day you worship, the length of hair, dress, the mode of baptism, or other religious codes), for by those works no person can be justified.

GALATIANS 2:16

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Note 9 at Ga 2:16: The phrase "works of the law" is used seven times in the New Testament in five scriptures (Ro 9:32; Ga 2:16, 3:2, 5, and 10).

What are "works of the law"? Any rule, command, or law that a person observes in an attempt to be accepted in right standing with God is a "work of the law." In other words, works of the Law are a righteousness produced by one's self, belonging to one's self, offered to God as a means of meeting God's standard for acceptance. Php 3:9 says it's "having mine own righteousness [a righteousness belonging to me], which is of the law" (emphasis and brackets mine). (See Ro 9:30-10:10 for a fuller understanding of the works of the Law.)

Works of the Law have always been man's attempt to be accepted by God. Paul says, "[Let me] be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Php 3:9, New International Version, brackets mine).

It takes a radical revelation of the Gospel of grace to abandon faith in the works of the Law. God's standard of righteousness is the righteousness of God alone.

In stark contrast to the works of the Law, there is the "work of faith," as referred to in 1Th 1:3 and 2Th 1:11. These may be the same actions that others do as works of the Law, but the motivation is different. Works of faith are the fruit of relationship with God whereas works of the Law are done to try to obtain relationship with God (see note 4 at Ro 9:32).

GALATIANS 2:17

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, [is] therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

Note 10 at Ga 2:17: This verse has proven difficult to interpret for many people. There is no consensus among scholars as to what Paul was saying. He may have been addressing a common question that arises anytime grace is taught: "What about those who profess to have a revelation of grace yet are living in sin?" Paul's answer was that it isn't Christ who is leading them to sin--their transgression is all their own (Ga 2:18).

GALATIANS 2:19

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Note 11 at Ga 2:19: Paul was saying that his deliverance from the Law is not through unlawful means. The Law demanded death for sin (Eze 18:4 and 20), and Jesus fulfilled that requirement by dying in our place. Now it would be unlawful to punish us once our debt has been paid. That would be double jeopardy.

Note 12 at Ga 2:19: The Lord redeemed us for a purpose: It was so we could live for Him. He didn't set us free so that we could do our own thing. We are not our own. We are bought with a price. Therefore, we should glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are the Lord's (1Co 6:19-20).

GALATIANS 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Note 13 at Ga 2:20: Paul was preaching a death to self, but it is very important to notice how this death took place. Paul was dead through what Jesus did. Paul experienced this death by simply reckoning what had already happened through Christ to be so (Ro 6:11).

There are people today who have taken the "dying to self" doctrine to an extreme, and instead of being free of self, they are totally self-centered. They constantly think of self. It may be in all negative terms, but it is still self-centered. Truly humble people are ones who are Christ-centered. Dying to self is not a hatred for self but rather a love of Christ more than self.

There are false religions that preach a denial of self. The legalistic Jews Paul was preaching against did that. Paul was not just dead to self; he was alive to God. A focus on the denial of self without the enthronement of Christ leads to legalism.

Note 14 at Ga 2:20: Paul's "old man" was dead through Christ (Ro 6:2-11). He was truly free to live, but it wasn't actually Paul who was living--it was Christ living through him. Paul had learned the secret of

victorious Christian living; it is not us living for Jesus, but Jesus living through us.

Failure to understand this simple truth is at the root of all legalism and performance mentality. The Law focuses on the outer man and tells it what it must do. Grace focuses on the inner man and tells it what is already done through Christ. Those who are focused on what they must do are under Law. Those who are focused on what Christ has done for them are walking under grace.

The Christian life is not just hard to live--it's impossible to live in our human strength. The only way to walk in victory is to let Christ live through us.

Note 15 at Ga 2:20: Notice that Paul didn't say he was living by faith in the Son of God. He said, "I live by the faith of the Son of God" (emphasis mine). He used this same terminology twice in Ga 2:16. We were so spiritually bankrupt that we couldn't even believe for salvation with our own faith. We had to use God's supernatural faith (Eph 2:8) that came to us as a gift through hearing God's Word (Ro 10:17).

There is a human faith that is limited to believing only what we can perceive through our five senses, but the supernatural, God-kind of faith goes beyond what we can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. God's kind of faith calls those things that be not as though they already were (Ro 4:17, see note 16 at Ro 12:3).

GALATIANS 2:21

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Note 16 at Ga 2:21: Paul's statement implies that the grace of God can be frustrated. The word "frustrate" means "to prevent from accomplishing a purpose or fulfilling a desire; thwart" (American Heritage Dictionary). The purpose of God's grace in our lives is to set us free from every device of Satan (1Jo 3:8) and grant us abundant life (see note 6 at Joh 10:10). This will not come to pass if we are striving to approach unto God through keeping the Law.

Note 17 at Ga 2:21: What a statement! This should leave no doubt as to

whether we can be justified through the Law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" (Ro 10:4), so anyone who is trusting in the Law is not trusting in Christ.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 3

GALATIANS 3:1

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Note 1 at Ga 3:1: Paul was so overwhelmed that the Galatians had rejected the grace of Christ for legalism (see note 7 at Mt 27:6 and note 1 at Lu 11:38), he was saying that they must be crazy. The Jerusalem Bible says, "Are you people in Galatia mad?" Paul was making no attempt to be polite. He was making it clear that their actions were insane. At best, legalism is stupid, and at worst, it's crazy.

Note 2 at Ga 3:1: Paul was saying that the Galatians' actions defied logic. There had to be demonic deception involved to turn them from the grace of Christ to legalism. The Living Bible says, "What magician has hypnotized you and cast an evil spell upon you?"

This was Paul "taking off the gloves." He was blasting these people with all he had, leaving no room for compromise. He was doing this because he loved them. Many people would not agree with Paul's harshness, but there's a time for tough love. Confrontation should never be relished, but it should not always be avoided either. There are some heaven-and-hell issues that need to be pressed, regardless of the outcome. Paul viewed legalism as one of those issues.

Note 3 at Ga 3:1: Paul had depicted the atonement of Christ so vividly to the Galatians that it was as if they were present at His crucifixion. How could they turn from the message that Christ paid it all to a message that put the burden of salvation on their backs?

If we truly understand the message of the cross, then we understand grace. Jesus didn't just make a token sacrifice for us. He paid it all. There's no sacrifice that we can make that will add to or replace the sacrifice of Christ. Preaching that our own holiness is required to receive from God is voiding the sacrifice of Christ (Ga 2:21).

Therefore, Paul was saying that anyone who has had a clear presentation of the Gospel of Christ, as these Galatians had, and then

turns away from that grace (see note 5 at Ga 1:6) back to works (see note 9 at Ga 2:16) is foolish (see note 1 at this verse) and deceived by the devil (see note 2 at this verse).

GALATIANS 3:2

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Note 4 at Ga 3:2: In today's English we would say "Just tell me this" or "Let me just ask you one question."

Note 5 at Ga 3:2: Paul was the one who shared the Gospel with these Galatians. He knew they received the Spirit by grace, because that's how he ministered it to them. Here, he reminded them of that. The obvious answer to this question is that faith alone produced the dramatic change in them. If they started by faith, how could they be so stupid to think that they had to earn the favor of God?

Col 2:6 says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." That means if you were saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8), then that's the way you should continue to walk with the Lord. Yet it is a common mistake for people who come to the Lord "Just as I am, without one plea" to fall back into the deception that they have to be holy enough for the Lord to answer their prayers. That's inconsistent, and it's what Paul was pointing out here.

We often extend grace to the drunks or prostitutes who are not born again. We tell them of God's love and how He wants to help them. But let them get born again and then sin again, and the very people who told them how much God loved them before they were saved will now damn them to hell for the slightest infraction. If that was really the way things were, those sinners would be better off to wait until their last breaths to receive salvation so that God would keep loving them. That is not the gospel. We are not saved by grace then maintained by works (see note 9 at Ga 2:16).

GALATIANS 3:3

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Note 6 at Ga 3:3: The New International Version interprets "made perfect by the flesh" as the phrase "to attain your goal by human effort."

GALATIANS 3:4

Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if [it be] yet in vain.

Note 7 at Ga 3:4: Paul said in this letter that if he preached righteousness by the Law, then the offense of the cross would cease (see my notes at Ga 5:11). Grace is offensive to religious people; legalism is not. The suffering that Paul was speaking of the Galatians enduring was persecution for preaching the Gospel of Christ. If they turned from that Gospel to legalism, then all the suffering they had borne for the sake of Christ would be wasted. He was trying to stir them up through the power of memory (2Pe 3:1).

Note 8 at Ga 3:4: Paul was not saying that the Galatians were reprobate (see note 6 at Ro 1:28 and note 1 at Mt 12:31), but he was warning them that they were dangerously close. Everything they had endured for the sake of the Gospel would be lost if they renounced their faith in Christ.

GALATIANS 3:5

He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Note 9 at Ga 3:5: It doesn't matter if the "he" in this verse was Paul or someone else. The point he was making is that those who are used of God don't deserve it. The Lord has never had anyone qualified working for Him yet (see note 8 at Ro 9:16). It's God's grace that He uses anybody. Those who claim to be used of God because of their

great holiness are either deceived or deceiving. It's faith in the grace of God that allows miracles to flow through people.

GALATIANS 3:6

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Note 10 at Ga 3:6: Paul's statements about the grace of God were, of course, offensive to the legalistic Jews. No doubt they thought he was way off course and completely outside the truths of Scripture. Here, Paul cited scripture to show that it is those who trust in themselves instead of a savior who are unscriptural.

Paul refers to Ge 15:6. When Abraham believed God's promise, that's when he had righteousness imputed to him. This is the same example Paul used in Ro 4 where he illustrated righteousness by grace with the example of Abraham. In Ro 4, Paul said righteousness was reckoned to Abraham about fourteen years (see note 2 at Ro 4:10) before he received the sign of circumcision (Ro 4:9-11). Therefore, circumcision or any other outward act cannot be a prerequisite to right standing with God.

Abraham was the greatest of all the patriarchs. All the promises began with him. He was the foundation of the Hebrew race. If Abraham received righteousness by faith, how could any Jew justify righteousness by any other means? Paul continued through the end of Ga 4 to use the example of Abraham to illustrate this truth of justification by faith.

GALATIANS 3:7

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Note 11 at Ga 3:7: Faith is what made Abraham pleasing to God (Heb 11:6). It certainly wasn't his performance or genealogy. Yet the Jews had missed this truth. They had misinterpreted Scripture to believe that the physical descendants of Abraham were the heirs of Abraham's blessings and God's covenant. Paul corrected that thinking with an

amazing interpretation of Old Testament scripture. He said that those who put faith in Christ are true children of Abraham, whether they are Jews or Gentiles by birth.

GALATIANS 3:8

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Note 12 at Ga 3:8: The Scripture "foresaw" that God would justify the Gentiles through faith. The word "foresee" carries the idea of seeing or knowing beforehand (American Heritage Dictionary) this good news of the Gospel (see note 1 at Ro 8:29).

