

Supplemental Notes:

*The Epistle
to
the Galatians*

*compiled
by
Chuck Missler*

Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

Audio Listing

Galatians Introduction

Introduction. A Preliminary Perspective: The Adventures of Paul.

Galatians Chapter 1

The Judaizers. Paul's Apostleship.

Galatians Chapter 2

Law vs. Grace. Titus as an Example. Peter and Paul.

Galatians Chapter 3a

Faith Alone. Example of Abraham. Martin Luther.

Galatians Chapter 3b

Permanence of Faith. Purpose of the Law. Seed.

Galatians Chapter 4

Child vs. Heir. Adoption. God Sent the Spirit. Paul's Attitude. Two Jerusalems.

Galatians Chapter 5

Stand Firm. Leaven. Works of the Flesh vs. Spirit.

Galatians Chapter 6

Sacrificial Service Toward Sinning Christians, Burdened Christians, Pastor-Teachers and all People.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 1

A Preliminary Perspective: The Adventures of Paul

Introduction

A Review of Paul's Adventures

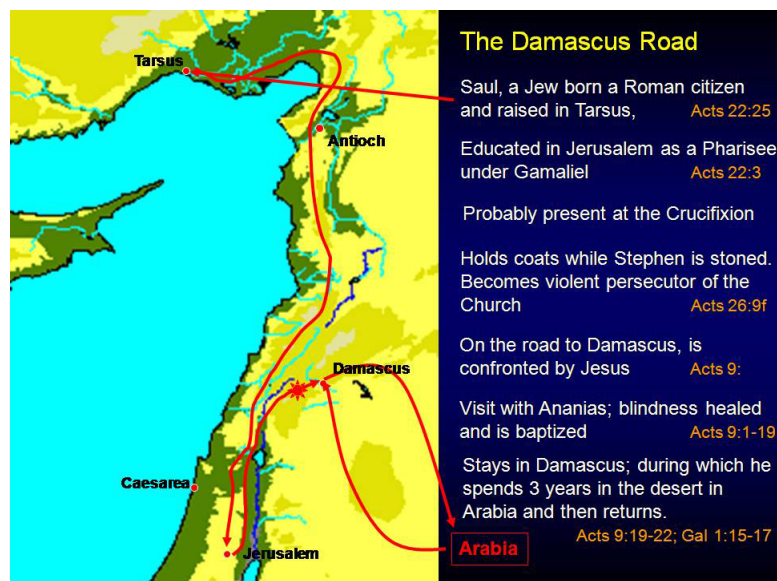
- Understanding the man.
- Understanding the issues facing him.
- Challenges for us today...

Galatia

- Northern Galatia.
- Southern Galatia.
- The Attack of the Judaizers.

Review of Acts

The message of the kingdom was presented by Peter and the rest of the Twelve in the first chapters of Acts, offering Christ to the Jews. Their answer was to stone Stephen (Acts 7). It was then that the message was taken to the Samaritans (Acts 8) and to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). Between these two events, Paul was saved (Acts 9).



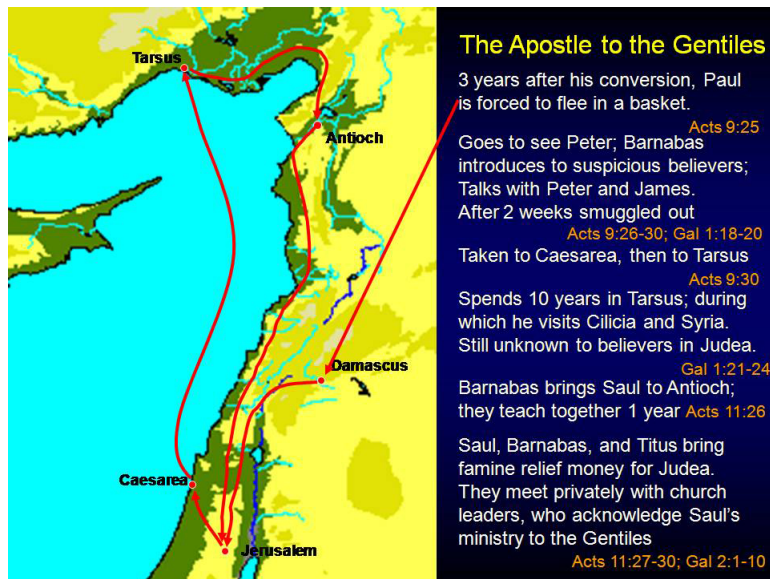
Acts 9

- 1] And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
- 2] And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
- 3] And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
- 4] And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- 5] And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
- 6] And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
- 7] And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.
- 8] And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.
- 9] And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.
- 10] And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.
- 11] And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,
- 12] And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.
- 13] Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:
- 14] And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.
- 15] But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:
- 16] For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

“...I will show him”: The first of many revelations by Christ Himself...

- 17] And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
- 18] And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.
- 19] And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.
- 20] And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

- 21] But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?
- 22] But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.
- 23] And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:
- 24] But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.
- 25] Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.
- 26] And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.
- 27] But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.
- 28] And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.
- 29] And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.
- 30] Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.
- 31] Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

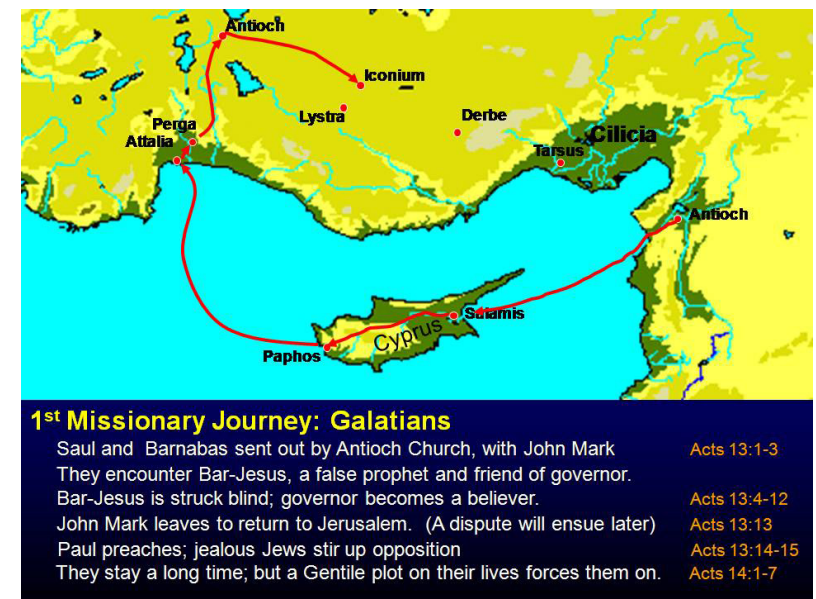


On his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28) he traveled even farther west. The church in Antioch was growing tremendously, and Barnabas was sent to recruit Paul from Tarsus. After a brief visit to bring food to

the brethren in Jerusalem, the first mission odyssey began. However, despite much progress, Jewish opposition began. "Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren" (Acts 14:2-20).

1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14) to the Galatians

- Salamis Acts 13:5
- Paphos Acts 13:6
- Antioch (Pisidia) Acts 13:14
- Iconium Acts 13:51
- Lystra and Derbe Acts 14:6, 20
- Return journey Acts 14:21, 22



The Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15)

Considerable controversy erupts over the obligations incumbent upon Gentile believers — Circumcision? Keeping the Mosaic Law, etc. Paul, Barnabas, and others seek the elders in Jerusalem for resolution.

Peter also testifies...

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be

saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

Acts 15:1-6

Peter's Testimony

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Acts 15:7-11

Note Peter's clever inversion: "...we shall be saved, even as they."

The Two Problems Raised

- 1) What must a Gentile do to be saved?
- 2) What is to become of Israel?

Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Acts 15:12-14

James completely agrees with Peter. They state the plan of God for today. Is God saving the whole world? No. Is God bringing in His kingdom? No. Then what is God doing today? He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. We learn in Revelation that standing before the throne of God there will be those of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

Acts 15:15-17

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That the rest of mankind may seek [the Lord], and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who does all these things.

Amos 9:11,12

Confirming the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (Lk 1:32).

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

Acts 15:18-32

This confirmation will be important when we review the issues in Paul's subsequent Epistle to the Galatians.

Four Meetings?

- 1) A public meeting, at which Paul recounted what God had done among the Gentiles (Acts 15:4).
- 2) Paul's private meeting with the leaders (Gal 2:2).
- 3) The public debate (Acts 15:5; Gal 2:3–5).
- 4) The council session at which the matter was finally settled (Acts 15:6–29).

Paul met with the leaders privately to keep out the “spies” (Gal 2:4) and to avoid any open disagreements that would only add fuel to the fire.

The Resolution(s)

Gentiles should: 1) Abstain from idols; 2) Abstain from fornication; and 3) Abstain from things strangled, and blood. There was no commitment to Mosaic practices: Ceremonial laws, Circumcision, etc. Paul will deal with the issue of Israel's destiny in his letter to the Romans (Cf. Romans 9, 10, 11).

Archaeological Discoveries

Recent discoveries in Israel have revealed definitive evidence of James' leadership of the Jerusalem church. The Vatican had attempted to sequester the materials; however, Robert Fisher (among the excavators) let the “cat-out-of-the-bag!”

And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Acts 15:33–35

2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36 – 18:22)

- Philippi
- Thessalonica
- Berea
- Athens
- Corinth
- Ephesus

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Acts 15:36–38



2nd Missionary Journey: Greece

Paul convinces both Jews and Greeks. Some Jews stir up a riot; Paul leaves secretly for Berea. Better reception; but mob stirred up by Jews from Thessalonica. Paul leaves for Athens; Silas and Timothy stay behind. Paul speaks at the Areopagus (Mars Hill)

Acts 17:1–9

Acts 17:10–15

Acts 17:16–34

Mark's Departure

Paul and Barnabas agree to revisit the Galatian churches. But they disagree about taking John Mark, who had left them on the earlier mission. John Mark had actually deserted. When he had reached Perga and got a look into the interior of Asia Minor and Galatia—the paganism and the physical dangers and hardships that were there—he apparently decided that he hadn't been called as a missionary. He headed home (Acts 13:13). His mother was a prominent member of the church in Jerusalem and her home was the place of meeting for the church there.

And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Acts 15:39–41

After the argument, Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus. Paul takes Silas to Galatia. At Lystra Paul asks Timothy to join them (Acts 16:1-3). They revisit the towns, telling the believers the decisions of the Jerusalem Council about Gentile converts (Acts 16:4-5).

Paul tries to go to Bithynia, but is blocked by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-7). At night, Paul has a vision: a Macedonian urges him to come to help. At this point Luke joins them: They sail for Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10). Paul delivers a girl medium from an evil spirit. Owners protest; crowd attacks. They are flogged, imprisoned; freed by earthquake. Jailer converted (Acts 16:11-40). They travel to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). Paul convinces both Jews and Greeks. Some Jews stir up a riot—Paul leaves secretly.

Paul later receives a better reception. But a mob is stirred up by people from Thessalonica. Paul leaves, but Silas and Timothy stay behind (Acts 17:10-15). And then Berea...In Athens, Paul speaks to the court of the Aeropagus which met to consider new religions. His mention of the resurrection divides his audience: some laugh, some believe (Acts 17:16-34).