Note 13 at Ga 3:8: How did this quote from Ge 12:3 contain the Gospel? Paul explained this later in this same chapter. God's covenant was with Abraham and his seed (singular - see note 22 at Ga 3:16), not seeds (plural). This singular seed was none other than Christ (Ga 3:16). The fact that all nations would be blessed through Him referred to Gentiles being saved without becoming Jews. This foretold salvation by grace (see note 5 at Ga 1:6) instead of by works or the Law.

GALATIANS 3:9

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Note 14 at Ga 3:9: The only way for anyone to partake of Abraham's blessing is by faith. That's the way Abraham received the blessing (see note 10 at Ga 3:6 and note 11 at Ga 3:7), and that's the way we must receive it too.

GALATIANS 3:10

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Note 15 at Ga 3:10: Paul was bringing out a very important point that those who preach performance conveniently fail to mention. De 27:26 says, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (emphasis mine). Those who trust in the Law must keep every word of the Law perfectly or else they come under the curse (De 28:15-68) instead of the blessing (De 28:1-14). Since all have sinned (Ro 3:23), people can never attain to the blessing of the Law through their own efforts. They must put faith in the grace of God and receive the blessing as a gift (Ro 6:23).

GALATIANS 3:11

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Note 16 at Ga 3:11: Since the Law placed a curse on sin (Ga 3:10), it should have been evident that the Law could not bring justification, since all have sinned (Ro 3:23). Yet, the Jews missed that point. Here, Paul quoted another Old Testament scripture that clearly states faith was the only way to justification with God (Hab 2:4). There are two ways of rendering this quotation: either "the just shall live by faith" (King James Version and Phillips New Testament Bible) or "the person who is put right with God through faith shall live" (Today's English Version). Faith is what imparts spiritual life, not works of the Law.

GALATIANS 3:12

And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Note 17 at Ga 3:12: What a radical statement! "The law is not of faith." When combined with Ro 14:23--"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"--then this statement must have been near blasphemy to the legalistic Jews, just as it is to legalistic Christians today. It is sin for New Testament believers to try to relate to God on the basis of attempting to keep the Old Testament Law. The Law itself is not sin (Ro 7:7), but it is sin to try to use the Law for justification with God. That was never the purpose of the Law.

Under the Law, people got what they deserved. Under faith, N.T. believers receive grace because of what Jesus did for them. Any departure from faith, especially a departure back to the O.T. Law, voids the work of Christ (Ga 2:21) and is the worst sin of all.

Note 18 at Ga 3:12: Here, Paul was quoting Le 18:5, which he also quoted in Ro 10:5 (see Ro 10:3-10). In Romans, Paul contrasted the Law, which says "do and you shall live," with faith, which says "done" and receives what grace has already provided.

GALATIANS 3:13

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:

Note 19 at Ga 3:13: The Law brought a "blessing" if obeyed or a "curse" if disobeyed. any failure to obey the Law brought on the curse (De 28:15-68). Therefore, everyone was under the curse (Ga 3:22) for all have sinned (Ro 3:23). But, praise God, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by bearing our curse for us. Now, through Christ, we will never receive any curse from God even though we all still disobey the Law in some way.

Paul cited De 21:23 to show that justice was satisfied when Jesus died for the Law we broke, thus paying the prescribed penalty and bearing the curse. There is no condemnation awaiting us from the Law, for we died in Him (Ro 8:1).

There are three basic Greek words for "redeem": (1) "AGORAZO"--"to buy in the slave market" (we were slaves to the Law); (2) "EX-AGORAZO"--"to buy out of the slave market" (it would remove us out from under the principle of the Law); and (3) "LUTROO"--"to set free or release by a payment" (Wuest Word Studies from the Greek New Testament). Christ's death paid in full the justice the Law demanded. We are now free from the Law to be in union with another, Jesus Christ (Ro 7:4). What the Law was to the Jew (they thought it was eternal life), Jesus is to the believer. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Joh 5:39, emphasis mine). Jesus Christ has replaced the Law by becoming the full manifestation of the will of God (Heb 1:1-3).

GALATIANS 3:14

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Note 20 at Ga 3:14: We can't be cursed and blessed at the same time. A curse is the opposite of a blessing. Christ removed the curse of a broken Law by bearing its penalty. The Law's curse and punishment were borne by Jesus as our substitute so that the blessings of grace and faith (received by Abraham) can be ours. The blessing of Abraham is having our faith in Christ reckoned to us as righteousness apart from our own worth, entitling us to receive the Holy Spirit through faith.

GALATIANS 3:15

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though [it be] but a man's covenant, yet [if it be] confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

Note 21 at Ga 3:15: Here, Paul was using a human illustration. If a man's covenant, contract, or agreement was drawn up and ratified (i.e., whatever was necessary to give it legal force had been done), then no one could break the agreement or add conditions to it. Likewise, God's covenant with Abraham was in force 430 years before the Law of Moses (Ga 3:17) and was superior to it. Indeed, Paul established in the next few verses that the Law of Moses was only a temporary addition that would cease to have any effect once the promised seed (Ga 3:16) came.'

GALATIANS 3:16

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Note 22 at Ga 3:16: Paul had been arguing from Ga 3:15 that the promise, or covenant, given to Abraham was still in force because no one can add to or take away from a legal covenant.

The promise, or covenant, was made with Abraham and his "seed" (singular - Ge 12:2-3, 13:14-15, 15:1, 5-6, 18, 17:2, 7; Ro 4:6-9, 13-14, 22-25; Ga 3:14, 22, and 29). The promises were not given to Abraham and

his "seeds" (plural--referring to the Jewish people, his descendants) but to his "seed," his one descendant, who is Christ.

The Greek word for "seed" is "SPERMA," and it means "'the seed' i.e. the grain or kernel which contains within itself the germ of the future plant" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Paul would later argue that believers were the future plants, so to speak, that were "in" the one seed--Christ. "Thus to Abraham personally and to all those who by faith in Christ are brought into salvation, were the promises made" ("Galatians in the Greek New Testament" by Kenneth S. Wuest, p. 101; see also Ga 3:29). God's promise of justification through faith was given long before the introduction of the Law and always has been the only way to justification with God.

GALATIANS 3:17

And this I say, [that] the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Note 23 at Ga 3:17: Here, Paul was drawing a conclusion from the argument he began in Ga 3:15. If a man's covenant cannot be added to or taken away from, then God's covenant of promise to save people through faith in Christ could not have been affected through the introduction of the Law 430 years after God's promise.

The Living Bible paraphrases verses 17-18 in the following way: "Here's what I am trying to say: God's promise to save through faith--and God wrote this promise down and signed it--could not be canceled or changed four hundred and thirty years later when God gave the Ten Commandments. If obeying those laws could save us, then it is obvious that this would be a different way of gaining God's favor than Abraham's way, for he simply accepted God's promise."

GALATIANS 3:18

For if the inheritance [be] of the law, [it is] no more of promise: but God gave [it] to Abraham by promise.

Note 24 at Ga 3:18: Receiving by Law and receiving by promise are opposites. Law involves effort (works). Promise provides as a gift

(grace). We are either saved by works or by grace, but not a combination of the two (see note 2 at Ro 11:6).

GALATIANS 3:19

Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Note 1 at Ga 3:19: Paul had already proven that the Law was not given to bring justification (see notes 3-4 at Ro 3:19 and note 14 at Ro 3:31). Then why was it given? It was added (this verse) to the covenant of promise (Ga 3:18) to magnify our sin (see note 5 at Ro 7:11) and therefore remove any false ideas we might have of saving ourselves. It ruled out the possibility of self-salvation and made us ready for the covenant of grace (Ga 3:24). It was to remain valid and in force until the coming of the one true descendant of Abraham; i.e., Christ (Ga 3:16).

Note 2 at Ga 3:19: The use of the words "added" and "till" are very significant. The Law was neither God's first nor His primary way of dealing with mankind. The covenant of grace, or promise (Ga 3:18), had already been in effect for 430 years before God gave the Law through Moses (Ga 3:17, see note 2 at Ro 4:10) and therefore had greater authority.

The word "till" is also used to show that the Law was only temporary until Christ came. When Christ came, He put an end to the Law for righteousness (Ro 10:4). Those who advocate the keeping of the Law for the purpose of right standing with God are going back to an Old Testament system of law that has been abolished (2Co 3:13 and Eph 2:15) and are making the work of Christ void in their lives (Ga 2:21).

Note 3 at Ga 3:19: The word "mediator" literally means to be in the middle or midst. It is "one who mediates' between two parties with a view to producing peace" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Moses was the mediator God used to make the Old Testament covenant of Law between Himself and the Jews. In the New Testament, Jesus is the mediator between God and mankind (1Ti 2:5, see note 4 at Ga 3:20).

GALATIANS 3:20

Now a mediator is not [a mediator] of one, but God is one.

Note 4 at Ga 3:20: Jesus is the New Testament mediator (see note 3 at Ga 3:19) between God and mankind (1Ti 2:5). There are some sharp contrasts between the mediation of Jesus in the N.T. and that of Moses in the Old Testament Law. First, Moses was only a man and was therefore limited in his ability to adequately represent God. However, Jesus was uniquely God and man (1Ti 3:16); therefore, He was a perfect mediator, knowing by experience both sides of the issue.

Second, Jesus did what Moses could not do. He went beyond mediation to actually become the sacrifice that would satisfy the justice of the one party (God) by bearing the sins of the other party (mankind). When Jesus rose from the dead, He (the mediator) also became the guarantor that His settlement would work. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

Note 5 at Ga 3:20: What did Paul mean here? A mediator mediates between two parties who are in conflict with each other. Therefore, by using the statement "a mediator is not a mediator of one," he was saying that mediators don't settle disputes among themselves--they are the go-between for two other parties.

However, the mediation of Jesus was very unique. Jesus was God and mankind at the same time. Therefore, He was reconciling Himself (His humanity and all His children by faith) to Himself (His divinity; i.e., His Father). This is what Paul referred to when he said, "But God is one."

GALATIANS 3:21

[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Note 6 at Ga 3:21: Because of all that had been said negatively concerning the Law, the question arose, "Is the Law against the promises of God?" Notice Paul's reply: "No! God forbid, may it never be" (paraphrase mine, see note 6 at Ro 3:4).

Paul completely supported the Law if it is used for its original function (see note 1 at Ga 3:19). The only conflict Paul had with the Law was when people taught that the function of the Law was to produce

justification through keeping its precepts. That was impossible and never the intent God had in giving the Law.

The function of the Law was to amplify the death that sin had already produced in our lives (Ro 6:23) so that we would not be deceived into thinking that we could be saved on our own merits. The Law wasn't given to produce life but death (2Co 3:7). If there could have been a law capable of giving life, then salvation would have come that way instead of through Jesus. The weakness of our flesh made us incapable of ever fulfilling any standard of the Law (Ro 8:3 and Heb 8:7-13). Our only hope of salvation is through faith in a Savior; i.e., Jesus.

GALATIANS 3:22

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Note 7 at Ga 3:22: The Old Testament scripture has "concluded all under sin" (Ro 3:9-20). The phrase "concluded all under sin" is a technical term used for prisoners being confined or imprisoned. Paul was speaking of all mankind being imprisoned and subject to sin and its bondage. This could be translated as "Everybody in the world is controlled by his strong desire to sin" (UBS Handbook, p. 79). The Law is what God used to make this strong desire come alive in man (see note 5 at Ro 7:11).

So, Paul was saying that God has condemned all mankind because of sin so that all the condemned may go free through faith in a savior. Because of sin, no one has an advantage over another in obtaining righteousness. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. Deliverance from sin and righteousness comes not by observance of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ (see Ro 7:24-25 and 11:32).

GALATIANS 3:23

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Note 8 at Ga 3:23: "But before faith came" is not referring to faith in

general, which Abraham exercised 430 years before the Law. This is the faith described in Ga 3:22--the "faith of Jesus Christ." People have always been saved by faith, but the content of their faith has varied. Ga 3:25 reveals that faith has come; i.e., the understanding of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Note 9 at Ga 3:23: "We were kept under the law, shut up" waiting for saving faith in Christ to be revealed. The word "kept" in the Greek carries the idea of the Law being a jailer who has imprisoned us under guilt and condemnation. We are always aware of the consciousness of sin and always looking inward at ourselves. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only key that unlocks the door to the Law's harsh imprisonment of guilt and condemnation (1Co 15:56-57).

The Law acted as a barrier that prevented us from ever obtaining salvation through our own efforts. The Law's standards were so high that we could never scale them. We were "shut up" so that the only way we could look was up to God for help.

GALATIANS 3:24

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Note 10 at Ga 3:24: Here, the Law was declared to be our "schoolmaster," bringing us to Christ so that we might be justified by faith in Him.

The Greek word for "schoolmaster" is "PAIDAGOGOS," and it describes a slave in either Greek or Roman households whose job was to conduct a young child to and from school (to the real teacher), as well as to supervise the life and morals of the child until he or she reached maturity. Although the PAIDAGOGOS may have instructed, their real job was to supervise by strict enforcement of rules and regulations. So, until Christ came, the Law was like someone trying to make us behave.

The Law drove us to holiness to show the futility of self-salvation. This prepared us for the message of Christ bringing salvation as a gift. Only those who have known the oppression of the Law fully appreciate the redemption provided by Jesus as a gift.

GALATIANS 3:25

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Note 11 at Ga 3:25: This is such a clear statement that it is amazing that so many people miss it. We are not under the Law anymore. The Law has served its function (see note 6 at Ga 3:21). We now relate to God on the basis of what Christ has done for us and our faith in Him (see note 17 at Ga 3:12).

GALATIANS 3:26

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Note 1 at Ga 3:26: Paul was continuing the comparison begun in the previous verses. In the same way that children grow out from under the authority and control of their "PAIDAGOGOS" ("schoolmaster" - see note 10 at Ga 3:24), so have we come out from under the authority and control of the Law. We now have liberty, privileges, and rights as full-grown children.

This does not mean that we are lawless any more than it means that children no longer do what is right once they are on their own. But it does mean we have the right to choose now without being motivated by fear of punishment prescribed by the Law. We should live righteously because it's the best way to live, not because we'll be punished if we don't.

Children are taught to look both ways before crossing the street for their own safety. But until the children are on their own, disobedience to that rule is dealt with by punishment. So, at a young age, children follow this rule, not to keep from getting hit by a car, but to keep from being punished. As adults, they should continue to walk by the same rule, but fear of punishment should not be a part of their reasoning.

Likewise, the Old Testament Law gave standards that were enforced by punishments. Many interpreted these punishments as God's hatred for sin instead of His love for His children. We all heard our parents say "This spanking is going to hurt me more than it hurts you"; the reason

the Lord gave the punishments of the O.T. Law was to turn us from self and sin for our own profit. Now that we are full-grown sons, He is not punishing us. We may punish ourselves through bearing the consequences of our sins, but our heavenly Father is not punishing us.

GALATIANS 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Note 2 at Ga 3:28: The distinctions created by religious law that separated Jew and Gentile, male and female, etc., no longer exist in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:13-16). Through union with Christ Jesus, we have all been made one. We are one new man, the body of Christ, joined together by faith in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:22-23).

GALATIANS 3:29

And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Note 3 at Ga 3:29: What a powerful statement! If we belong to Christ, which we do, then we are Abraham's seed (singular), which Ga 3:16 made very clear was Christ (see note 22 at Ga 3:16). Paul was saying that God treats us as He treats Jesus, because we have become partakers with Him through faith. 1Pe 4:1 tells us to arm ourselves with the same mind that Christ had. Php 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." One of the keys to victorious Christian living is seeing ourselves "in Christ" with all the rights and privileges that Christ has (Ro 6:4-11).

Note 4 at Ga 3:29: Going back to Ga 3:16, we discover that God's promises were made to Abraham and his seed, Christ. Christ was participating in the covenant agreement on our behalf. Jesus had no need to be justified through faith. Therefore, as our representative, the promise was made to Him, and since we are "in Him," we receive the benefits. We are also guaranteed that this covenant will not be voided by our performance, because the promise was made to Christ, not to us (see note 5 at Ga 3:20). We are beneficiaries of His goodness, not ours.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 4

GALATIANS 4:1

Now I say, [That] the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

Note 1 at Ga 4:1: Here, Paul gave a human illustration to show the state of spiritual immaturity that people experience by being under the Law. Paul stated that being under the Law is no better than being a slave, whereas faith in Christ brings people into a position of full-grown sons (Ga 3:26).

It is sad to say, but most Christians have never graduated into the sonship that Paul was describing here. They are still serving God with an Old-Testament-Law mentality; that is not pleasing to God (Heb 11:6) and is oppressive to them (see note 4 at Ro 3:19). The truth is that sonship is theirs. It's been provided for them freely through Christ, but it doesn't happen automatically. They have to renew their minds (see note 9 at Ro 12:2) to take advantage of this blessed relationship.

GALATIANS 4:2

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Note 2 at Ga 4:2: The illustration Paul was making is a continuation of his thoughts in Ga 3. In Ga 3:24-26, Paul likened the Law to being our schoolmaster, or "PAIDAGOGOS" (see note 10 at Ga 3:24). There, he was emphasizing the job of the Law (Ga 3:19 and 21).

Here, he was continuing that comparison but emphasizing the effect that relationship had on man. Under the Law, people were no better than slaves. They were constantly being told what to do and actually had no freedom to choose. Through Christ, people have been redeemed from the slave relationship to the Law and are now sons with all the rights, privileges, and freedoms that go with that.

GALATIANS 4:3

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Note 3 at Ga 4:3: By being under the Law and outside of Christ, we were the young "child" of Ga 4:1-2 without really having any spiritual rights. Paul stated that we "were in bondage under the elements of the world."

The Revised Standard Version translates this phrase as "we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe." If this translation is correct, then Paul was referring to the demonic spirits that brought bondage to our lives before we came to Christ. It all adds up to this: Being under the Law makes us slaves, and the Law does not have the power to free us from the flesh or the demonic realm. In fact, it gives place to the devil, because we are operating in our own strength. Faith in Christ gives us deliverance from both.

GALATIANS 4:4

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Note 4 at Ga 4:4: The New International Version translates this phrase as "when the time had fully come." The God's Word translation says, "But when the right time came." Each of these translations is emphasizing that Jesus was sent at a specific time. The entrance of Jesus into the physical realm was not a random thing occurring at a haphazard time.

The word "fulness" literally means the maximum or complete size, amount, or development. There were developments that had to take place before Christ could come to the earth and redeem man. The Father sent His Son to the earth at the earliest possible time. Any time prior to the time that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary would have been premature.

Note 5 at Ga 4:4: Notice that Paul was not saying that God created His Son when He appeared on earth. No, God the Son had existed as God

forever prior to that time (see note 3 at Joh 1:3). God the Father sent the already existent Son, Jesus, to the earth through the virgin birth.

Note 6 at Ga 4:4: The virgin birth of Christ was an essential part of the redemption process (see note 1 at Lu 1:27 and note 18 at 2Co 5:21).

Note 7 at Ga 4:4: Christ was born under the dispensation of the Old Testament Law. He is the only person who ever kept that Law flawlessly (Heb 4:15 and 1Pe 2:22). He already had righteousness as God before becoming man. Then He earned the righteousness that comes through the Law by being perfect. He bore our curse and punishment that we should have received for breaking the Law and thereby redeemed us out from under the Law (see note 19 at Ga 3:13). We now have received the perfect righteousness of Jesus by faith (see note 9 at Ro 8:4).

GALATIANS 4:5

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Note 8 at Ga 4:5: When the right time came (see note 4 at Ga 4:4), God sent forth His Son in His preexistent state from heaven into the world. He was born of a woman (virgin birth) and was made subject to the requirements of the Law (see note 7 at Ga 4:4).

His purpose in coming into the world was twofold. First, He came to "redeem them that were under the law." He did this by perfectly keeping the Law, fulfilling it, and paying its curse (Mt 5:17 and Ga 3:13). Thus Christ delivered us from the entire system of the Law. The Greek word for "redeem" used here is "EXAGORAZO," and according to Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, it means "to buy out of the slave market" (emphasis mine). Wuest goes on to say that "the word law is not preceded by the definite article, hence law in general is referred to here" (Volume 1, p. 115). This system of Law was then superseded by grace, with an emphasis on living by faith.

Second, Christ gave us the status of son-ship with all its privileges. In the Greek, the expression means adult-sons. Under grace, we are treated as adults, not babies.

Therefore, we were redeemed not only from the bondage of the Law but also unto son-ship. Many people stop short, only realizing what we were delivered from. Sure, we need to rejoice in that, but we also need to move on into realizing the full benefits of our inheritance (Ro 8:19, see note 10 at Ga 4:7).

GALATIANS 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Note 9 at Ga 4:6: One of the benefits of being God's son is receiving the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. This allows the believer to address God the Father in the same manner that Jesus did (Mr 14:35-36). The word "Abba" is an Aramaic word used by Jesus (Mr 14:36), and it carries the idea of God being our "daddy" (see note 29 at Mt 6:9). It is a term used for intimacy and affectionate fondness. It removes the idea of God as our strict Judge and carries the idea of Him being a loving Father who cares, understands, and is our best friend.

GALATIANS 4:7

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Note 10 at Ga 4:7: What would your reaction be if you were told you were an heir to the richest person in the world, or the most powerful or the most popular? Whatever that reaction would be, it would be positive. You would have hope, joy, peace, and many other reactions.

Being an heir of God is infinitely greater than being an heir to the greatest person alive today. If we aren't experiencing positive emotions in knowing we're heirs of God, it is because we aren't fully understanding or appreciating our inheritance, not because the inheritance is unworthy.

It would have been wonderful if God had just redeemed us from His

wrath so that we would not have to spend eternity in hell, but He did much, much more than that. He actually made us His sons and granted us an inheritance. That's supernatural! Only God could embrace a rebellious world and elevate them to son-ship (1Jo 3:1-2).

GALATIANS 4:8

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

Note 1 at Ga 4:8: Formerly, before the Galatian Christians came to know God through Christ, they were slaves to sin and in bondage to idols (1Co 12:2). These idols were gods in name only. They had no life and couldn't do anything good or bad (Ps 115:4-8, 135:15-18; Isa 44:9-20; and Jer 10:3-16). That's what Paul meant when he said, "Which by nature are no gods."