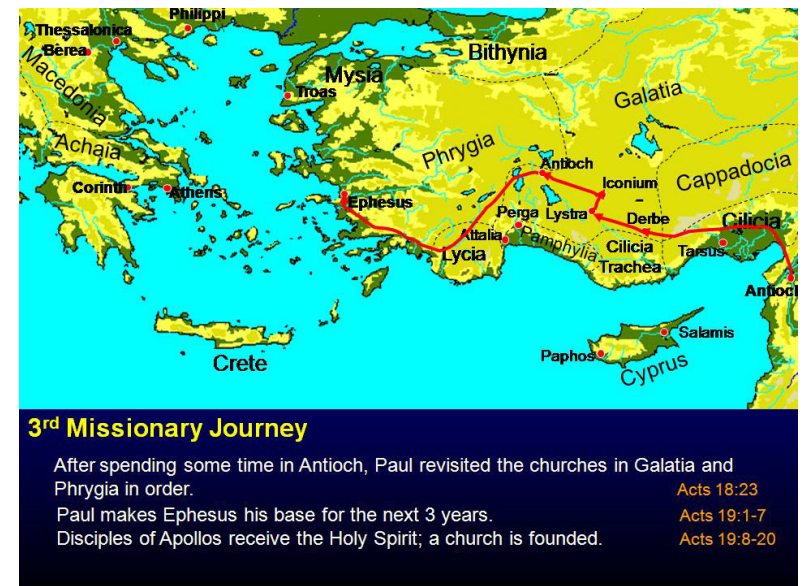
Paul on Mars Hill

Aeropagus = Court of the Judges. Paul begins where the people were: Their idolatry (30,000 “gods”) He told them they were “extremely devout”; “very god-fearing.” He mentioned the altar to the Unknown God: “We are his offspring...”

He also referenced an astronomical poem of Aratus, a Greek countryman of Paul’s (his predecessor by 300 yrs), and a religious hymn of Cleanthes of Troas, a contemporary of Aratus. [Paul also quoted Menander in 1 Cor 15:33.]

Silas and Timothy arrive with news of Thessalonica. Paul writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians, encouraging that church in its difficulties. They spend almost two years here, building up the church. Despite Jewish opposition, they are able to stay (Acts 18:1-17).

They stop briefly in Ephesus—Paul had been forbidden earlier by the Spirit to preach in Asia. He debates with the Jews who want him to stay longer (Acts 18:18-21). They travel back to Antioch, via Caesarea and Jerusalem (Acts 18:22).



Paul’s Hearings

- Before Sanhedrin Acts 23
 - Arguments turn to violence
- Before Governor Felix Acts 24
 - Defers. After 2 years, Festus replaces Felix
- Before Governor Festus Acts 25
 - “I appeal to Caesar”
- Before King Agrippa Acts 26
 - While awaiting his appeal

The Epistle to the Galatians

Introduction: Pauline Epistles

There are 27 books in the NT: over half were written by one man—Paul. 17 of 28 chapters of Acts deal with Paul; from Acts 15 on, the other apostles are never mentioned.

The Epistle to the Galatians is regarded as one of Paul’s greatest and most important letters. It has been characterized as a “short Romans”; Romans can viewed as an expansion of Galatians.

But for the letters of Paul, we would be in darkness concerning the truth of the Church as the Body of Christ, its function, activity, and destiny. Galatians, more than any other single book, became the manifesto of freedom and revival of Biblical truth of the Reformation era: “the Magna Carta of spiritual emancipation.”

Few books have had a more profound influence on the history of mankind than has this small tract, for such it should be called. Christianity might have been just one more Jewish sect, and the thought of the Western world might have been entirely pagan had it never been written. Galatians embodies the germinal teaching on Christian freedom which separated Christianity from Judaism, and which launched it upon a career of missionary conquest. It was the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation, because its teaching of salvation by grace alone became the dominant theme of the preaching of the Reformers.

—Merrill Tenney

Martin Luther called it “my own little epistle. I have betrothed myself to it; it is my Katie von Vora (his wife).” Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians* was one of the key books of the Reformation, “...a pebble from the brook from which the Reformers smote the papal giant of the Middle Ages.”

It is a unique and marvelous letter, which embraces in its six short chapters such a variety of vehement and intense emotion as could probably not be paralleled in any other work.

— William Ramsay

Judaizers

However, there were Jews who tried to mix the simple message of grace with the Law, blending improperly the kingdom message and the church message. Their aim was to entice Gentile believers into the Jewish system. They taught that a person was saved by faith *and* by keeping the Law. They wanted the believers to follow the Jewish laws and customs. These teachers were upsetting the people in Galatia (Gal 1:6-9; 3:1; 4:8-11; 5:7-9; 5:12; 6:12-13). The only Gospel that God approves and blesses is the Gospel of the grace of God, justification by faith in Christ Jesus alone. We are not saved by making promises to God, but by believing His promises.

Relevance Today

Galatians is God’s strongest word against legalism: the flesh loves to do things religious—celebrate holy days, practice rituals, attempt to do

good works for God. Many religious systems today mix law and grace and present a garbled, confused way of salvation that is actually a way of bondage (Gal 2:4; 4:9; 5:1). Keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, an earthly priesthood, holy days, obeying rules—all of these are swept away in Galatians and replaced by the glorious liberty the believer has through faith in Christ!

The Galatians

Old Galatia—Northern Asia Minor—was settled by the Gauls (Latin, *Gallia*), a Celtic people who gave us the mystical Scots, the warmhearted Welsh, the volatile French, the energetic Irish, and spread to western Europe, France, northern Spain, and the British Isles. In the 4th century B.C. they invaded the Roman Empire and sacked Rome.

In 280 B.C. they crossed into Greece and captured Delphi. They were warlike people and on the move. Many of these Germanic tribes were wild and fierce: “The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves, fond of change, and not to be trusted,” said Caesar.

“Flank, impetuous, impressible, eminently intelligent, but extremely inconstant, fond of show, perpetually quarreling, the fruit of excessive vanity,” said Thierry. This description is not altogether inapplicable to their descendants in France and Ireland.

At the invitation of Nikomedes I, king of Bithynia, they crossed over into Asia Minor to help him in a civil war. In 25 B.C. the territory was taken over by the Roman Empire and made a Roman province, including parts of Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia and Isauria.

Two Galatias?

Some scholars believe there were two Galatias: the Old Galatia in the north, and the second being the reorganized Roman province including both the north and some additional territories in the south.

There are some difference of view as to whether the apostle was referring to unnamed churches in the old territory of Galatia in the North, or referring to the churches of such towns as Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium in the south which he founded on his first missionary journey.

[South Galatia included the churches in the area Paul visited on his first missionary journey. North Galatia included Pessinus, Ancyra,

and Tavium.] Most current scholars believe Paul wrote his letter to the churches in the southern part of the province of Galatia, founded on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28) and that they were later revisited on other journeys (Acts 16:1-6; 18:23). Galatians would be among the earliest of Paul's epistles; he would, thus, be writing to Christians in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

When Was this Epistle Written?

- 17 years after Paul's conversion A.D. 31-36
 - 3 yrs (Gal 1:18)
 - 14 yrs (Gal 2:1)
- After Conference in Jerusalem A.D. 49 (Gal 2:1-10)
- After Peter's visit to Antioch (Gal 2:11-14)
- After Thessalonians sent from Corinth A.D. 50-51
- From Corinth on the 2nd missionary journey (before Romans)? A.D. 53
- Romans from Corinth: A.D. 56-57
- From Ephesus on the 3rd missionary journey during his two years of residence there? A.D. 57

Distinctives

- 1) If you compare this epistle with the other Pauline epistles, you will see that it is different: it is a stern, severe, and solemn message (Cf. Gal 1:6-9; 3:1-5). The Galatian believers were in grave peril because the foundations of their faith were being attacked. The epistle contains no word of commendation, praise, or thanksgiving. There is no request for prayer, and there is no mention of their standing in Christ. No one with him is mentioned by name.
- 2) In this epistle the heart of Paul the apostle is laid bare, and there is deep emotion and strong feeling. This is his *fighting* epistle: Paul has no toleration for legalism. Someone has said, "The Epistle to the Romans comes from the *head* of Paul; The Epistle to the Galatians comes from the *heart* of Paul." "Galatians takes up controversially what Romans puts systematically."
- 3) This epistle is a *declaration of emancipation* from legalism of any type. This was Martin Luther's favorite epistle. It is the manifesto of Christian liberty, the impregnable citadel, and a veritable Gibraltar against any attack on the heart of the gospel. As someone put it, "Immortal victory is set upon its brow."

- 4) Galatians is the strongest declaration and defense of the doctrine of justification by faith in or out of Scripture. It is God's polemic on behalf of the most vital truth of the Christian faith against any attack. Not only is a sinner saved by grace through faith *plus nothing*, but the saved sinner lives by grace.

The Mosaic Law is neither discredited, despised, nor disregarded. Its majesty, perfection, demands, fullness, and purpose are maintained. Yet these very qualities make it utterly impossible for man to come this route to God.

Another way is opened for man to be justified before God, a way which entirely bypasses the Mosaic Law. The new route is by faith: Justification by faith is the theme, with the emphasis upon faith.

Outline of the Book

- Chapters 1 & 2: Personal—his ministry; his method, and his message.
- Chapters 3 & 4: Doctrinal.
- Chapters 5 & 6: Practical.

Next Session

Review your notes on the Book of Acts. Read Galatians Chapter 1.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 2

Chapter 1

Review

For Paul it all began on the Damascus Road, and there was no road back. We all need to take the same road: any other road leads to "another gospel."

He spoke of his conversion in Hebrew before the crowd at the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1-21. Cf. Acts 9:1-19); and before King Agrippa in Caesarea (Acts 26:1-32). In both addresses—before both friend and foe—he offers his conversion as the greatest proof of his discipleship and the truth of the doctrine that a man is saved by faith and not by works.

In his first letter to Timothy he again referred to his conversion as epitomizing the validity of the Gospel which he expounded in Galatians (1 Tim 1:13-16). His most effective use is in Galatians itself: Gal 1:11-17.

After several years being alone with his Lord in Arabia, he returns to Damascus (34, 35 A.D.?). But it is enemy territory now: former friends make the fiercest enemies. A plot to take his life caused him to seek shelter in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-28; Gal 1:18).

After a short visit of two weeks, his enemies tried to kill him again, but his brethren whisked him away to Caesarea where he boarded a ship to his home town of Tarsus (Acts 9:26-31; Gal 1:21-24).

All this strife for new converts against his former “friends” is the core of the Galatian letter and gives it the light and heat of new-found freedom in Christ. The years spent in Tarsus and Cilicia—on the fringe of Galatia into which he pushed his first missionary journey—comprised more spiritual and mystical preparation for the road ahead.

[In his so-called “silent years” it is likely that he preached and defended this Gospel in Cilicia between 36-43 A.D. since the Apostolic Council sent communications to the Gentile brethren in Antioch and Cilicia (Acts 15:24). In Acts 15:41 Luke writes that Paul was going to the brethren of Syria and Cilicia.]