GALATIANS 4:9

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Note 2 at Ga 4:9: Paul was writing this letter to turn the Galatian Christians away from trusting in the Old Testament Law for justification (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Galatians). In this verse, when he referred to turning "to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage," he was referring to turning to the Law. In doing so, Paul was likening the Galatians' departure from the Gospel to them turning back to the idolatry they practiced before their salvation (Ga 4:8). Indeed, legalism is very similar to idolatry.

Just as with the worship of idols, legalism assumes God is a wrathful God who has to be appeased by our efforts. In contrast, Christianity presents a merciful God who has personally paid for our sins and offers us salvation as a gift. Idolatry has countless rituals, and so does a

legalistic interpretation of the O.T. Law. Legalism is bondage, just as all false religions are. The Law is "weak"--i.e., powerless to save--just as all idolatry is powerless. The same Greek word that was translated "weak" here was also translated "more feeble," "impotent," "sick," "weakness," and "without strength." The Law is "beggarly" in the sense that it is totally inadequate. This same Greek word was translated "poor" thirty times in the New Testament.

So, the Law in its proper place (see note 3 at Ro 3:19) and used for its proper purpose (see note 4 at Ro 3:19) is good (see note 14 at Ro 3:31). But any attempt to mix the Gospel (see note 5 at Ac 20:24) and Law together is bondage (see note 6 at Ga 1:6).

GALATIANS 4:10

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Note 3 at Ga 4:10: Paul was rebuking the Galatians for trying to incorporate observance of the Old Testament Law into the Gospel that he had brought to them (see note 8 at Ga 1:7). Here, he named some of the things they were proclaiming had to be done to receive right standing with God.

The observance of days refers to keeping the Sabbath (see note 1 at Joh 5:16). Observing months and times is a reference to the new moons (Nu 10:10, 1Ch 23:31, and Ps 81:3) and feasts (i.e., Passover, Firstfruits, etc.). Observing years refers to the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee of Le 25. Paul made it very clear that the keeping of these rituals is not necessary for salvation. Those who preach that it is are dangerously close to having their faith in Christ voided (Ga 2:21), as Paul described in the .

GALATIANS 4:11

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Note 4 at Ga 4:11: There is no doubt that Paul considered these Galatians to be born-again Christians. He was the one who founded the

churches of Galatia. He spoke to them as believers in this letter (Ga 1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; and 6:1). Yet, it is also clear that Paul was in doubt about the state of their salvation (Ga 3:4; this verse, 4:20; and 5:1-4). This reveals that salvation is not an irrevocable gift (see note 1 at Mt 12:31).

Paul went on to say in Ga 5:10 that he was confident the Galatians would stand firm in the Gospel. So, in the end, Paul believed they were still standing in faith that Christ was their Savior. However, his statement here reveals that they were dangerously close to rejecting their salvation (see my note at Heb 6:4). Salvation is secure for those who keep their faith in Christ, but as we can see through the opinions expressed by Paul here, it is possible to renounce faith in Christ. Legalism taken to the extreme can lead people to becoming reprobate (see note 6 at Ro 1:28).

GALATIANS 4:12

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I [am]; for I [am] as ye [are]: ye have not injured me at all.

Note 5 at Ga 4:12: Paul was pleading with the Galatians to join him in rejecting the Law as a means of being justified with God. Paul was a Jew by natural birth, but he had forsaken the Law as a means of being reconciled to God. Therefore, he was living like a Gentile (see note 45 at Mt 6:32) in that sense. He was saying, "Be like me (free from the Law), because that's the way you really are." The Galatians' tendencies toward legalism hadn't affected Paul. He was going to continue in grace.

GALATIANS 4:13

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

Note 6 at Ga 4:13: Some people have taken Paul's mention of an "infirmity of the flesh" here, and his reference in Ga 4:15 to the Galatians' willingness to pluck out their own eyes for him (see note 8 at Ga 4:15), as referring to the sickness that Paul called his "thorn in the flesh" in 2Co 12:7. However, as pointed out in note 14 at 2Co 12:7, Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was not sickness.

The assumption that this verse and Ga 4:15 refer to some rare Aramaic eye disease could only be made if someone is already disposed to believe that Paul had a chronic sickness. These passages certainly do not provide evidence for that conclusion on their own.

A much more obvious interpretation is that Paul was referring to some of the physical effects of a stoning he received while in Galatia. In Ac 14:19, Paul was stoned and left for dead (see note 3 at Ac 14:20). This happened in Lystra (Ac 14:8), one of the main cities of the region of Galatia (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Galatians, The Recipients of Paul's Epistle "Galatians"). Paul was either dead or so close to death that his persecutors thought he was dead. Certainly, he had cuts and bruises all over his body as he preached to the very people to whom he was writing this letter. It would not be unthinkable that he had received injuries to his eyes, which he was referring to here. He did say that this infirmity was "at the first," implying that this was not a permanent, chronic problem but a temporary thing that had healed. In Ga 4:15, Paul may have been using a figure of speech just to emphasize that these Galatians were willing to do anything for him at one time (see note 8 at Ga 4:15).

Paul was referring to injuries he had sustained from the stoning to make the point that in the beginning, the Galatians hadn't despised him but had received him as they would an angel of God. Why had they changed? Paul hadn't changed. The Gospel hadn't changed. It was the Galatians who were inconsistent. He was putting them in remembrance of their original reception of him to rekindle their love for him and to cause them to submit themselves once again to the Gospel that he preached.

GALATIANS 4:15

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if [it had been] possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Note 7 at Ga 4:15: The Greek word that was translated "blessedness" is "MAKARISMOS." This word comes from the word "MAKARIZO," and MAKARIZO was translated as "count...happy" in Jas 5:11. Legalism causes people to lose their joy. This is what happened to the Galatians. The New International Version translates this phrase as "What

happened to all your joy?" Paul was saying, "Where is the joy you used to have through our relationship? At one time, you would have done anything for me, even given me your own eyes if it were necessary. But now you've drawn back. It is you that have changed, not me."

Note 8 at Ga 4:15: As explained in note 6 at Ga 4:13, the infirmity Paul was speaking of was not a chronic problem but a temporary problem that was probably associated with him being stoned and left for dead. Likewise, any reference to his eyes in this verse would be related to the physical problems he suffered from that stoning.

However, it is possible that Paul did not literally mean by these statements that there was something wrong with his eyes. Just as today when someone says, "I'd give my right arm for them," that doesn't necessarily mean there is anything wrong with the other person's right arm. This is just a way of expressing a commitment to another person, even to the point of sacrificing a valuable part of his or her own body for the loved one's benefit. Likewise, Paul may have just been saying that these Galatians were at one time willing to do anything for him--what had changed?

GALATIANS 4:16

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Note 9 at Ga 4:16: Here, Paul was saying, "Does telling you the truth offend you and make me your enemy?" The truth isn't always welcome, but it truly is love to tell others the truth regardless of whether they welcome it or not (Le 19:17).

If a bridge had washed out on a dark, rainy night, would it be love to flag down other drivers and stop them from driving to their deaths? Sure, it would. At first, though, some of those drivers might not welcome your attempts to stop them. They might think you were trying to harm or rob them. But if you truly loved others more than yourself, you would stop them regardless of what they thought.

Likewise, those who don't know the Lord may misinterpret our attempts to share the Gospel with them, but if we truly love others more than ourselves, we will persist despite their objections.

GALATIANS 4:17

They zealously affect you, [but] not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

Note 10 at Ga 4:17: The New International Version translates this verse as "Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you (from us), so that you may be zealous for them." This seems to accurately represent what the King James English is trying to convey.

Paul had addressed the false teachers' gospel, and here, he was addressing their motives. He was stating that they were zealous but not in a good way or for a good purpose. Their intention was to alienate the Galatians from the true Gospel and from those who taught it, so that instead of the Galatians going to Christ, they would go to them (the Judaizers).

GALATIANS 4:18

But [it is] good to be zealously affected always in [a] good [thing], and not only when I am present with you.

Note 11 at Ga 4:18: Once again (see note 10 at Ga 4:17), the New International Version translates this Old English into modern English very well: "It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you." The Simple English Bible says, "It is good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is always good. This is true whether I am with you or not."

GALATIANS 4:19

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

Note 12 at Ga 4:19: Through prayer, Paul had interceded for these Galatians when he first brought the Gospel to them. Here, he was in doubt of their relationship to Christ, since they were moving back toward trusting in the Law. Therefore, he was praying for them again as he did in the beginning.

This does not mean that the Galatians had lost their salvation and that Paul was praying for them to be born again, again. That can't happen (see note 5 at Ac 5:5). He was simply stating that he wanted to see the Galatians turn back to Christ and develop and grow in Him again.

GALATIANS 4:20

I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Note 13 at Ga 4:20: Paul did not regret the things that he had said to the Galatians; rather, he regretted the tone in which he had to say them. If he had been present with them, he could have approached them in a gentler way and possibly explained himself more completely. Paul longed to be with them so that he could answer the questions he had about them.

The phrase "I stand in doubt of you" means "to be at a loss, to be disturbed" (UBS Handbook, p. 107), or to feel helplessness about the situation. Paul was like a parent feeling very concerned about his children going astray (see note 8 at 2Co 12:14).

GALATIANS 4:21

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

Note 1 at Ga 4:21: Those who advocate obtaining righteousness by keeping the Law don't know what they are saying (1Ti 1:7). You can't

just keep part of the Law. You have to keep every precept of the Law perfectly or else you've broken the whole thing (see note 15 at Ga 3:10). Paul here used the Old Testament scriptures that the legalistic Jews had perverted to prove the Gospel he had preached.

GALATIANS 4:22

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

Note 2 at Ga 4:22: Paul's statement, "it is written," refers to a summary of Ge 16-17 and 21. This is the story of Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Ishmael was born of a slave woman, while Isaac's mother, Sarah, was a free woman.

Note 3 at Ga 4:22: Paul used an allegory (Ga 4:24), a type of interpretation common among the rabbis. An allegory interprets scriptural events or persons as foreshadowing a deeper spiritual truth. In this passage, two women represent two covenants, and the two children represent a work of the flesh and a work of the Spirit.

The two women are Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Hagar, an Egyptian slave who was Sarah's handmaiden (Ge 16:1). Sarah was barren, so she suggested that Abraham have a sexual relationship with Hagar; Sarah would then raise the child as her own (Ge 16:2). This was a common practice of their day.

Abraham did as Sarah wished, and Hagar had a child named Ishmael (Ge 16:4 and 11). However, God made it clear that this was not the child He had promised to Abraham through whom He would fulfill His promise (Ge 17:20-21). So, approximately fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael (see note 2 at Ro 4:10), Abraham and Sarah had a child supernaturally, who was named Isaac (Ge 21:1-3).

Ishmael, the son of Hagar, persecuted Isaac, the son of Sarah, to the degree that Sarah begged Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away (Ge 21:9-10). Abraham did not want to do this, but God spoke to him and told him to do as Sarah had said (Ge 21:11-12).

Here, Paul interpreted the significance of these actions. Ishmael was a product of self-effort, just as any trust in the Law for the purpose of

justification would be. In contrast, Isaac was supernatural. Both Abraham and Sarah were well beyond the age of having children, so Isaac was a miracle. Likewise, salvation by grace is a miracle, not self-effort.

In the same way that Hagar and her son, who was a product of the flesh, were cast out, so those who seek to be justified by the Law are rejected by God. But those who believe the Gospel and receive salvation as a gift are like Isaac, who came supernaturally through the promise of God.

Thus, Paul showed that the truths of the Gospel were present in the Old Testament Law (see note 3 at Ro 1:2), but the legalistic Jews had been blinded to these simple truths. They had misinterpreted the purpose of the O.T. Law (see note 4 at Ro 3:19) and were therefore wrongly teaching that conformity to the Law was necessary for salvation. Peter spoke of people who were willfully ignorant of the truth (2Pe 3:5). Paul said in Ga 3:1 that legalism is crazy (see note 1 at Ga 3:1).

GALATIANS 4:23

But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman [was] by promise.

Note 4 at Ga 4:23: Abraham's son, born of his slave-wife, was conceived and born according to the natural process. Abraham's son, born through Sarah, was a work of God's Spirit, conceived when Abraham and Sarah were incapable of having children. Isaac was a result of God's "promise" given to Abraham (Ge 15).

GALATIANS 4:25

For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Note 5 at Ga 4:25: Hagar represents Mount Sinai (where Moses received the Law) and the city of Jerusalem in Paul's time, which was enslaved to Rome as well as to the Law. Hagar's children being slaves

corresponds to the Jews' bondage of being under the Law, or as the Living Bible states, "The center of that system of trying to please God by trying to obey the Commandments."

GALATIANS 4:26

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Note 6 at Ga 4:26: The earthly city of Jerusalem was corrupt. Its inhabitants rejected Jesus by crucifying Him, and as a whole, they had also rejected the Gospel. But the heavenly city of God (of which the earthly Jerusalem was supposed to be symbolic) was pure and free. Those who receive salvation by faith in what Christ did for them, instead of what they do for Him through the Law, are all citizens of this heavenly Jerusalem.

GALATIANS 4:27

For it is written, Rejoice, [thou] barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

Note 7 at Ga 4:27: This verse is a quotation of Isa 54:1 from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The "barren" in this verse refers to Sarah. She was told of the Lord to break forth into singing and rejoicing before she became pregnant. The barren Sarah rejoiced at the promise of God through faith (Heb 11:11), and through the promised seed (i.e., Christ [Ga 3:16]), she had infinitely more children than her slave Hagar (all believers are Abraham's seed - see note 3 at Ga 3:29).

GALATIANS 4:28

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Note 8 at Ga 4:28: Just as Isaac was conceived supernaturally, so the

Galatians became God's children not through their own efforts but through a supernatural work of God (see note 3 at Ga 4:22).

GALATIANS 4:29

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him [that was born] after the Spirit, even so [it is] now.

Note 9 at Ga 4:29: In the same way that Ishmael persecuted Isaac, the child of promise (Ge 21:9), so it is now. Those who rely on the flesh (the Law) persecute those born of the Spirit (those who have been saved by grace).

There have always been and will always be only two kinds of religion: those of faith (grace) and those of works (Law). Those of Law will always continue to persecute those of grace (consider Cain and Abel, Ge 4:3-8).

GALATIANS 4:30

Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Note 10 at Ga 4:30: Here, Paul was taking the Galatians back to the Scriptures. He was speaking from Ge 21:9-14. The point was that just as Hagar and Ishmael would not have any part in the inheritance of Isaac, so those of the covenant of Law with its legalism will not inherit the promise of justification that comes by faith.

GALATIANS 4:31

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Note 11 at Ga 4:31: Paul was saying that we do not obtain right standing with God through the Law ("the bondwoman" - Hagar), but through faith ("the freewoman" - Sarah).

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 5

GALATIANS 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Note 1 at Ga 5:1: "Stand fast" is an expression of the Greek word "STEKO." STEKO means "to stand firm...persevere...to hold one's ground" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Just as countries must persevere to maintain freedom and protection of their rights, so also must we stand fast in protecting our spiritual freedom.

Paul's admonition to "stand fast" also reveals that our freedom in Christ doesn't function automatically. We have a part to play. Our adversary, the devil, is always seeking whom he may devour (1Pe 5:8). Legalism is one of his greatest weapons, and we must resist every attempt he makes to draw us back into self-effort (1Pe 5:9).

Note 2 at Ga 5:1: When you see the word "therefore," you need to stop and think what that word is there for. The word links what Paul was saying here with what he said in the previous verses.

Paul had just compared being under the Law to being a descendant of the slave woman, Hagar, and therefore not an heir of the promises of God (see note 3 at Ga 4:22). Therefore, since none of us want to be cast out from the inheritance of God, we need to steadfastly defend our liberty that we have received through faith in Christ.

Note 3 at Ga 5:1: The word "liberty" means "1.a. The condition of being free from restriction or control. b. The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself in a manner of one's own choosing. c. The condition of being physically and legally free from confinement, servitude, or forced labor" (American Heritage Dictionary). The liberty that Paul was speaking of is specifically the freedom from the oppression of the Old Testament Law (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

Of course, Paul was not out of control. He was controlled by his love for the Lord instead of his fear of punishment for breaking the O.T. Law. Paul made it clear in Ga 5:13-15 that this liberty is not freedom to

sin but freedom from sin. If we use our freedom in Christ to indulge our sinful passions, we will pay a price (see note 5 at Ga 5:15).

Note 4 at Ga 5:1: The word "entangled" in Greek carries the idea of being "ensnared or held in a net" (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament). The bondage that had ensnared the Galatians was the Law's demands in which they were trying to find God's favor or acceptance through performance.

God paid the ultimate price for our liberty. Freedom from self-justification through the Law was purchased by Christ upon the cross. We must never let anything or anyone bring us back into bondage again.

Note 5 at Ga 5:1: The context makes it very clear that this "yoke of bondage" that Paul was speaking of is the Old Testament Law. This is a strong statement and leaves no doubt that the Law was not for the purpose of liberty but bondage (see note 4 at Ro 3:19 and note 5 at Ro 7:11).

Contrast the Law's "yoke of bondage" with what Christ said in Mt 11:29-30: "Take my yoke upon you...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (see note 2 at Mt 11:29).

GALATIANS 5:2

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Note 6 at Ga 5:2: Paul was circumcised himself (Php 3:5), so what was he saying? Paul was referring to trusting in some external action to produce justification with God instead of just faith in Christ. The false teachers in Galatia had taught that circumcision (see note 2 at Ac 15:1) and the keeping of the Old Testament Law were necessary for salvation.

It doesn't matter if it is circumcision, water baptism, holiness, or any other religious act; trust in anything except Christ voids the saving effects of Christ in our lives (see note 16 at Ga 2:21).

A simple way to detect what our faith is in is to imagine ourselves standing before God, giving a reason that we should be allowed into

heaven. If we pointed out our church attendance, giving receipts, acts of holiness, or anything else, then that is what our faith is in. Those of us who would do that are no different than Muslims or Buddhists. We would be trusting in our own efforts to produce salvation.

The proper response would be to say, "The only thing that makes me worthy to enter heaven is what Jesus did for me. My total faith and trust is in Jesus." It's not Jesus plus anything (see note 2 at Ro 11:6). Faith alone saves (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

Note 7 at Ga 5:2: The phrase "Christ shall profit you nothing" is another way of saying that if people turn to self-effort for salvation, then they cannot benefit in any way from what Christ has done for them. The only way to appropriate what Jesus did for man is by faith.

It is possible to put total faith in Jesus concerning our eternal salvation and yet turn back to the deception that God will only bless us in this life proportionally to our performance. That is not true and will keep us from experiencing the abundant life Jesus purchased for us (Joh 10:10).

GALATIANS 5:3

For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Note 8 at Ga 5:3: This passage is saying the same thing as Jas 2:10. Those who commit to obeying any part of the Law for justification obligate themselves to keeping all of the Law (see note 15 at Ga 3:10).

GALATIANS 5:4

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Note 9 at Ga 5:4: The New American Standard Version states, "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (emphasis mine). We all know how serious it is to have a body part severed, such as an arm or a foot. How much more dangerous it is to be "severed from Christ." This takes place when

anyone turns from grace to the Law for salvation.

Note 10 at Ga 5:4: The expression "you are fallen from grace" "should be understood not in the sense that grace has been taken away from them, but in the sense that they have turned their backs on it. One may also say 'you have put yourself in a place where God cannot be good to you, or show you His goodness'" (UBS Handbook, p. 122). "Fallen from grace" is not speaking about the Armenian doctrine of losing salvation by one's sins; rather, it is speaking of turning from the method of salvation (grace) to seeking salvation by another way.

GALATIANS 5:5

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Note 11 at Ga 5:5: All of us who are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) are already righteous in our new, born-again spirits (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17 and note 3 at Mt 26:41). However, we are not only spirits; we also have souls and bodies that are longing to be changed (see note 11 at Ro 8:23).

So, there is still a hope (i.e., future) to our righteousness. Paul was speaking of the hope that will be realized when we receive glorified bodies and new souls that know all things even as we are known (1Co 13:12).

The point that Paul was making is that we are persevering in our Christian life by faith, not by works. The Galatians had changed from faith to works, and Paul was in doubt of whether they would see the completion of their salvation (Ga 4:20).

GALATIANS 5:6

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Note 12 at Ga 5:6: We might add that no other work of righteousness avails anything either, as far as being justified in the sight of God goes.

The truth that Paul was presenting was not about circumcision. Circumcision is no longer an issue. Paul so conclusively disproved that circumcision was essential for salvation that nobody argues that point today. However, the same legalistic thinking that Paul countered in these verses lives on today in the doctrine of water baptism (see note 9 at Mr 16:16), church membership, and other acts of holiness that some preach are necessary for salvation.

Paul was simply using circumcision as an example of an act of holiness that the people of his day maintained was necessary for salvation. His point was that faith alone in the love of God, as expressed through Jesus, is the only thing that God demands for justification. To substitute some other act in the place of circumcision, and then proceed as the Galatians had done, is to miss the whole message that Paul was presenting.

Note 13 at Ga 5:6: Paul was saying that faith alone in what Jesus has already done is the only thing that can procure salvation for us. It is true that saving faith is never alone (see note 55 at Mt 7:21) and can be distinguished from all imitations through examining the actions it produces. The actions of faith (see note 4 at Ro 9:32), however, are not the cause but rather the effect. Faith in God's grace is all that's needed (Eph 2:8).

Note 14 at Ga 5:6: There are two ways of looking at the phrase "faith which worketh by love." One way is to say that true, saving faith always expresses itself through love. That is certainly true. A God-kind of faith will always have actions that conform to the commands of God's Word. This is the way the New International Version translated this verse: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."

It is also accurate to say that love produces faith or is what makes faith work. We naturally trust those who we know love us. A revelation of God's unconditional love for us will make faith naturally abound in us. Anyone who is struggling with faith has a deficiency in understanding how much God loves them.

GALATIANS 5:7

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Note 15 at Ga 5:7: Paul related the Christian experience to a race (1Co 9:24-25). The Galatians had begun the race well, and then suddenly the Judaizers gained their attention and caused them to be hindered. We cannot finish the race by legalism and self-effort. Faith is the only thing that will enable them to cross the finish line (2Ti 4:7).