The Judaizers

These “legal men”—“Old Testament Christians”—were called “Judaizers” from a coined Latin word *Judaizo*, meaning “to be or live like a Jew.” It is a religious designation rather than a national description. These opponents of the early Christian missionaries were called Judaizers because of their fundamental belief that Gentiles should live like Jews; that is, follow the Mosaic Law and Jewish customs and traditions, when and after they become Christians.

It is not that Judaizers were wicked people or that they did not have good intentions. For them the issue was a matter of principle and from God Himself. But the implications of their insistence upon Jewish ceremonial law for the young Christian church, both theologically and socially, were divisive and volatile indeed.

It was one thing to preach grace to Jews who had their background; it was another to preach to a mixture of Jews, Greeks, Syrians, et al., especially while still in a Jewish Synagogue.

The Jew knew what he had: circumcision, the glory of Israel, the pride of Judaism with its one God and high morality. What did the Gentile have? (The Jew could easily summarize it for him:) false gods, forni-

cation, immorality, drunkenness, etc. The Jew took for granted that he should become a Jew—just as the earlier proselytes—and then become a Christian. This ultimately led to the Council in Acts 15.

Paul made it plain that the Gospel was not an addendum to Judaism, no mere supplement to the law; but rather the end and fulfillment of the law and actually in antithesis to it. The new kingdom would go beyond the boundaries of Israel, not just nationally but also theologically and socially—even though Jesus the Messiah came from David’s line, now “every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:39)

For Paul it was not “both-and” but “either-or.” The choice is between grace or law, faith or works, either Moses or Christ. Grace excludes all works.

The Battle Against Legalism

Grace = God’s answer to man’s pride. Good works do not make a good man; a good man does good works = true liberty. False teaching: substituting Law for Grace. *There is something about error when it once grips the mind that makes it assume an importance that the truth itself never had...*

Legalism always seems to take the heart out of Christianity and replace it with a heart of stone. The heart of Christianity is God’s free grace in Jesus Christ. Let the law do the honorable work of showing a man his sin, but it can’t save man from sin.

The Paradigm of Salvation

“I have been saved;
I am being saved;
and I will be saved.”

—Earl D. Rachmacher

Justification (Past tense)

The gift from God of everlasting life received by faith alone in Christ alone (Jn 3:18; 5:24; Eph 2:5,8).

Sanctification (Present tense)

A progressive work that involves the faith and the works of the believer.

Glorification (Future tense)

A result of the previous aspects. All believers will be glorified (resurrected and given a body like Christ), but some will have more glory (i.e. reward) than others. This is what Hebrews speaks of.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

John 10:28, 29

Past Tense: Separation from the *Penalty* of Sin

Justification

Present Tense: Separation from the *Power* of Sin

Sanctification

Future Tense: Separation from the *Presence* of Sin

Glorification

Justification is *for* us;

Sanctification is *in* us.

Justification *declares* the sinner righteous;

Sanctification *makes* the sinner righteous.

Justification removes the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin;

Sanctification removes the *growth* and the *power* of sin.

Relevance Today

Galatians is God's strongest word against legalism: The flesh loves to do things religious—celebrate holy days, practice rituals, and attempt to do good works for God. Many religious systems today mix law and grace and present a garbled, confused way of salvation that is actually a way of bondage (Gal 2:4; 4:9; 5:1). Keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws, an earthly priesthood, holy days, obeying rules—all of these are swept away in Galatians and replaced by the glorious liberty the believer has through faith in Christ!

Outline of the Book

- Chapters 1 & 2: Personal—his ministry, method, and message.
- Chapters 3 & 4: Doctrinal.
- Chapters 5 & 6: Practical.

Galatians 1: Liberation Through the Gospel

The key word in the first two chapters is “Gospel,” found 10 times in these 45 verses.

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - **Genuine as to its origin** Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4
 - The new relation it effects Gal 3
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18

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

“Paul, an apostle” - personal commission from God (Acts 26:15-18). Apostle = “sent one” [prefers to speak of himself as a “servant” (“bond-slave”) of Jesus Christ.”]

“...by Jesus Christ”: Jesus laid His hand upon Paul, called him, and set him apart for the office (Acts 9:15-16)

“...who raised Him from the dead”: Note the emphasis on the resurrection. The resurrection is central to the message of the Gospel: Jesus' victory over death is our reason to hope (1 Cor 15:1-4).

Paul's aim was to show that his message and ministry came directly from Christ and not from men. Paul did not preach a secondhand message that he learned from Peter or any of the apostles. Rather, God took every measure necessary to keep Paul's ministry separate from that of the Twelve, lest anyone think Paul's ministry was given to him by the apostles.

- 2] And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:
3] Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul's greeting is cool, brief, formal, and terse. No one is personally mentioned.

Grace, χάρις *charis* = Greek greeting. In the NT sense, grace = unmerited favor.

Peace = Hebrew greeting, *Shalom*. Only when we know the grace of God, can we experience the peace of God.

- 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:

There is nothing that we can add to the value of His sacrifice. The **Purpose** of God's grace is to deliver us from this present evil world; the **Source** of God's grace is the sovereign will of our Father.

Galatians: "A Short Romans"

A different Gospel would cheat them of the many privileges... sonship; inheritances; et al. This was not an ancient problem: very contemporary: the struggle between the true Gospel and its legalistic manipulators...

Paul's Gospel

Paul's Gospel was centered in Christ—His death, burial, and resurrection—and not in Moses or the Law. It was a Gospel of grace that brought peace. It was a Gospel of liberty: "...that He might deliver us" (v. 4). The Judaizers were bringing the churches into bondage through the Law (Gal 2:4; 3:13; 4:9). Christ's death has delivered us from this present evil age and has given us a new standing in liberty (Gal 5:1ff).

- 5] To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No wonder Paul adds, "To whom be glory for ever and ever!" One of the oldest heresies known, and one that is still with us today, is *adding* something to the gospel of grace; every cult and "ism" has something for you to *do* in order to be saved. Remember, Paul said to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Simon Peter said to the Sanhedrin, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Paul here describes the work of Jesus Christ for us:

- The Channel of God's grace: Jesus Christ gave Himself. As a man, He did not cease to be God (Ps 49:7,8; Mt 20:28).
- He was made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21).
- He was made a curse (Gal 3:13).
- His soul was an offering for sin (Isa 53:10).

The Reason for God's grace: to bring glory (only) to God for ever and ever.

- Grace excludes all human effort (2 Tim 1:9).
- Hannah, mother of Samuel (1 Sam 2:6-9).
- Grace + *nothing* (Rom 11:6).

The Gospel

May we never be confused as to the content and intent of the Gospel: The Gospel is *not* "to follow Christ and imitate His life," but "to receive Christ by faith and allow Him to set you free." There is no place in the Gospel for a salvation that is attained by keeping the Law. The "Gospel of the kingdom" that was emphasized from Matthew 3 to Acts 7 is *not* our message today.

- 6] I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
- 7] Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

"...so soon removed": Paul seems surprised that they so quickly yield truth to untruth.

"...another...another": Two Greek words used for "another" and both are used in the passage above. The "another" in verse 6 is ἕτερος *heteros*: another of a *different* kind; the "another" in verse 7 is ἄλλος *allos*: another of the same kind

"...pervert": μεταστρέφω *metastrepho* = twist, or distort; thus, by clever deceivers, enchanters, bewitchers. *Metastrephō* is a strong word, used by Luke in speaking of the sun *turned* to darkness (see Acts 2:20), and by James, speaking of laughter *turned* to mourning (see James 4:9). To attempt to change the gospel has the effect of making it the very opposite of what it really is.

Grace => the death of pride. There will be no strutting in heaven. The only man-made things in heaven are scars... What about observing legalistic rules? (Col 2:16).

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Romans 3:19

A Unified Message : Genesis to Revelation

- Eden: “Seed of the Woman” Gen 3:15
- Abraham Seed as the dust of the earth Gen 13:16
- In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed Gen 22:18
 - One Seed: Gal 3:16
- Psalms (David) Ps 51:16,17
- Isaiah Isa 53:5
- Jeremiah Jer 23:6
- Zechariah Zech 13:7
- John, the Baptist Jn 1:29
- Jesus Jn 1:17; 3:16; 5:24
- Peter Acts 10:43
- John 1 Jn 1:7
- James Jas 1:18
- Paul Acts 13:38,39
- ...all the ages to come Rev 1:5
- Summary: Eph 2:8,9
 - Why? Eph 2:7

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:7-9

- 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.
- 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.

“...accursed”: ἀνάθεμα *anathema*; accursed! Paul has just made a deliberate and extreme statement (*Twice!*). He calls down a curse on any one who proclaims a gospel to them contrary to that which they had received from him.

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

The Galatians know Paul: that he is no seeker after popularity. He puts his known character behind the assertion that his gospel of grace was a revelation from God

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

Paul’s apostleship had been challenged by false teachers. They questioned his authority because he had not been ordained by men; he was ordained directly by Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1-22).

“...revelation”: ἀποκάλυψις *apokalupsis*. He had numerous visions of Christ: concerning the origin of the Lord’s Supper he expressly says, “I received again (παρελάβον *parelabon*) from the Lord.” (1 Cor 11:23).

Paul’s Credentials

- 1) He is no seeker after popularity (Gal 1:10).
- 2) His revelation was from Christ (Gal 1:11,12).
- 3) His zeal forsaken for something better (Gal 1:13,14).

Paul was never meant to be the “twelfth” apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1:16–26): Paul could not have met the qualifications; God deliberately kept Paul separated from the Twelve so no one could accuse Paul of borrowing his message; nobody could accuse Paul of inventing his message, because he had been a persecutor of the church, not a friend. [In Isaiah 53, the ELSS *includes* Matthias...]

Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles and was related to the mystery of the church, the one body. The Twelve received their call from Christ on earth because their message presented the hope of Israel’s earthly Kingdom. Paul received his call from heaven, because his message presented the “heavenly calling” of the church in Christ. There were twelve apostles, associated with the twelve tribes (Mt 19:38; Lk 22:30). Paul was one man (and a Jew with Gentile citizenship) representing the one body in Christ.

- 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:

“...conversation” = “Manner of life.”

“Jew’s religion”: Paul’s reputation. Judaism was dearer than life to him.

“...wasted”: Devastated. As the ravaging wolf of Benjamin, he was engaged in laying waste the church (Acts 7 - 9). Paul would have lived and died as an advocate of Judaism but for the miracle of grace (Acts 26:5).

- 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.

“...Jews' religion”: Paul was taught by Gamaliel himself (Acts 5:34; 22:3). Ἰουδαϊσμός *Ioudaismos* the Jewish faith and worship, religion of the Jews: Judaism. NT: θρησκεία *threskeia* religion, esp. external, observances (Act 26:5; Jas 1:26; Col 2:18); a believer's good works (Jas 1:27).

- 15] But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,
16] To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Like Jeremiah, God's hand was upon him from his birth and prepared him for ministry: a well-educated Jew, a Roman citizen, and immersed in the Greek culture from his boyhood (Jer 1:5). God has a specific purpose for each of us which can only be fulfilled when we are serving Him according to His plan. The Pharisees were the separatists who held themselves off from others. Paul conceives himself as a spiritual Pharisee “separated unto the gospel of God.”

- 17] Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.
18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

If Paul had felt uncertain about his message, a journey to one of these centers would have been natural and necessary. But he was an apostle as truly as were the Twelve, fully in possession of the truth of the Gospel from the Lord himself. The Apostles brought the message of the Kingdom; Paul, the message of Grace.