GALATIANS 5:8

This persuasion [cometh] not of him that calleth you.

Note 16 at Ga 5:8: Paul was simply saying, "It certainly wasn't God who stopped you from obeying the truth."

GALATIANS 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Note 17 at Ga 5:9: Paul used leaven (yeast) twice in his New Testament writings (1Co 5:6 and this verse). Leaven symbolizes evil or sin in Scripture (see note 1 at Mt 13:33). Even the smallest influence of a false gospel will eventually corrupt all, causing the whole system of grace to fall.

GALATIANS 5:10

I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

Note 18 at Ga 5:10: Paul had expressed doubt in this very letter about whether or not these Galatians would return to faith (Ga 4:20). Here, he was saying he was confident that they would come back to faith alone as the way they related to the Lord.

Note 19 at Ga 5:10: Paul preached grace, yet he pronounced judgment on those who had troubled the Galatians with legalistic heresies. The only people Jesus ever openly rebuked were the legalistic Jews who totally rejected grace (see note 1 at Mt 23:1). This fits well with James' statement in Jas 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy." The worst sin of all is self-righteousness. God is long-suffering to all manner of sin, but those who maintain their own holiness as sufficient fall under the judgment of God (see note 4 at Joh 3:36).

Paul may not have been wishing this judgment to come on these legalistic Jews; he might simply have been stating the inevitable conclusion of their actions. It is true that those who proclaim that God is a harsh, judgmental God, giving us only what we deserve, get what they preach. Paul knew this firsthand. At one time, he had been more legalistic than any of the Jews he was rebuking (see note 20 at Ga 5:11).

GALATIANS 5:11

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Note 20 at Ga 5:11: Paul's use of the word "yet" is in reference to the fact that at one time, Paul himself proclaimed the same legalistic doctrines as these Judaizers (see note 2 at Ga 1:1) whom he was rebuking (see note 1 at Ac 9:1). When Paul preached performance as the basis of relationship with God, he was the one doing the persecution (Ac 7:58-8:4). When he converted and embraced grace, Paul became the persecuted (Ac 9:23-25). It's always this way. Those who preach what we must do persecute those who preach what Jesus

has already done for us.

Note 21 at Ga 5:11: The thing that makes true Christianity offensive is the message that people can't save themselves. This is taken as an insult to those who are pleased with their own holiness. They can't put faith in Jesus alone--that would take away from what they have accomplished, and they would lose their advantage over those who are less holy.

The message of the cross is that Jesus paid it all because we couldn't pay anything at all. Our holiness could not atone for even the smallest of our sins (Isa 64:6). We needed a savior other than ourselves. Therefore those who are pleased with themselves are not pleased with the message of the cross. All persecution is rooted in self-love (see note 2 at Ac 4:17).

GALATIANS 5:12

I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Note 22 at Ga 5:12: There is quite a bit of debate among scholars as to what Paul meant here. The Phillips New Testament states, "I wish those who are so eager to cut your bodies would cut themselves off from you altogether!" Other scholars believe that Paul was referring to the act of castration. They think Paul was saying, "I would that those who want you circumcised were castrated themselves."

Regardless of which of these meanings is correct, it is clear that Paul was wishing that the Judaizers were removed from the Galatians so that they would no longer be a problem to them.

GALATIANS 5:13

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only [use] not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Note 1 at Ga 5:13: Christian liberty is not freedom to sin but freedom from sin. Paul's defense of grace is not a promotion of sin. On the contrary, he was admonishing us believers to live godly lives. However,

the motivation behind our actions has to change. Instead of living holy to be accepted by God, we now live holy because we have been accepted by God, and it's our nature to do so. Also, as explained in note 5 at Ga 5:15, if we don't walk in love with others, we will be devoured by the strife we sow.

Note 2 at Ga 5:13: Paul had been promoting freedom from the laws and regulations of the Old Testament Law. This freedom is possible because our born-again spirits are changed (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17). In our spirits, we are righteous and truly holy (Eph 4:24), and the Lord relates to us according to who we are in our spirits (Joh 4:24).

However, we aren't only spirit. In this verse, Paul recognized that there is still a part of us that is susceptible to sin; i.e., the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18). Paul went on to explain in this chapter (Ga 5:16-17) that we can't walk in the Spirit and in the flesh at the same time. It's one or the other, not both simultaneously. Therefore, if we want to enjoy the liberty that is in our spirits, we must deny the flesh.

Note 3 at Ga 5:13: How do you deny the flesh as Paul had just instructed (see note 2 at this verse)? Paul gave the answer here. The way to deny the flesh is to serve others through God's kind of love. Love is unselfish and therefore diametrically opposed to the selfish flesh. Serving others with God's love will always negate the power of the flesh.

GALATIANS 5:14

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, [even] in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Note 4 at Ga 5:14: It is true that the Old Testament Law had many commands and prohibitions. Most people--in both Paul's day and ours--have not looked beyond the outward rules to see its true purpose. The true focus of the Law was not actually our individual actions. The target was our old selfish, sinful nature. The Law struck at the core of our problem--our sinful selves. By dealing with our actions, the Law was revealing the sinfulness and complete helplessness of our nature. The Law was powerless to change us or enable us to overcome sin. It only pointed out sin and thereby actually strengthened sin's grip on our lives (see note 26 at 1Co 15:56).

Love, on the other hand, does what the Law could not do. God's kind of love is selfless—the opposite of the selfish, sinful nature. Walking in love will deny the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) and, as a result, will naturally fulfill all the holy commands of the Law. If we love others more than ourselves, we will never steal from them. We will never murder or hurt those we love. We will never commit sexual sins if we truly love our mates. All sin is selfish. Therefore, love is the antidote for all sin.

GALATIANS 5:15

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Note 5 at Ga 5:15: Every time anyone advocates Christian liberty, the critics always bring up the same question: "Why then live holy? If God accepts us by grace, then what motivation is there to have godly actions?" Paul addressed this very issue in much detail in Ro 6 (see note 1 at Ro 6:1, note 2 at Ro 6:2, note 7 at Ro 6:15, and note 8 at Ro 6:16).

Here, once again, Paul was giving reasons for living a holy life. Even though we do not have to fear God's wrath or rejection, if we walk in strife with others, we will reap the negative results that those actions produce. In other words, there are still consequences to our actions outside of God's direct punishment. Mankind and the devil will make us pay dearly for ungodliness (see note 8 at Ro 6:16).

So, the liberty that Paul was promoting is freedom from the guilt and condemnation of sin, not freedom to sin. Those who choose to use this liberty in Christ to indulge their flesh will suffer for it. However, it's not God punishing them; it's simply those people reaping what they have sown (Lu 6:38 and Ga 6:7).

GALATIANS 5:16

[This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Note 6 at Ga 5:16: How do we walk in the Spirit? The Greek word "PERIPATEO," translated "walk" here, means "to tread all around, i.e. walk at large...figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow" (Strong's Concordance) (see note 10 at Ro 8:4). The figurative meaning is what Paul was referring to here. He was speaking of living by, conducting our actions according to, and following the leading of the Holy Spirit (see note 12 at Ga 5:18).

The way we do this is through living by, conducting our actions according to, and following the leading of the Word of God as quickened to us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God agree perfectly because the Holy Spirit is the one who inspired the written Word of God (2Pe 1:21).

The Spirit is truth (1Jo 5:6), and God's Word is truth (Joh 17:17). The Word of God is spirit and life (Joh 6:63). Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one (1Jo 5:7), and Jesus was the Word of God made flesh (Joh 1:1-3 and 14).

When people walk according to the spirit of God's Word (see note 5 at Mr 2:27), they are walking in the Spirit. Those who walk contrary to God's Word are not in the Spirit.

Walking in the true revelation knowledge (see note 9 at Joh 6:45 and note 1 at Lu 2:26) of God's Word, as quickened to us by the Holy Spirit, is the way we walk in the Spirit. When we do that, we reap the benefits promised in this verse (see note 7 at this verse).

Note 7 at Ga 5:16: The deliverance from sin and its influence does not come from ourselves. This can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit (see note 1 at Ro 8:1). When we let the Holy Spirit control us, He breaks the power of the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18). One of the true differences between Christianity and other religions is that God provides us with His power through the Holy Spirit to enable us to perform His will. Other religions preach that God will accept us in proportion to how we overcome sin. What a difference!

Note 8 at Ga 5:16: It is important to notice what this verse does not say. Denying the flesh will not produce walking in the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit will produce denying of the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18). This

is a subtle difference to some, but the difference is truly profound.

As a whole, false religions teach that as we overcome our flesh, there is a noticeable increase in the presence and power of God in our lives. That was what the Pharisees of Jesus' day and the legalistic Jews of Paul's day taught. Just the opposite is true. As we experience more of the presence and power of the Spirit of God, the influence of the flesh is diminished. Victory must come in this order. We don't get the Spirit as a result of overcoming the flesh; having the Spirit results in overcoming the flesh.

It's similar to how a dark room is filled with light. The darkness isn't shoveled out and then light comes. No! The light is simply turned on and darkness flees. Much of religion preaches to us to stop sinning (get rid of the darkness) and then the Holy Spirit will come and empower us (the light will come). That's not the way it works. We can no more get rid of the power of the flesh on our own than we can get rid of the power of darkness without light. We have to receive the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives by grace, and then that union with the Holy Spirit breaks the power of the flesh.

The key to breaking the dominion of the flesh is to appropriate the power of the Spirit through faith while the flesh is still giving us problems. Those of us who are waiting on the Spirit to come after we have subdued the flesh will be waiting as long as the one who is trying to get rid of all the darkness so the light can come.

GALATIANS 5:17

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Note 9 at Ga 5:17: The word "lust" is used today primarily in a very negative way to describe unlawful sexual desires. However, the word literally means "an overwhelming desire or craving" (American Heritage Dictionary). The New International Version translated this thought as "desires what is contrary to." Notice that in this verse, Paul said that the Spirit also lusts against the flesh. We know that is not speaking of some unlawful sexual desire. It is just expressing that the flesh constantly desires things contrary to what the Spirit of God

desires and vice versa. They are opposed to each other in their basic nature and desires. Serving one will keep us from serving the other.

Note 10 at Ga 5:17: The flesh and the Spirit have opposite desires manifesting opposite results (Ga 5:19-23). Because of this, if we indulge one, the other will automatically be hindered. We cannot serve both (Mt 6:24). Most Christians take the negative approach of denying the flesh in order to manifest the power of the Spirit (see note 8 at Ga 5:16). The more positive way is to seek to walk in the Spirit (see note 6 at Ga 5:16), and the flesh will be denied through neglect.

Note 11 at Ga 5:17: A parallel passage to this would be Ro 7:19, where Paul stated, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do." Paul's answer for deliverance is not in self-effort; rather, it is in total dependence upon the Spirit of God to break the bonds of sins by dependence upon Him (see note 1 at Ro 7:15, note 2 at Ro 7:17, note 3 at Ro 7:18, note 4 at Ro 7:21, note 5 at Ro 7:23, notes 1-2 at Ro 7:24, and notes 3-4 at Ro 7:25). We cannot free ourselves. Ro 8:7 says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Our only hope is the power that the Holy Spirit brings to our lives.