And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

Acts 9:26-29

His visit of two weeks with Peter came after Barnabas endorsed Paul to the suspicious disciples in Jerusalem while he was preaching in the

city. It was a delightful experience, but Peter did not start Paul upon his apostleship. He visited him as an equal. Peter no doubt had much to say to Paul.

- 19] But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.
20] Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

“...James the Lord's brother”: James (*Yakov*), the author of the Epistle of James, was the Lord's (half) brother. James, the son of Zebedee, was still living at that time. The rest of the twelve were probably away preaching and James, brother of the Lord, is here termed an apostle, though not one of the twelve as Barnabas is later so called.

- 21] Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;
22] And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

Paul was not idle, but at work in Tarsus and the surrounding country. The believers there were actually afraid of Paul; were it not for Barnabas, Paul would never have been accepted. This fact in itself proved that Paul had never leaned on the Jerusalem church for approval.

After this visit, he went to Syria (Antioch, cf. Acts 11:22-30), but he was personally unknown to the believers in Judea. However, the churches there heard the wonderful news of Paul's conversion and glorified God.

- 23] But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.
24] And they glorified God in me.
The Apostles recognized Paul's distinctive ministry to the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-10). At the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-24) they determined that Gentiles are not under the law: Key passages: Gal 3:10-12; Gal 2:21b.

Paul's Credentials

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1) He is no seeker after popularity | Gal 1:10 |
| 2) His revelation was from Christ | Gal 1:11,12 |
| 3) His zeal forsaken for something better | Gal 1:13,14 |
| 4) He preached grace before he met with any other Apostles | Gal 1:15-24 |
| 5) Later, they added nothing | Gal 2:1-6 |
| 6) They recognized his apostleship | Gal 2:7-10 |
| 7) Peter yielded when rebuked by Paul | Gal 2:11-21 |

Next Session

Read Galatians Chapter 2 and review Acts 15.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 3 Chapter 2

Outline of the Book

- Chapters 1 & 2: Personal—Paul’s ministry, method, and message.
- Chapters 3 & 4: Doctrinal.
- Chapters 5 & 6: Practical.

Review of Acts

The message of the kingdom was presented by Peter and the rest of the Twelve in the first chapters of Acts, offering Christ to the Jews. Their answer was to stone Stephen (Acts 7). It was then that the message was taken to the Samaritans (Acts 8) and to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). Between these two events, Paul was saved (Acts 9).

God especially revealed to Paul that He was doing a new thing and that the prophecy message of the kingdom had been replaced (temporarily) by the mystery of the church. However, the masses of believers (some of whom continued to be faithful to the Jewish religion) did not realize that this wonderful new program of grace, for both Jew and Gentile, had come onto the scene. The issue was debated finally at Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Council of Jerusalem: Acts 15

- 1) God’s program for today was to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name;
- 2) Paul was His apostle to the Gentiles, with a special ministry to the Body, the church;
- 3) The kingdom program would be resumed after the Body was completed.

Judaizers

However, there were Jews who would not receive the simple message of grace and who tried to mix it with the Law, blending improperly the

kingdom message and the church message. Their aim was to entice Gentile believers into the Jewish system. They taught that a person was saved by faith *and* by keeping the Law.

These teachers had visited the Gentile churches in Galatia and were upsetting the people (Gal 1:6-9; 3:1; 4:8-11; 5:7-9; 5:12; 6:12-13). They wanted the believers to follow the Jewish laws and customs of religious holidays, circumcision, etc. This was the “other Gospel” that Paul condemned (Gal 1:6-9).

The only Gospel that God approves and blesses is the Gospel of the grace of God, justification by faith in Christ Jesus alone. We are not saved by making promises to God but by believing His promises.

The Mosaic Law is neither discredited, despised, nor disregarded. Its majesty, perfection, demands, fullness, and purpose are maintained. Yet these very qualities make it utterly impossible for man to come this route to God.

Another way is opened for man to be justified before God, a way which entirely bypasses the Mosaic Law. The new route is by *faith*: Justification by *faith* is the theme, with the emphasis upon *faith*.

The Paradigm of Salvation

“I have been saved;
I am being saved;
and I will be saved.”

—Earl D. Rachmacher

Justification (Past tense)

The gift from God of everlasting life received by faith alone in Christ alone (Jn 3:18; 5:24; Eph 2:5,8).

Sanctification (Present tense)

A progressive work that involves the faith and the works of the believer.

Glorification (Future tense)

A result of the previous aspects. All believers will be glorified (resurrected and given a body like Christ), but some will have more glory (i.e. reward) than others. This is what Hebrews speaks of.

Past Tense: Separation from the *Penalty* of Sin
Justification
Present Tense: Separation from the *Power* of Sin
Sanctification
Future Tense: Separation from the *Presence* of Sin
Glorification

Justification is *for* us;
 Sanctification is *in* us.

Justification *declares* the sinner righteous;
 Sanctification *makes* the sinner righteous.

Justification removes the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin;
 Sanctification removes the *growth* and the *power* of sin.

Galatians Outline

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - **Genuine as to its nature Gal 2**
- Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4
 - The new relation it effects Gal 3
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18

Paul's Credentials: Review from Galatians 1

- 1) He is no seeker after popularity Gal 1:10
- 2) His revelation was from Christ Gal 1:11,12
- 3) His zeal forsaken for something better Gal 1:13,14
- 4) He preached grace before he met with any other Apostles Gal 1:15-24

Now, in Galatians 2:

- 5) Later, they added nothing Gal 2:1-6
- 6) They recognized his apostleship Gal 2:7-10
- 7) Peter yielded when rebuked by Paul Gal 2:11-21

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

Barnabas: A leader in the beginning; it was he who persuaded Paul to leave Tarsus to join the work in Antioch. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:24). The reason for Paul's bringing Titus along becomes evident: he was to be a test case in the matter of Gentile reception into the Church

- 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.

Notice that Paul waited until he had a definite revelation to go up to Jerusalem.

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

[Titus is not mentioned in Acts 15 nor anywhere else in Acts for some reason, possibly because he was Luke's own brother.]

- 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:

Paul met with them privately to keep out the "spies" and to avoid any open disagreements that would only add fuel to the fire.

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

He is not about to follow any part of the Law for salvation. This is a tremendous stand that Paul is taking!

- 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:

The council added nothing to Paul's message, and endorsed it as well.

They Recognized his Apostleship

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

Paul is careful to point out that the same Spirit who worked in Paul worked in Peter as well.

- 9] And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Peter's Aramaic name, Cephas, is appropriately used here.

"...fellowship": κοινωνία *koinonia*.

Division of Labor

The apostles sent one group of evangelists to the Gentiles, the other to the Jews. However, they requested the missionaries to the Gentile world not to so divorce themselves from the Jewish believers—especially those at Jerusalem, who were notoriously poor (Rom 15:26).

A few years before, God had revealed the door opening to the Gentiles through Peter at Joppa (Acts 10:12-15). Paul relates the arrangement as to the division of spheres of labor while in Jerusalem.

Preposition "of" may also be rendered "for." The Apostles had established no churches outside of Judea (Acts 8:1). Even those scattered abroad did not preach to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19). Barnabas, sent to investigate Antioch, did not report back to the apostles, but sent for Paul in Tarsus. The proof of Paul's good faith was that he raised a substantial fund among the Gentile churches, which he and others took to Jerusalem on the occasion of his last visit (1 Cor 16:1-4).

Same Gospel

Peter had also been among the Galatians preaching the *same* gospel as everywhere else—on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38, 39), and again in Acts 3:19-21, 26. The Jewish nation had rejected their Messiah. Again (Acts 4:10-12). Now, you hear the same man preaching in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). Then examine the message addressed to the Jewish converts (1 Pet 1:18-20). This is the gospel Peter preached. Compare it to that of Paul (Acts 13:32-39). Nothing is different; just fuller; Paul added justification. We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6).

Peter Yielded When Rebuked by Paul

- 10] Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.
- 11] But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Paul must have smiled. One Body, one Spirit, one hope. Paul evidenced no subservience to Peter... "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov 29:25).

Encounter with Peter at Antioch (Gal 2:11-21)

This is the third occasion on which Paul came into contact with Peter:

- 1) The first time he simply met Peter;
- 2) The next time he discovered their unity and equality;
- 3) This time he was moved to differ with him and rebuke him.

This confirms the fact that Paul's purpose throughout the epistle to the Galatians is to demonstrate his independent apostleship.

- 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.

The action of the council (Acts 15:28, 29) had opened the way for freedom of social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the church at Antioch, a freedom that Peter was glad to share. He even ate with the Gentiles (Acts 10:28; 11:3). But the arrival of certain men from James, the acknowledged head of the church at Jerusalem, awoke fear in Peter's heart, for he remembered that the mother church had rebuked him for associating and eating with Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:1-18).

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

"Dissimulation" = hypocrisy.

Barnabas also! Paul expected more of him than of the other Jewish believers. No one is immune...

- 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?

What's At Stake?

Peter was a Jew and therefore not obliged to live after the manner of the Gentiles, as he had been doing in his table companionship. But now,

having gone that far and then broken off, he was logically compelling Gentile believers to live as Jews, that is, to adopt circumcision and the dietary laws of the Jews and thus remove all barriers between themselves and men like Peter.

But if the Gentile believers did this, they would sacrifice the truth of the Gospel, which had been affirmed at Jerusalem. The church had decided that no such burden of legal compliance was to be laid on Gentile believers.

The whole principle of grace was at stake. The logical outcome of Peter's conduct was to make Jews out of Gentile Christians or else force the creation of a Gentile church alongside the Jewish church, which would break the unity of the body of Christ. *So the truth of the Gospel was involved.*

"Papal Supremacy"? If this was the "Rock" upon which the Church was to be built, it seems a bit wobbly... (Mt 16:18). Peter knew of no such supremacy doctrine, as he himself emphasizes (1 Pet 5:1ff). Peter was "spirit-filled," but he still "blew it..." Paul didn't spare Peter's feelings: "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev 19:17).

- 15] We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,
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.

The OT itself testifies that justification does not come from the works of the Law (Ps 143:2). "I keep the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount." Strike One. "I am as good as the next guy." Strike Two. "I am doing the best I can." Strike Three (James 2:10; Gal 3:10).

Paul here quotes from his words to Peter when he withstood Peter at Antioch (v.11) in order to show the Galatians that, whatever the legalists may have pretended, Peter and he were in perfect accord doctrinally. Paul appealed to the common belief of Peter and himself as a rebuke of Peter's inconsistent practice.

- 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.
18] For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

"...we ourselves": "We" Jews: Cf. Rom 3:19-23. Galatians 2:17 Paraphrased: "If we Jews, in seeking to be justified by faith in Christ, take

our places as mere sinners, like the Gentiles, is it therefore Christ who makes us sinners? By no means. It is by putting ourselves again under the law after seeking justification through Christ, that we act as if we were still unjustified sinners, seeking to become righteous through law-works" (Cf. Gal 5:1-4).

This lowering of the Jew to the level of the Gentile seemed to involve Christ, making Him a **minister of sin** in that He released man from bondage to the Law, since faith in Christ for both Jew and Gentile on equal terms is the condition of salvation. But Paul rejected the conclusion, for it rested on a false premise, namely, the fancied superiority of Jew over Gentile.

Here Paul delicately takes what belongs to Peter and refers it to himself. The real transgressor is not Christ, but the one who, like Peter, builds up again a distinction that has in fact been destroyed. Peter was doing just that by withdrawing from Gentile fellowship, making it appear that Jewish believers were a superior breed.

We know that Paul's rebuke accomplished its purpose: One of the last admonitions Peter wrote was that believers should read Paul's letters to find God's truth about this present age (2 Pet 3:16-18).

*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as **our beloved brother Paul** also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written **unto you**; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

2 Peter 3:15, 16

Divinely Authorized

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16

"All Scripture is . . . profitable" in four ways: for *doctrine*—that's what's right; for *reproof*—that's what's not right; for *correction*—that's how to get right; and for *instruction in righteousness*—that's how to stay right.

Mark and Barnabas

Paul and Barnabas remained friends (1 Cor 9:6), though they soon separated over John Mark (Acts 15:36-40) who had deserted them during the 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Paul later reinstates Mark (2

Tim 4:11). Paul, “being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God” (which marks their approval of Paul’s course) went with Silas through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus, his native island.

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

Dead to the Law

The law cannot try a dead man.

- Dead to the law Rom 7:4; 6:14
- Where did YOU die? Gal 2:20
- Buried with Him Rom 6:3,4
- (“Body”: 3X) Mt 27:58-60
- Raised with Him Rom 6:8-11
- Ascended, seated with Him Eph 2:4-6
- Saved, sanctified, & kept—by Grace!

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.

The Law made no provision beyond death. This is the **key verse** in Galatians! (Memorize it! Live it!) The Believer is not under the law, but grace (Rom 6:14):

...loosed from the law	Rom 7:2
...delivered from the law	Rom 7:6
...Christ = end of the law	Rom 10:4; 7:4
...free from the law	Rom 8:2

The Law cannot punish a man twice—we have the certificate of debt (Col 2:14—nailed to the Cross!). Church = His Body (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 5:30; Col 1:18). When did God start dealing with us? Before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-5).

Law vs. Grace (contrasted)

- [Stoned for sticks] Num 15:32-36
- Rebellious Son Stoned Deut 21:18
- Prodigal Son Luke 15:20
- Adulteress stoned Lev 20:10
- Go and sin no more John 8:11

The Law

The Law is perfect: *Which is why imperfect men cannot keep it.*
 The Law is holy: *Which is why sinners are condemned by it.*
 The Law is just: *Therefore cannot show mercy to the guilty.*

The Law prohibits; *Grace invites and gives.*
 The Law condemns the sinner; *Grace redeems the sinner.*
 The Law reveals sin; *Grace atones for sin.*

By the Law is the knowledge of sin; *By Grace is redemption from sin.*
 The Law was given by Moses; *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*
 The Law demands obedience; *Grace bestows & gives power to obey.*

The Law says do and do not; *Grace says “It is done.”*
 The Law says, Continue to be holy; *Grace says, It is finished.*
 The Law curses; *Grace blesses.*

The Law slays the sinner; *Grace makes the sinner alive.*
 The Law shuts every mouth before God; *Grace opens the mouth to praise God.*
 The Law condemns the best man; *Grace saves the worst man.*

The Law says, pay what you owe; *Grace says, I freely forgive you all.*
 The Law says “The wages of sin is death”; *Grace says, “The gift of God is eternal life.”*
 The Law says, “The soul that sinneth it shall die”; *Grace says, Believe and live.*

The Law was done away in Christ; *Grace abides forever.*
 The Law puts us under bondage; *Grace sets us in the liberty of the sons of God (Rom 12:1).*

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

Cf. Gal 3:21,22; Rom 3:28.

Next Session

Read Galatians Chapter 3. We will now enter the strictly doctrinal part of Paul’s epistle.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 4

Chapter 3: Part 1

Galatians Outline

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- **Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4**
 - **The new relation it effects Gal 3**
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18

Law vs. Grace

Chapters 3 and 4 are doctrinal: in them Paul explains the relationship between law and grace. Three words are repeated frequently: faith (14X); law (19X); and, promise (11X).

Paul presents six arguments, three in each chapter, seeking to prove that salvation is by grace, through faith, *apart* from the works of the Law.

Six Arguments

- 1) **The Personal Argument Gal 3:1–5**
- 2) The Scriptural Argument Gal 3:6–14
- 3) The Logical Argument Gal 3:15–29
- 4) The Dispensational Argument Gal 4:1–11
- 5) The Sentimental Argument Gal 4:12–18
- 6) The Allegorical Argument Gal 4:19–31

- 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?

Paul's tone was direct and severe: You foolish Galatians! To embrace a doctrine which declared the death of Christ unnecessary was irrational (cf. Gal 2:21).

“Bewitched”? Strange word. It would almost appear they had been cast under some evil spell. They had lost their grasp of the truth.

“...evidently set forth”: For this they were without excuse: προγράφω *prographo*: to write before (of time); set forth or designated beforehand (in the OT Scriptures); to depict or portray openly; to write before the eyes of all who can read;

“...crucified”: Paul had vividly and graphically proclaimed the crucified Christ to the Galatians; yet their eyes had been diverted from the Cross to the Law. They were without excuse.

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

1) How did you receive the Holy Spirit? The first of four questions. This rhetorical question pointed to the time of their conversions, when they received the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 4:6). Thus Paul *did not question their salvation* but challenged them to consider whether they were saved and received the Spirit by faith or on the basis of works. It was of course by faith, when they heard Paul preach the gospel. *As an essentially Gentile church, they did not possess the Mosaic Law in any case.*

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

2) How will you then be sanctified? Presupposing the answer that the Galatians became Christians by faith, Paul asked if they were so foolish as to think they could begin the Christian life in one way (by faith) and move on to spiritual maturity in another (by works).

This was what the Judaizers promoted (cf. Gal 4:10; 5:2; 6:13), but the *means of justification and sanctification were (and are) the same*. There was no provision under the Law for the Holy Spirit to do a work of sanctification. The Galatian believers evidently thought that keeping the old Law would aid them in their spiritual lives, but it would not.

This is the key message of the letter: *Can we gain perfection (completion) by works of the flesh?*

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

3) Did you suffer in vain? This third question looked back on the persecution the apostles and new believers experienced in the region of Galatia. As Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps at the end of the first missionary journey, they warned the Galatian converts that they would suffer as Christians (Acts 14:21-22).

Persecution evidently soon followed, and Paul reminded them that if they turned from grace to Law they would brand their former position in error and would then have suffered so much for nothing. But the apostle was unwilling to believe that this was so. “Upon your believing, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13).

- 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?

4) On what basis did God perform miracles? That miracles were performed among the Galatians by divine power was recorded in the Book of Acts (Acts 14:3, 8-11). It was clear, furthermore, that these supernatural works were not the result of the works of the Law but from the hearing that leads to faith. The Galatians did not know the Law, and Paul’s message was that of justification by faith.

[Among the resources that we are indebted to is Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton, IL, 1983, 1985.]

Six Arguments

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) The Personal Argument | Gal 3:1–5 |
| 2) The Scriptural Argument | Gal 3:6–14 |
| 3) The Logical Argument | Gal 3:15–29 |
| 4) The Dispensational Argument | Gal 4:1–11 |
| 5) The Sentimental Argument | Gal 4:12–18 |
| 6) The Allegorical Argument | Gal 4:19–31 |

Six Old Testament Quotes

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1) Gal 3:6-7 | Gen 15:6 |
| 2) Gal 3:8-9 | Gen 12:3 |
| 3) Gal 3:10 | Deut 27:26 |
| 4) Gal 3:11 | Hab 2:4 |
| 5) Gal 3:12 | Lev 18:5 |
| 6) Gal 3:13-14 | Deut 21:23 |

By the Example of Abraham (3:6-9)

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

The Judaizers claimed to have the Old Testament on their side, especially looking to Moses as their teacher. But Paul went centuries farther back and said, Consider Abraham: (*He was a Gentile then.*)

How was he, the father of Jewish people, justified? The answer was simple and direct: Gen 15:6. Abraham’s faith in God’s ability to perform what He promised was accepted by God as righteousness and so the patriarch was justified—*before he was circumcised* (cf. Gen. 17:24). How then could the Judaizers insist that circumcision was essential to being accepted by God? [*What* did Abraham believe? The resurrection (of Isaac)!; Heb 11:19.]

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

“...children of Abraham”: υἱός *huios*: a son ; generally used of the offspring of men; in a restricted sense, the male offspring (one born by a father and of a mother); in a wider sense, a descendant, one of the posterity of any one; the children of Israel, sons of Abraham; used to describe one who depends on another or is his follower; a pupil.

υἱός *huios*

Son of man: a term describing man, carrying the connotation of weakness and mortality; used by Christ of Himself, doubtless in order that He might intimate his Messiahship and also that He might designate himself as the head of the human race, the man, the one who both furnished the pattern of the perfect man and acted on behalf of all mankind.

Christ seems to have preferred this to the other Messianic titles, because by its lowliness it was least suited to foster the expectation of an earthly Messiah in royal splendor.

Son of God: used to describe Adam (Lk 3:38) and those who are born again (Lk 20:36) and used of angels and of Jesus Christ. The term is used preeminently of Jesus Christ, as enjoying the supreme love of God, united to him in affectionate intimacy, privy to his saving councils, and obedient to the Father’s will in all his acts.

- 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.

The incident referenced was Gen 22:15-18; Heb 11:19; cf. James 2:20-22 (works of faith, not of the law). Striking a tremendous blow at the Judaizers, Paul linked the past with the present and declared that just as Abraham was saved by faith so were those who now claimed to be his children. Abraham and his spiritual descendants, both Jews and Gentiles, have all been declared righteous by faith.

This conclusion is in harmony with the Scripture which states that all nations will be blessed through Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3). Thus the justification of uncircumcised Gentiles was anticipated in the universal aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant when God announced the gospel (lit., “the good news”) to Abraham.

Scripture God-Breathed

It should not be overlooked that Paul referred to Scripture speaking as though God were speaking, so it can rightly be affirmed that what the Bible says, God says. This and similar verses (e.g., Jn 10:35b; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21) provide important support for believing in the absolute and total inspiration and authority of Scripture.

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

The apostle concluded this phase of his argument by stating that though provision was made for “all nations” (v. 8), only those who have faith receive the blessing of justification. Thus, Paul drew a distinction between God’s provision and human appropriation: “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom 11:6).

The Limitations of the Law (Gal 3:10-12)

- 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.

“...continueth not in all things...”: Contrary to what the Judaizers taught, the Law could not justify; it could only condemn: Paul quoted Deut 27:26 to show that the Law demanded perfection and that a curse was attached to failure to keep any part of it. The breaking of only one command even once brings a person under the curse; and since everybody fails at some point, all are under the curse. The proposition that a person can gain divine acceptance by human effort is therefore *totally destroyed*.

- 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.

It is impossible to summarize the impact of Habakkuk 2:4 has had on the history of the world...

The Reformation

In the year 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony, a baby boy was born to a poor coal miner. As he grew up and observed the poverty of his father, this boy, named Martin, chose to pursue a different vocation. He decided to become a lawyer, and in 1501 entered the University of Erfurt, where he excelled in his studies.