GALATIANS 5:18

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Note 12 at Ga 5:18: In Ga 5:16, the subject was walking in the Spirit (see note 6 at Ga 5:16). Here, Paul was speaking of being led by the Spirit. He used these terms interchangeably, thereby giving us the further insight that being led by the Spirit is walking in the Spirit.

Note 13 at Ga 5:18: The Galatians were still trying to live the Christian life, but they were going about it by self-effort, self-dependence, and the principle of the Law. The Spirit and the Law are contrasted and shown to be opposed to one another. The Spirit's ability to deliver from sin is quite different from the Law's ability of self-effort. This verse is saying that we do not have to keep the requirements of the Law to earn God's approval.

GALATIANS 5:19

**Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these];
Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,**

Note 14 at Ga 5:19: Paul is now giving a clearly defined standard to show whether a person is being led by the Holy Spirit or the flesh. If a person is walking after the flesh, he will manifest the works of the flesh to some degree.

Paul categorizes these actions in four areas: (1) Sensual results - fornication or prostitution; uncleanness, meaning moral impurity (including homosexuality - see note 3 at Ro 1:26, note 4 at Ro 1:27, and note 3 at 1Co 6:9) and lasciviousness (promiscuity such as premarital or extramarital sexual relationships, and things of that nature). (2) False worship - idolatry and sorcery or witchcraft. (3) Personal and social relations - hatred (personal animosities), variance (strife, rivalry, and discord), emulations (jealousies of an unnatural kind), wrath, strife (factions and division within the body), seditions (divisions among individuals and between married couples), heresies, and envyings. These are personal and social results of walking in the flesh. (4) Intemperance - drunkenness, and revelings or orgies.

GALATIANS 5:21

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Note 15 at Ga 5:21: Having listed all these "works of the flesh" (Ga 5:19), Paul pointed out that people who practice these things will not enter the kingdom of God. These are characteristics of unsaved people. However, Christians can commit these acts also. Does this mean that any Christian who is guilty of something listed here has lost his or her salvation? Definitely not!

The phrase "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" may be rendered as "'will not enjoy having God rule over them' or 'will never have the joy of God ruling them'" (UBS Handbook, p. 139). It may also be that "Paul is dealing with that which is habitual practice as over against that which a believer simply falls into on an occasional basis" (Manuscript #126, p. 27, by Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum). Compare this verse with

note 6 at 1Co 6:11.

GALATIANS 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Note 16 at Ga 5:22: Notice that the word "fruit" is singular, yet there are nine things listed in Ga 5:22-23. The Spirit produces all nine of these things simultaneously and constantly. All together, they are the fruit (singular) of the Spirit.

In the same way that light comes with all the different colors in the light spectrum, so the fruit of the Spirit is all these different things. Yet, for the purpose of understanding, we can separate this fruit into these nine separate elements just as the colors of light can be separated by a prism.

Note 17 at Ga 5:22: Jesus spoke of bearing fruit in Joh 15 and declared that "without me ye can do nothing" (Joh 15:5). The "fruit" spoken of in these verses is not produced by the believer but by the Holy Spirit, as believers live in union with Him.

The Today's English Version states, "But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control" (emphasis mine). Our part is to yield and trust; God's part is to produce the fruit.

Note 18 at Ga 5:22: This fruit is the product of the Holy Spirit, not our efforts (see note 16 at this verse). However, since "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1Co 6:17), then this fruit of the Spirit is also what our born-again spirits produce. Our spirits always have these attributes regardless of what we feel in our emotions.

Failure to understand this has caused many of us to think we would be hypocrites to express joy when truly we are depressed. However, it's only our soulish part that gets depressed. Our spirits are always bearing the fruit of "love, joy, peace," etc. If we seek to walk in the Spirit (see note 6 at Ga 5:16), it is actually hypocritical to let our soulish emotions dominate our spiritual emotions. The truth is, our spirits are never depressed, just our souls (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17). We who understand this have the choice of letting our souls depress us or

letting the Holy Spirit, through our born-again spirits, release the joy and peace spoken of here.

This same principle applies to every different characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit listed here.

Note 19 at Ga 5:22: Notice that faith is a fruit of the Spirit. As explained in notes 16 and 18 at this verse, this fruit is constantly being produced. It doesn't come and go, as most of us think it does. Our use of faith is spasmodic. Our perception of whether or not we have faith may fluctuate, but the truth is this fruit of faith is constantly in our spirits. We just have to draw it out, not go get it (see note 3 at Lu 17:5).

GALATIANS 5:23

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Note 20 at Ga 5:23: The phrase "against such there is no law" is another way of saying "'The law was never meant for people who demonstrate these qualities' or 'there are no laws which speak against people who live in this way'" (UBS Handbook, p. 141).

GALATIANS 5:24

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Note 21 at Ga 5:24: "Have crucified the flesh" is in the aorist tense, suggesting an action that took place in the past. This does not refer to self-crucifixion or self-mortification, but rather to Christians identifying with Christ's death. A parallel passage may be found in Ro 6:6 and 11, which state, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin...Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (see note 6 at Ro 6:4 and note 7 at Ro 6:6).

Victory over the flesh with its passions and lusts has already been provided for us by Christ through His death. We simply have to

appropriate this truth by faith instead of self-effort.

GALATIANS 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Note 22 at Ga 5:25: This is similar to Paul's terminology in Ro 8 (see note 20 at Ro 8:9). All born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) Christians are living by the Spirit of God, but that doesn't mean they are walking after (or in) the Spirit. Living in the Spirit is referring to a reality that automatically accompanies the new birth. Walking in the Spirit (see note 6 at Ga 5:16) is referring to the way believers should conduct themselves after salvation. The first is a fixed position. The second is conditional, depending on how they renew their minds and yield to the Holy Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:26

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Note 23 at Ga 5:26: Paul may have been negatively expressing the danger of failing to walk in the Spirit (see note 6 at Ga 5:16). What he characterized is the manifestation of the flesh (see note 14 at Ga 5:19). "Vain glory" is speaking of the pride that comes from a person trusting in self-effort. "Provoking one another" would be to trouble or irritate one another. "Envyng one another" has the idea of being jealous of one another.

GALATIANS

CHAPTER 6

GALATIANS 6:1

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Note 1 at Ga 6:1: The word "overtaken" carries the idea of something that comes upon a person by surprise. The word "fault" comes from the Greek word "PARAPTOMA," and PARAPTOMA means "a side-slip (lapse or deviation), i.e. (unintentional) error or (wilful) transgression" (Strong's Concordance). Therefore, Paul was giving these instructions about how to help someone who is sincere but in error.

Note 2 at Ga 6:1: The spiritual ones, whom Paul instructed to restore those who are overtaken in a fault, are those who are dependent upon and led by the Holy Spirit.

Note 3 at Ga 6:1: The Greek word that was translated "restore" literally means to set a bone that has been broken (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament). It takes time for broken bones to mend, and activities usually have to be restricted during the healing process. Likewise, spiritual restoration takes time and usually necessitates a change of routine. If those individuals go back to the same circumstances, chances are they will make the same wrong choices they did before.

Also, just as setting a broken bone in the natural is painful but necessary, the restoration process is always painful. Those who fail to deal with the issues completely because it is painful are similar to those who don't set a broken bone. The bone will never be straight again, but enduring a moment of pain as the bone is set will let the bone mend properly and become as strong as it was before.

Just as a cast protects the broken bone from further injury, people who have fallen should be surrounded by brothers and sisters who are committed to keeping those fallen individuals from making the injury worse. Submission to spiritual authority is just as important to those who have fallen as a cast is to a person with a broken bone.

Until the healing is complete, the cast and the curtailed lifestyle have to be maintained even though it may be inconvenient and uncomfortable. Trying to return to "normal" prematurely can prevent the bone from ever being completely healed.

GALATIANS 6:2

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Note 4 at Ga 6:2: The Greek word "BAROS," translated "burden" here, means "heaviness, weight, burden, trouble" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). It is such a heavy weight that if a person is not helped in carrying it, he or she will be overwhelmed. This may be either a sin (Ga 6:1) or a circumstance of life.

We fulfill Christ's law of love when we bear one another's burdens. Our love must go beyond just not seeing others hurt to the alleviation of their suffering if it is within our power.

GALATIANS 6:3

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Note 5 at Ga 6:3: Paul was saying that if we think we are too important to stoop down and help others with their burdens, then we are deceived about our own importance. None of us are anything of ourselves. None of us have any good excuse for not helping restore our fellow believers. This was one of the sins of the Pharisees (see note 4 at Lu 18:9).

The Amplified Bible translates this verse as, "For if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself."

GALATIANS 6:4

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Note 6 at Ga 6:4: If we are to help bear others' burdens, we must lay aside conceit (see note 5 at Ga 6:3). Intolerance toward those who have sinned is an indication of our own vulnerability. Here, Paul gave the remedy for conceit. A realistic look at our own weaknesses will make us better prepared to help others. This is the same message as that of Mt 7:3-5, which says, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

GALATIANS 6:5

For every man shall bear his own burden.

Note 7 at Ga 6:5: This verse is the exact opposite of Ga 6:2, but it makes Paul's point perfectly. In Ga 6:2, Paul said, "Bear ye one another's burdens." Ga 6:3-4 stripped away any objections that someone might have to doing that. Then here, Paul gave the clinching argument: "For every man shall bear his own burden."

His reasoning is that since all of us have burdens that we bear ourselves, we ought to be quick to help others with their burdens. We reap what we sow (Ga 6:7), and God doesn't extend mercy to those who have shown no mercy (Jas 2:13). Therefore, those who don't help others will not be helped. We don't want that. So, we should help others and sow a seed for our own future needs.

GALATIANS 6:6

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Note 8 at Ga 6:6: The Phillips New Testament translated this verse in the following manner: "The man under Christian instruction should be willing to contribute towards the livelihood of his teacher." In other words, you should share your financial resources with those who are ministering God's Word to you. This is a continuation of Paul's teaching on bearing others' burdens that he had mentioned in the previous verses.

"This concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord's servants was revolutionary since Jews were taxed for the support of their priests and Gentiles paid fees, made vows, etc., to sustain their religions" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition, p. 610).

However, the New Testament established voluntary giving for the support of the poor (Ga 2:10) and widows (1Ti 5:3-16), as well as those who instructed others in the Word of God (1Co 9:7-14 and this verse). Those who don't take care of the ones who minister the Word of God to them are hindering their own financial blessings.

GALATIANS 6:7

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Note 9 at Ga 6:7: Anyone who does not believe and practice this spiritual law of sowing and reaping is deceived. It is an absolute law that works, whether or not people believe it. Those who agree with it and sow to the Spirit reap everlasting life. Those who sow to their carnal desires reap corruption.

Note 10 at Ga 6:7: The word "mock" in Greek literally means "to turn up the nose or sneer at" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). The American Heritage Dictionary defines "mock" as "to treat with ridicule or contempt."

In context, Paul was speaking about supporting ministers (see note 8 at

Ga 6:6). Those who fail to follow the instructions of the Lord about giving back financially to those who instruct them in the Word of God are mocking God. He will not allow that. There is a spiritual law that all reap what they sow (see note 11 at this verse). Those who fail to sow finances into the Gospel will fail to reap finances in their personal lives. Those who give liberally will receive liberally (see note 2 at 2Co 9:6).