As he came to the end of his schooling in 1504, an event took place which changed his life. While he was walking the campus grounds, a storm broke so forcefully that Martin fell on his face in fear. The thunder was deafening and lightning struck all around him. Instinctively, he cried out to the patron saint of coal miners, whose name he had heard invoked during his childhood, “Saint Anne! Save me from the lightning. If you save me I will become a monk.” Shortly thereafter the storm stopped.

Being a man of his word, Martin withdrew from law school and entered an Augustinian monastery, where he applied himself so diligently that he obtained a Doctorate of Theology with a few years. But the more he studied, the more troubled his heart became, for although he was becoming an expert in theology, he lacked peace personally. The question he repeatedly wrote in his diary was: “How can a man find favor with God?” In search of such peace, Martin devoted himself to an exceedingly pious life-style. He would fast for ten to fifteen days at a time. When temperatures dropped below freezing, he slept outside without a blanket.

Between his studies, he beat his body until it was black and blue and bleeding—hoping that somehow by punishing his flesh, he could rid himself of the thoughts and motives that he knew were not right. (These were typical practices of the medieval church...)

He went to confession so many times a day that finally the abbot said, “Martin, either go out and commit a sin worth confessing or stop coming here so often!”

Martin was so introspective and continually plagued by what he knew of his own depravity and sinfulness. Once, while sitting at his desk writing theology, he felt the presence of Satan so tangibly that he grabbed a bottle of ink and hurled it across the room to where he thought the devil was standing. The bottle crashed against the wall and left a mark that can still be seen today.

Finally, in 1509, Martin decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome in hope of finding the elusive peace for which he longed. He set out on foot and crossed the Alps. On his descent, he almost died of a high fever before making his way to a monastery at the foot of the mountains where the Brothers nursed him back to health.

While there, a wise monk approached him and said, “You need to read the Book of Habakkuk.” And so Martin did just that. He read Habakkuk.

Good suggestion. Habakkuk was a struggler just like Martin: If God is good, why does He allow suffering? If there really is a devil, why doesn’t God just obliterate him? We throw out questions, then plunge into our personal pursuits—and wonder why we don’t get answers.

One verse captured Martin’s imagination: Hab 2:4. “The just shall live by faith.” He couldn’t get it out of his mind.

Having recovered sufficiently to continue his journey to Rome, he went to the Church of St. John’s Lateran, a typical cathedral of that day. There is a staircase there that is said to be from Pilate’s judgment hall. The existing stairs are four parts: the special inner two are said to have been transported there miraculously from Jerusalem. The outer two are ordinary. The inner steps are not walked on. Here pilgrims mount painfully on their knees, a step at a time, saying prayers as they go. The pope had promised an indulgence to all who would undergo this rite.

As Martin repeated his prayers on the Lateran staircase, Hab 2:4 suddenly came into his mind: “The just shall live by faith.”

He ceased his prayers, returned to the University of Wittenberg, went on to explore the revolutionary idea of “justification by faith,” and ultimately nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, and started the movement known today as the Reformation—the single most important event in modern history.¹ His name, of course, was Martin Luther.

The leadership didn’t like the implications of his views and ultimately, at the Diet (council) of Worms (a town) they excommunicated him as a heretic. He went on to write commentaries that are classics today; hymns like “A Mighty Fortress is our God,” and translated the entire Bible into German, a classic which remains the literary masterpiece in the Germanic tongue.

Endnote:

1. Manuscript by his son D. Paul Luther preserved in the library at Rudolstadt, quoted by F.W. Boreham in *A Bunch of Everlastings or Texts That Made History*, Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1920, p.20. Also, see Courson, p. 33-38.

* * *

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

This verse led to a Trilogy of epistles in NT: “The Just Shall Live by Faith”

The Just...	Romans	Rom 1:17
...Shall live...	Galatians	Gal 3:11
...By Faith!	Hebrews	Heb 10:39

This implies that Paul wrote *all three!* Each use Hab 2:4 as a cornerstone.

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

“...the law is not of faith”: Quoting again from the Old Testament, Paul proved that Law and faith are mutually exclusive (Lev 18:5). Only perfect performance could win divine approval under the Law, but since that was not achievable the Law could only condemn a person and cause him to cast himself on God in faith (cf. James 2:10).

- 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:

The positive side of Paul’s argument emphasized that there is hope for all who have broken the Law and are therefore under its curse. That hope is not in man but in Christ who redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

“...Christ hath redeemed us...”: But *how* did Christ redeem (evxagora, *zw exagorazo*, lit., “buy out of slavery”? By becoming a curse for us. This is a strong declaration of substitutionary redemption whereby Christ took the penalty of all guilty lawbreakers on Himself. Thus the “curse of the Law” was transferred from sinners to Christ, the sinless One, and He delivered people from it (1 Pet 3:18).

“...hangeth on a tree...”: ξύλον *xulon* means wood, not usually tree; it was used of gallows, crosses, etc. (Deut 21:23). In Old Testament times

criminals were executed (normally by stoning) and then displayed on a stake or post to show God's divine rejection. When Christ was crucified, it was evidence He had come under the curse of God. The manner of His death was a great obstacle to faith for Jews until they realized the curse He bore was for *them* (cf. Isa. 53; Ps 22).

Christ Was "Made a Curse for Us"

When?

- in His incarnation? When He was born He was called "... that holy thing ..." (Lk 1:35).
- during those silent years of which we have so little record? He advanced "... in favor with God and man" (Lk 2:52).
- during his ministry? It was during His ministry that the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).
- while He was on the cross? Not during the first three hours on the cross, because when He offered up Himself, He was without blemish..

It was during those last three hours on the cross that He was made a curse for us. It was then that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and put Him to grief. He made His soul an offering for sin (Isa 53:10).

And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Numbers 21:6-9

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

- 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.

Two purposes for Christ's redemptive work are given, each introduced by the Greek conjunction *ὥστε hina*, "in order that" (cf. Gal 4:5):

1) Gentiles might receive the blessing given to Abraham; as already stated (Gal 3:8). This is a reference not to personal or national blessings but to the promised blessing of justification apart from works of the Law, available to all who believe;

2) All who thus believe might receive the promise of the Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, who was promised (cf. v. 2).

"...through faith": Again the apostle emphasized that salvation *and sanctification* come by faith, not by works.

Six OT Quotes

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| 1) Gal 3:6-7 | Gen 15:6 |
| 2) Gal 3:8-9 | Gen 12:3 |
| 3) Gal 3:10 | Deut 27:26 |
| 4) Gal 3:11 | Hab 2:4 |
| 5) Gal 3:12 | Lev 18:5 |
| 6) Gal 3:13-14 | Deut 21:23 |

Next Session

The Logical Argument—Galatians 3:15-29.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 5

Chapter 3: Part 2

Galatians: Liberation Through the Gospel

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- **Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4**
 - **The new relation it effects Gal 3**
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18

Law vs. Grace

Chapters 3 and 4 are doctrinal: in them Paul explains the relationship between law and grace. Three words are repeated frequently:

- faith (14X)
- law (19X)
- promise (11X)

Paul presents six arguments, three in each chapter, seeking to prove that salvation is by grace, through faith, *apart* from the works of the Law

Six Arguments

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) The Personal Argument | Gal 3:1–5 |
| 2) The Scriptural Argument | Gal 3:6–14 |
| 3) The Logical Argument | Gal 3:15–29 |
| 4) The Dispensational Argument | Gal 4:1–11 |
| 5) The Sentimental Argument | Gal 4:12–18 |
| 6) The Allegorical Argument | Gal 4:19–31 |

The Scriptural Argument: Review

1) Gal 3:6,7 quotes Gen 15:6

The Judaizers pointed to Abraham, the “father of the Jews,” as their example, and Paul does the same thing. How was Abraham saved? By faith! And all who trust Christ are children of Abraham, the father of the believing (Cf. Rom 4:1–8).

2) Gal 3:8,9 quote Gen 12:3

God promised to bless the heathen (Gentiles) through Abraham, which means that Jews and Gentiles are saved the very same way. The gospel Abraham believed was the good news that God would bless Abraham and make him a mighty nation. Abraham believed this promise and this faith was accounted for righteousness. The “gospel” that Abraham believed was certainly not the full Gospel of the grace of God that we preach today; even the apostles did not fully understand the meaning of Christ’s death until it was explained to them.

3) Gal 3:10 quotes Deut 27:26

“You want to be saved by the works of the law? But the law does not save—it curses!”

4) Gal 3:11 quotes Hab 2:4

“The just shall live by faith” (Cf. Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38). This little verse from Habakkuk is so rich that God wrote three NT commentaries on it!

5) Gal 3:12 quotes Lev 18:5

There is a vast difference between “doing” and “believing”! Nobody was ever saved by doing the Law, because nobody can ever fully obey the Law.

6) Gal 3:13-14 quote Deut 21:23

The law puts us under a curse, but Christ died to remove that curse. He died on a tree (the Cross—1 Peter 2:24) and fulfilled the word given in Deuteronomy. Because He has taken our curse upon Himself, we are free to live in Christ. The blessing God promised Abraham is now available to the Gentiles by faith.

The Logical Argument (Gal 3:15-29)

- 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.

Even if Paul’s opponents admitted that Abraham was justified by faith, those Judaizers might have argued that the Law, coming at a later time, entirely changed the basis for achieving salvation. To refute this, Paul declared that just as a properly executed Roman covenant (or will, based on ancient Greek law) cannot arbitrarily be set aside or changed, so the promises of God are immutable.

Further, the promises spoken to Abraham and to his seed were not fulfilled before the giving of the Law. Rather, they found fulfillment in Christ and are in effect forever. The blessing of justification by faith is therefore permanent and could not be changed by the Law.

- 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.

“...Abraham and his seed...”: The stress on **seed**, singular (cf. Gen 12:7; 13:15; 24:7), not **seeds**, plural was made simply to remind the readers that the faithful in Israel had always recognized that blessing would ultimately come through a single individual, the Messiah (cf. Gal 3:19).

And Matthew declared Christ to be *the* Son of Abraham and the true Heir to the First Covenant's promises (Mt 1:1).

The word *seed* refers specifically to Christ (Cf. Gen 22:18). Christ said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (Jn 8:56).

- 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.

Finally, Paul applied the principle of the permanence of faith by affirming that a covenant made so long before could not possibly be altered by a later giving of the Law. The Law was given 430 years *after* the promise (Ex 12:40).

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

Additionally, the Law could not alter God's dealing with Abraham on the basis of a promise because the two are fundamentally different in nature. They do not commingle; they cannot be combined. Instead, the inheritance (i.e., justification by faith) was given by God as an *unconditional gift* to those who believe.

Contrary to the claim of the Judaizers, obedience to the Law was not necessary to gain the inheritance. God's way of salvation has always been *by grace through faith*. The promise concerning Christ was made *before* the Mosaic Law was given, and that promise holds as good as though there had been no Law given. The promise was made irrespective of the Law.

- 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.

Moses is represented as receiving the law from an angel (Acts 7:38; Heb 2:2; Deut 33:2, LXX). It was given to *reveal* not *remove* sin. An indignant Judaizer was sure to respond with objections to Paul's insistence that the Law:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1) could not give the Holy Spirit | vv.1-5 |
| 2) could not bring justification | vv.6-9 |
| 3) could not alter the permanence of faith | vv. 5-18 |
| 4) but does bring a curse | vv.10-12 |

Wherefore the Law?

1) The Law was added to give sin the character of transgressions. Men had been sinning before the Moses but, in the absence of the Law, their sins were not put to their account (Rom 5:13). The Law gave to sin the character of transgression: i.e., personal guilt. Since men not only continued to sin after the Law was given, but were provoked to transgress by the very Law which forbade it (Rom 7:8), it conclusively proved the inveterate sinfulness of man's nature (Rom 7:11-13).

2) The Law, therefore, "concluded all under sin" (Rom 3:19-20,23).

3) The Law was an ad interim dealing, "till the seed should come" (Gal 3:16).

4) The Law shut sinful man up to faith as the only avenue of escape (Gal 3:23).

5) The Law was to the Jews what the child-discipliner was in a Greek household, a custodian of the children in their minority, and it has this character until Christ (Gal 3:23-25).

6) Christ having come, the believer becomes a disciple of Christ Himself (Mt 11:29; Lk 10:39; Jn 17:6-8; Tit 2:11-13).

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

Closely related to the last part of verse 19, a mediator implies a covenant between two parties both of whom have responsibilities, facts true of the Mosaic Covenant. On the other hand God is One, that is, the "promise" (v.19) was *unilateral*—thus, unconditional—and was given to man directly without a mediator, God alone having responsibility for fulfilling it.

- 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.

"God forbid": Is there conflict between the Law and the promises of God? "Perish the thought" (μή γένοιτο *mai genoito*), declared the apostle. God gave both the Law and promises, but for different purposes. And it was not the purpose of the Law to give life.

Theoretically salvation could have come by the Law if people had been capable of keeping it perfectly, but they could not (Rom 8:3-4). The life promised to those who sought to obey the Law refers to temporal blessing on earth (Deut 8:1). Cf. The Gethsemane prayer(s)... But if the Law is not opposed to the promises, if there is no conflict between them, how can their harmony be demonstrated? By recognizing that while the Law could not justify or give life, it did prepare the way for the gospel.

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

What part then did Law play in this respect? *It declared the whole world a prisoner of sin.* Referring perhaps to Psalm 143:1-2 or Deut 27:26, Paul declared that the whole world is trapped and under the dominion of sin (cf. Rom 3:9, 23).

When people recognize this and give up attempts to please God by their own works, the way is prepared for them to receive the promise of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

“...to them that believe”: “God helps those who help themselves”? NO! *God helps those who come to the end of themselves!*

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

Paul used two figures of speech, likening the Law to a prison and to a child-custodian relationship.

“Before this faith came” means before the advent of faith in Jesus Christ (Cf. Gal 3:22). Justifying faith was operative in the Old Testament, but faith in the person and work of Christ did not come until He was revealed. Before that, Israel was under the protective custody of the Law, God thus shielding His people from the evil heathen rites surrounding them.

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

“...schoolmaster”: παιδαγωγός *paidagogos* The pedagogue was a slave to whom a son was committed from age six or seven to puberty. These slaves were severe disciplinarians and were charged with guarding the children from the evils of society and giving them moral training.

The Law of Moses

Given in three parts: 1) Commandments: expressing the righteous will of God (Ex 20:1-26); 2) Judgments: governing the social life of Israel (Ex 21:1-24:11); 3) Ordinances: governing the religious life in Israel (Ex 24:12; 31:18).

When an Israelite sinned, he was held “blameless” if he brought the required offering (Lk 1:6; Phil 3:6). This was a dispensation which extended from the giving of the Law to the death of Jesus Christ (Gal 3:13,14,23,24). The attempt of the legalistic teachers (Acts 15:1-31; Gal 2:1-5) to mingle Law with grace during the dispensation of the church brought out the true relation of the Law to the Christian.

The Christian Doctrine of the Law

The Law is in contrast to grace. Under grace God bestows the righteousness which, under Law, He demanded (Ex 19:5; Jn 1:17; Rom 3:21; 10:3-10; 1 Cor 1:30). The law is, in itself, holy just, good, and spiritual (Rom 7:12-14). Before the Law the whole world is guilty, and the Law is, therefore, of necessity a ministry of condemnation, death, and divine curse (Rom 3:19; 2 Cor 3:7-9; Gal 3:10).

Christ bore the curse of the Law, and redeemed the believer both from the curse and from the dominion of the Law (Gal 3:13; 4:5-7). The Law neither justifies a sinner nor sanctifies a believer (Gal 2:16; 3:2,3,11,12). The believer is both dead to the Law and redeemed from it, so that he is “not under the Law, but under grace” (Rom 6:14; 7:4; Gal 2:19; 4:4-7; 1 Tim 1:8,9).

Under the new covenant of grace the principle of obedience to the divine will is inwrought (Heb 10:16). So far is the life of the believer from the anarchy of self-will that he is “in-lawed to Christ” (1 Cor 9:21) and the new “law of Christ” (Gal 6:2; 2 Jn 5) is his delight; whereas through the indwelling Spirit, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in him (Rom 8:2-4; Gal 5:16-18). The commandments are used in the distinctively Christian Scriptures as *an instruction in righteousness* (2 Tim 3:16,17; Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 9:8,9; Eph 6:1-3).

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

“...schoolmaster”: παιδαγωγός *paidagogos* a tutor; a guardian. Among the Greeks and the Romans a trustworthy slave who was charged with

the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed even to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.

The pedagogue's authority ceased when the "child" became a son (Gal 4:1-6) and the minor became an adult (Heb 12:5-10; 1 Jn 2:1,2). This was like the Law's function until Christ came and people could be justified by faith in Him.

The Law did not *lead us to* Christ but that it was the disciplinarian *until* Christ came. Thus, the reign of Law has ended since faith in Christ has delivered believers from the protective custody of the prison and the harsh discipline of the pedagogue.

Recap: Why the Law?

"But why then did God even give the Law?" his objectors would argue. Paul gave three answers:

1) The Law was Temporary and Only for Israel (vv. 19-20)

God never gave the Law to the Gentiles. The moral law was already written in the Gentiles' hearts (Rom 2:14,15; Acts 15:24). But the ceremonial Law (including the Sabbath Laws) was never given to the Gentiles. The Law was "added" and was not a replacement for the Abrahamic promises. Once the Seed (Christ) came, the Law was superseded.

"But the Law was given with such glory!" the Judaizers would reply. "How can you say it was only temporary?"

Paul is ready with an answer: the Law was given by angelic mediators, but God spoke personally to Abraham. God is one—and the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham depended on Him alone.

2) The Law Convicted Us of Sin but Never Saved Us from Sin (vv. 21-22)

If there were a law that saved sinners, then God would have spared His Son and used that law instead of the cross. The Law is not contrary to God's promises; by revealing sin, the Law forces the sinner to trust God's promises. The Law shows us our need of grace; grace enables us to please God through faith. The Law places all under sin, which means that all can be saved by grace. If God permitted even one sinner

to be saved by the Law, then no man could be saved by grace. All must be saved the same way.

3) The Law Prepared the Way for Christ (vv. 23-29)

"Before the faith we now know came, the law shut men up, revealing their need for a Savior." The Law was God's "schoolmaster" (tutor) for the Jews in their national infancy. The Greek and Roman tutor used to guard and teach the minor children until they reached legal adulthood, after which the children were on their own. The Law kept the Jews "in line," so to speak, until Christ came and the full revelation of the Gospel was given to Jews and Gentiles.

The Believer's Present Position

[*Three changes are noted:*] Paul's vindication of the doctrine of *justification* by faith reached a climax in this section as he contrasts the position of a justified sinner with what he *had been* under the Law.

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

1. All who believe in Christ become sons of God. The change in person from the first to the second "ye" indicates that Paul turned from looking at Israel as a nation to address the Galatian believers personally. Under the dispensation of the Law, v.24, the Law was a disciplining pedagogue, and those under its supervision were regarded as children.

However, now that Christ had come, the Galatian believers were adult sons through faith and were no longer under a Jewish slave-guardian. Why should they seek to revert to their inferior status?

Legitimacy

Huios: legitimate sons of God (Cf. Jn 1:11,12). In contrast to His "il-legitimacy" (Ps 69:8-12).

Psalm 69

Next to Psalm 22, it is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. Psalm 22 deals with the death of Christ; Psalm 69 deals with the life of Christ. It is quoted in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and in Acts and Romans (there are also many references to it beyond those actual quotations). It includes allusions to the boyhood of Jesus in Nazareth...

I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children...When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.

Psalm 69:8, 10-12

The Strange Prophecy

1. Perez
2. Hezron
3. Ram
4. Amminadab
5. Nahshon
6. Salmon
7. Boaz
8. Obed
9. Jesse
10. David

And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

Ruth 4:12

A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 23:2

Messianic Genealogy

The most distinguished Family Tree in history: encrypted in the Torah (Gen 38); prophesied in Judges (Ruth 4); evades the blood curse on Jeconiah (Jer 22:30); culminating in the Virgin Birth (Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; Ps 69, 110).

- 27] For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

“...baptized into”: The exalted position of “sons of God” involves a living union with Christ brought about by being baptized into Christ. This is the baptism of (or in) the Holy Spirit, which according to Paul joins all believers to Christ and unites them within the church, Christ’s body (1 Cor 12:12-13).

Baptism

He does not mean that one enters into Christ and so is saved by means of baptism after the teaching of the mystery religions, but just the opposite. We are justified by faith *in Christ*, not by circumcision or by baptism. But baptism was the public profession and pledge, the soldier’s *sacramentum*, oath of fealty to Christ, taking one’s stand with Christ, the symbolic picture of the change wrought by faith already (Rom 6:4-6).

[Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Logos Research Systems, Oak Harbor, 1997.]

This union with Him means being clothed with Christ. In the Roman society when a youth came of age he was given a special toga, which admitted him to the full rights of the family and state and indicated he was a grown-up son. So the Galatian believers had laid aside the old garments of the Law and had put on Christ’s robe of righteousness which grants full acceptance before God. Who would want to don again the old clothing?

“...many of you...”: A key to understanding Galatians is the use of the two pronouns, “we” and “us.” Paul was a Jew, writing to a Gentile church. When “we” or “us” is used, it refers to Israel; but the “ye” and “you” refers to the Gentiles (Cf. vv. 23-27, 29).

- 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.

2. Since all believers became one with each other, human distinctions lose their significance. None is spiritually superior over another, that is, a believing Jew is not more privileged before God than a believing Gentile (Greek, in contrast to Jew, suggests all Gentiles) cf. Col. 3:11.

A believing slave does not rank higher than a believing free person; a believing man is not superior to a believing woman. Paul cut across these distinctions and stated that they do not exist in the body of Christ so far as spiritual privilege and position are concerned.

Elsewhere, while affirming the coequality of man and woman in Christ, Paul did nonetheless make it clear that there is a headship of the man over the woman (cf. 1 Cor 11:3) and that there are distinctions in the area of spiritual service (cf. 1 Tim 2:12).

- 29] And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

3. Believers in Christ are Abraham’s seed. As Paul previously stated, Christ is *the* Seed of Abraham (vv. 16, 19). Therefore, being in Christ makes a believer a part of that seed and an heir of the promise to Abraham.