This truth applies not only to those who support ministers but also to the ministers themselves. Those who give of their time and effort to share the Word of God with others will reap a financial harvest from their ministries (see note 1 at 1Co 9:7).

Note 11 at Ga 6:7: This is one of the spiritual laws of God that controls people's lives (see note 12 at Ro 3:27). It does not have to be believed to work. Those who fail to believe this law and conduct their lives against God's instructions reap the negative harvest of corruption. Those who submit to this law through compliance reap the positive harvest of life everlasting (Ga 6:8).

Just as surely as the natural law of reaping exactly what is sown and only what is sown, so it is in the spiritual realm. We would think people to be fools if they were complaining that they didn't have any crop to harvest if they had never sown any seed. But in the spiritual world, people complain all the time about not receiving from God when they have not sown any seed. We have to sow to reap.

In context, Paul was speaking of sowing money into ministers' lives (see note 8 at Ga 6:6). Those who don't give financially to the work of the Gospel will not have God's financial blessings in their personal lives. On the other hand, those who do give to the work of the Lord will have an abundant harvest of finances.

However, this law of sowing and reaping applies to much more than just finances. If we want friends, we must be friends (Pr 18:24). If we want life and peace, we must think on the things that produce life and peace (God's Word, see Ro 8:6 and Isa 26:3). Whatever we need can be acquired through giving those same things to others.

It's also important to remember that just as natural seed doesn't produce overnight, spiritual seeds take time to produce after their own kind. We shouldn't wait until we are in need to start sowing seeds. We have to do that in advance, because there is a period of time between seedtime and harvest.

GALATIANS 6:8

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Note 12 at Ga 6:8: Sowing to our flesh encompasses a lot of things. In a nutshell, it is living out from under the control of the Spirit of God. It wouldn't matter if that was total rebellion through sin or just not pursuing the things of God. Many "good" people don't realize that the depression and discouragement they experience are the harvest of their good but not God-controlled lives. The Pharisees lived holy lives; but they were sowing to their flesh, and they reaped the corruption that this verse promises. Not all that is "good" is God. We must have pure hearts directed by the Spirit of God.

Note 13 at Ga 6:8: Our actions are the way we sow seeds. Those of us who act in accordance with the Spirit of God (i.e., the Word of God - see note 6 at Ga 5:16) are sowing to the Spirit. Those who conduct their actions independently of the Spirit of God (i.e., the Word of God) are sowing to the flesh.

As important as our actions are, they are just the result of our thoughts (Pr 23:7). Actions are conceived in our thoughts (Jas 1:14-15), so if we want to control our actions, we must first control our thoughts (Ro 8:6).

GALATIANS 6:9

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Note 14 at Ga 6:9: Weariness only comes over time. No one gets weary instantly. Paul was giving this exhortation because this law of sowing and reaping (see note 11 at Ga 6:7) takes time to work. There is a "due season" when our harvest comes (see note 15 at this verse), and we must remain in faith until harvest time.

Spiritual weariness takes place in our minds. As the writer of Hebrews said, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb 12:3,

emphasis mine). To remain faithful during this growing season until our harvest comes, we must win the battle over our thoughts (see note 13 at Ga 6:8 and note 16 at this verse).

Note 15 at Ga 6:9: The phrase "due season" means there is an appointed time when our harvest is ready. Farmers don't plant their crops one day and reap the next day. It takes time for the seeds to germinate and come to maturity. Likewise, spiritual seeds need time to grow. Those who don't understand this get upset when they give money in the offering and don't see any return on their giving within twenty-four hours.

Financial seeds need to be planted well in advance of need. Just as farmers plant in the spring for the harvest they need in the fall, there needs to be some advanced planning when sowing spiritual seeds.

Note 16 at Ga 6:9: This promise of reaping is conditional on us not fainting. Weariness and fainting are both results of losing the battle over our thoughts (see note 14 at this verse). Heb 12:3 says we faint in our minds. There are people who are still going through the motions of believing God but have fainted in their minds. They may fool people, but "God is not mocked" (Ga 6:7). The Lord looks at their hearts (1Sa 16:7) and knows their innermost thoughts.

Heb 12:3 also gives us the antidote to weariness and fainting: We must consider Jesus and the suffering He endured. In comparison, any problems we have are nothing. Therefore, we can encourage ourselves that just as Jesus prevailed, we also will prevail if we faint not.

GALATIANS 6:10

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Note 17 at Ga 6:10: It is very important that Paul prefaced his instructions about doing good with the phrase "As we have therefore opportunity." It isn't possible for one individual to solve all the problems and right all the wrongs that exist in the world. Often, sincere people fall prey to guilt and condemnation because they can't support every worthy effort, but Paul said to help "as we have...opportunity."

We all know people who need help. We also come in contact with opportunities to help through our churches and other organizations. We need to take advantage of these opportunities with a priority placed on helping fellow Christians (see note 18 at this verse), but we must be realistic and refuse taking on more than what is right.

Note 18 at Ga 6:10: The Scriptures instruct us to walk in God's love toward all people--believers and unbelievers alike. Jesus told us to love our enemies (Mt 5:44). But here, Paul placed a priority on helping fellow Christians. This does not diminish our responsibility to show God's love to unbelievers. Instead, Paul was simply saying, "Charity must start at home." It would be hypocritical to step over hurting brothers and sisters in the Lord to go find unbelievers to minister to.

Just as Jesus instructed His disciples to start where they were and work out to others (see note 7 at Ac 1:8), so Paul instructed the Galatians to give priority to relieving hurting brothers and sisters.

GALATIANS 6:11

Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Note 1 at Ga 6:11: Once again, those who already have the misconception that Paul's thorn in the flesh was some chronic sickness (see notes 11-17 at 2Co 12:7) use this verse to further their claims. They say Paul was nearly blind; so, he had to write in huge letters, and that is what he was referring to here.

That was certainly not the case. There are many possible explanations as to what Paul meant that do not include writing in two- to three-inch-tall block letters. That would make this letter of Galatians an incredibly large book.

The scholar J.B. Phillips says, "According to centuries-old Eastern usage, this could easily mean, 'Note how heavily I have pressed upon the pen in writing this.' Thus it could be translated, 'Notice how heavily I underlined these words to you.'"

It could also very easily be referring to the length of this letter as a whole instead of the individual letters that comprised each word. Any letter that is five pages long when typed and single-spaced could be

considered a large letter.

GALATIANS 6:12

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Note 2 at Ga 6:12: 1Sa 16:7 says, "For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." Those who see the way God sees are more concerned with the condition of the heart than they are with people's actions. But those who are carnal are always focused on actions instead of attitudes. The New International Version confirms this by translating the beginning of this verse as "Those who want to make a good impression outwardly."

That's the way these Judaizers were. They hadn't even noticed the wonderful work that God had done in the hearts of the Galatians through the ministry of Paul. All they could see was what they hadn't done. Likewise today, legalists are so focused on outward acts that they often fail to see the deeper, more important work that the Holy Spirit does in people's hearts. If they haven't been baptized according to their tradition or don't worship after their form, it doesn't matter how much they love the Lord, the legalists pronounce them unclean.

Carnal people are consumed with carnal (external) things. They can't believe that God can accept anyone who isn't holy according to their standards. However, spiritual people are consumed with spiritual (internal) things. They recognize that holiness is a fruit, not a root, of salvation (Ro 6:22).

Note 3 at Ga 6:12: The Judaizers (see note 2 at Ga 1:1) were trying to escape persecution from their Jewish brethren who still believed Christians had to keep the Law (see note 4 at Ac 23:6). They maintained that if they showed the Jews that the way of salvation was still the Law, they could be accepted by them. They were trying to force circumcision upon the church (Jews and Gentiles) as a "faith-plus-works" method of salvation. This would avoid the persecution that would come if they acknowledged that salvation comes only through Jesus and Him crucified.

The Simple English Bible translates this as, "Some men are trying to

force you to be circumcised. They do these things, so that the Jewish people will accept them, fearing they will be persecuted, if they follow only the cross of Christ."

GALATIANS 6:13

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Note 4 at Ga 6:13: These legalists who were demanding compliance with the Law weren't keeping the Law themselves. No one except Jesus has ever been able to fulfill the Law, and no one else ever will (Ro 3:23; 1Jo 1:8, and 10). It is the height of hypocrisy to demand of others what you cannot do yourself. So, why would they demand this thing? Paul said it was so they could glory in their flesh. They gloried in appearance, or outward things, and not in the condition of the heart (2Co 5:12, see note 2 at Ga 6:12).

GALATIANS 6:14

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Note 5 at Ga 6:14: Notice that Paul's critics gloried in the carnal things they accomplished, while Paul gloried only in what Jesus had done for him through the cross. One way to discern true men and women of God is to see where their boasting lies. Those who boast in their own accomplishments are suspect, while those who boast in the Lord are the true and faithful witnesses.

Note 6 at Ga 6:14: Notice that there is a double crucifixion. The world was crucified unto Paul, and Paul was crucified unto it. This means that the world's system had nothing to offer Paul, and Paul had nothing to offer the world outside of Christ. It's one thing to remove yourself from the world's system, but it's another thing to remove the world's system from you. Paul had done both. Paul's sole purpose in life was to bring glory unto the risen Christ.

GALATIANS 6:15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Note 7 at Ga 6:15: This was a radical statement to the Jews of Paul's day (see note 4 at Ro 3:19). They believed salvation could not be obtained without adhering to the commands of the Old Testament Law, of which circumcision was considered to be the foundation. This would be the equivalent of saying to some religious people today, "Church membership, water baptism, holiness, and so forth don't matter. The only thing that counts is being born again" (see note 2 at Joh 3:3). Religious rites mean nothing. The only thing that counts is becoming a new creation (see notes 8-9 at 2Co 5:17).

GALATIANS 6:16

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace [be] on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Note 8 at Ga 6:16: The only way to access God's peace is through faith in Christ (see note 2 at Ro 5:1 and note 3 at Ro 5:2). Therefore, those who walk according to the Gospel Paul preached have peace and mercy on them. These comprise the true Israel of God (see note 1 at Ro 9:6 and note 2 at Ro 2:29).

GALATIANS 6:17

From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Note 9 at Ga 6:17: Paul has already presented all his arguments to the Galatians. He's had it with them. They can either accept the Gospel or reject it, but he won't compromise. They don't need to trouble him with any more quarrels over this issue. He's branded forever with the marks of the Lord Jesus.

This is probably a reference to the custom of the day where slaves who chose to stay with their masters were permanently branded in their flesh. Once this happened, they could never go free (Ex 21:6 and De 15:17). The scars in Paul's flesh that he suffered as a result of preaching the Gospel were as this brand to him. He would never deviate from the truth of the Gospel.

GALATIANS 6:18

**Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit.
Amen.**

Note 10 at Ga 6:18: This letter to the Galatians was a harsh one (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Galatians), and Paul's previous sentence stated that his terms were for 100 percent surrender on their part. Yet, he closed with a blessing of the grace of Jesus over his brethren. It was love that compelled Paul to be stern (see note 9 at Ga 4:16).