Any discussion of the seed of Abraham must first take into account his natural seed, the descendants of Jacob in the 12 tribes. *Within* this natural seed there is a believing remnant of Jews who will one day inherit the Abrahamic promises directed specifically to them (cf. Rom 9:6, 8).

But there is also the spiritual seed of Abraham who are not Jews. These are the Gentiles who believe and become Abraham’s spiritual seed. They inherit the promise of justification by faith as Paul explained earlier.(cf. Gal 3:6-9).

To suggest, as amillennialists do, that Gentile believers inherit the national promises given to the believing Jewish remnant—that the church thus supplants Israel or is the “new Israel”—is to read into these verses what is not there.

[Alternative issue in Acts 15: Then what is to become of Israel *eschatologically*? Reread James’ quote from Amos 9:11, 12. For a study of Israel and the Church, see our Briefing Package on *The Prodigal Heirs*; for the post-Biblical history of Israel see *Betrayal of the Chosen*.]

Next Session

Read Galatians 4: The privileges which the Gospel releases.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 6 Chapter 4

Galatians Outline

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- **Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4**
 - The new relation it effects Gal 3
 - **The privileges it releases Gal 4**
- The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18

Six Arguments

- 1) The Personal Argument Gal 3:1–5
- 2) The Scriptural Argument Gal 3:6–14
- 3) The Logical Argument Gal 3:15–29
- 4) The Dispensational Argument Gal 4:1–11**
- 5) The Sentimental Argument Gal 4:12–18
- 6) The Allegorical Argument Gal 4:19–31

Dispensational View

In this next section of the epistle, Paul highlights an interesting distinction which can help us discern the relative place of the Old Testament believers with those of us in this present dispensation.

It is important to recognize that in *all* dispensations it was necessary for men to be “born again” in order to become the “sons of God” (*Beni HaElohim*). The new birth has always been on the basis of faith in the divine revelation: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

Throughout all the ages, every adult was begotten by faith in the word of truth. Children, before the age of accountability were imputed an exception: “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” (Mt 18:14). But it is just as necessary that children be born again as in the case of adults: “that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

The Dispensational Argument (Gal 4:1-11)

In Old Testament times, not all God’s children were recognized as sons. Minor children were not recognized as their father’s heirs until they were officially adopted as sons. The first seven verses of Galatians 4 presents this important perspective from the household of that day:

Child vs. Heir

- 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;

To illustrate the spiritual immaturity of those who lived under the Mosaic Law, Paul reminds the Galatian believers of certain characteristics of an heir as a minor child.

“...child”: *νήπιος nepios*, “infant, young child; without speech”; in contrast with *huios*, “son” (Gal 3:7, 26).

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

Though by birthright he would eventually own the entire estate, he nevertheless was kept in subservience like a slave in that he enjoyed no freedom and could make no decisions. In fact, the heir as a child was

under guardians (ἐπίτροπος *epitropos* , different from the παιδαγωγός in 3:24-25) who watched over his person, and trustees who protected his estate.

This was true until he came of age as a son, an age that varied in the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman societies. Under Roman law, the age of maturity for a child was set by his father and involved a ceremonial donning of the *toga virilis* and his formal acknowledgment as son and heir.

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

Paul applied the illustration in order to show the contrast between the believers' former position and what they now enjoyed. Formerly, in their state of spiritual immaturity (when we were children, νηπιον), they were like slaves.

“...elements of the world”: The scope of that slavery was described as being under the basic rudiments (στοιχεῖον *stoicheion*) of the world. Though often interpreted as a reference to the Mosaic Law, this view does not seem to fit the Galatians, most of whom were Gentile pagans before conversion and were never under the Law.

It seems better to understand the “elements of the world” to refer to the elementary stages of *religious experience*, whether of Jews under the Law or Gentiles in bondage to heathen religions (cf. “weak and miserable principles,” v. 9; and “basic principles of this world,” Col 2:20). Thus all were enslaved until Christ came to emancipate them.

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

“...fulness of time”: As explained in verse 2, that is the time appointed by the Father. As a human father chose the time for his child to become an adult son, so the heavenly Father chose the time for the coming of Christ to make provision for people's transition from bondage under Law to spiritual sonship.

This “fulness of the time” was:

- 1) when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel;
- 2) when the Grecian civilization provided a language which was adopted as the *lingua franca* of the empire; and

- 3) when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the Messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world.
- 4) as Gabriel had precisely predicted to Daniel, the 69 weeks were about to mature...Dan 9:24-27.

“...sent forth His Son”: It was then that God sent His Son, the preexistent One, out of heaven and to earth on a mission.

“...made of a woman”: The “Son” was not only Deity; He was also humanity as the expression born of a woman indicates (v.4 emphasizes the Eternal Sonship of Christ: 1 Jn 4:9, 10; Jn 3:16; et al.).

The reference to His mother only harmonizes with the doctrine of the virgin birth as taught in the Gospels (cf. Mt 1:18). [Why a virgin birth? Gen 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; curse on Jeconiah, cf Jer 22:24-30. See our Briefing Package on *The Christmas Story* for an in-depth study.]

“...made under the Law”: Further, Christ was born under Law as a Jew; He kept the Law perfectly and fulfilled it (cf. Mt. 5:17); and finally paid its curse (cf. Gal. 3:13). He was “made sin for us” (2 Cor 5:21).

Adoption as Sons

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

“To redeem them”: **First**, He came to redeem those under Law. (ἐξαγοράζω *exagorazo*). This is not a redemption from the curse of the Law (as in Gal 3:13), but from a slavery to the entire Mosaic system. The emphasis is not on the *penalty* of the Law as in 3:13, but on its *bondage*. Since Christ redeemed and set free those who were under the Law, why should Gentile converts now wish to be placed under it?

“...adoption of sons”: **Second**, Christ's Incarnation and death secured for believers the full rights of sons (“the adoption of sons,” KJV). All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to those who have entered into the benefits of Christ's redemptive work.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:17

What does *that* mean? (!)

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

“...Spirit of His Son”: God the Father not only “sent His Son”; *He also sent the Spirit*. Thus, the full Trinity is involved in the work of salvation. The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer because of sonship. No sons or daughters lack the Spirit. Further, He is present within each believer’s heart to give evidence of that one’s position in God’s family.

“...Abba...”: The Spirit moves the believer to pray to God, addressing Him as Abba, Father (Rom 8:15). The word “Abba” is the Aramaic word for “Father.” *Abba* is the diminutive form used by small children in addressing their fathers—it is appropriate to compare to the English word “Daddy.” Used by Christ in Gethsemane (Mk 14:36). This familiar form indicates intimacy and trust as opposed to the formalism of legalism (Cf. Rom 8:15, 16).

Hebrew Alphabet Lesson

- א *Aleph* = “first, or leader”
- ב *Beth* = “house”
- אב *Ab* = “the Leader of the House” = “father”
- ה *Heh* = “essence, breath or spirit”
- אהב *Ahab* = the essence of the father = “love” (John 3:16)

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

To conclude, Paul declared that the Galatians were no longer slaves, but were sons and heirs. [The plural forms in verse 6 were replaced by the singular forms in verse 7, thus making the application more direct and personal.] In God’s family, sonship carries with it heirship (Cf. Rom 8:14-17).

However, it is interesting to notice that after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, He said to Mary, “...Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God.” (Jn 20:17). Notice: “my” and “your”; not “our.” His own relationship is unique, from eternity (Jn 1:1-3).

We are still merely creatures. He is our creator. “He was crucified on a cross of wood. Yet He made the hill on which it stood.”

In John 20:17, He was fulfilling Psalm 22:22: “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.” In a sense, He has entrusted the honor of His name to us. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (Ex

20:7). This did not refer to swearing or profanity: they were called by the name of the Lord and were responsible to magnify His name. Our wicked and corrupt behavior reflects on Him (Rom 2:24; 1 Tim 6:1; et al.).

An Appeal Not to Turn to Legalism (Gal 4:8-11)

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

Prior to conversion the Galatians, in their ignorance of the one true God, they were misled by pagan priestcraft into bondage to false gods such as Zeus and Hermes (cf. Acts 14:11-13).

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

“...known of God”: γινώσκω *ginosko*: to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of; perceive, feel; to become known; also, idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman (tense: second aorist; voice: active; mood: participle).

But a great change took place and they came to know God (salvation from the perspective of man), and to be known by God (salvation from God’s perspective). Yet having come to know (*gnontes*, from γινώσκω “to know intimately and on a personal level”) the true God, the Galatians were giving up the liberty and light of Christianity for the twilight and bondage of Judaism.

“...weak and beggarly elements”: Paul was amazed and dismayed. Did they understand that they would be going back to a state of religious slavery? Was this their desire? If so, why would they be attracted to a system that was weak (it could not justify or energize for Godly living) and miserable (it could not provide an inheritance). The principles (*stoicheia*) of that system are “of the world,” as Paul had already said in verse 3.

There are only two religions in the world: the true and false. False religions are alike in that they say, “Something in my hand I bring.” The true religion revealed from heaven leads one to sing, “Nothing in my hand I bring.”

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Titus 3:5

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

The Jews' catechism is his calendar.

—Samson Raphael Hirsch

Under the influence of the Judaizers, the Galatians had begun to observe the Mosaic calendar. They kept special days (the 70 *HaMoyadim*, “the appointed times”: weekly Sabbaths and seasonal festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, etc.)

They observed these special times, thinking that they would thereby gain additional merit before God. But Paul had already made it clear that works could not be added to faith as grounds for either *justification* or *sanctification* (Cf. Col. 2:16, 17).

Paul does not object to these observances for he kept them himself as a Jew. He objected to Gentiles taking to them as a means of salvation.

Sabbaths?

The Sabbath day of rest has found fulfillment in Him who said, “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11:28) and “There remaineth therefore a rest [a true Sabbath] to the people of God” (Heb 4:9). Christ is our Passover (1 Cor 5:7,8), our Firstfruits, etc. (Jn 12:24). [For more on the Sabbath, see *The 7th Day* briefing. For a study of the Feasts, see our Briefing Package on *The Feasts of Israel*.]

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

Literally, “I have labored to the point of exhaustion” if their attachment to legalistic practices continued. The apostle’s words emphasized his strong antipathy toward legalistic religion. Some may make good impressions, but are not of us:

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1 John 2:19

The Sentimental Argument (Gal 4:12-18)

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

Intensifying his personal appeal, Paul challenged the Galatians, “Become like me, for I became like you, that is, become free from the Law as I am, for after my conversion I became like the Gentiles, no longer living under the Law” (1 Cor 9:20, 21). The irony, however, was that the Galatian Gentiles were putting themselves under the Law *after* their conversions.

The last clause of verse 12 also belongs with the following verses in which Paul related how he was received by the Galatians on his first visit to them (cf. Acts 13-14). At that time, he labored under the handicap of an illness but remained until he had preached the gospel to them.

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

Paul sought to touch their hearts by reminding them of those earlier days when he came to Antioch in Pisidia, and to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—all these were Galatian cities.

He came not with pomp and ceremony, nor to profess authority over them, but lowly, preaching Christ crucified (Cf. 2 Cor 12:9). Whatever his infirmity, the Galatians did not treat Paul with contempt or scorn as a weak messenger, but rather received him as one would receive an angel or even Christ Jesus Himself. [Was the affliction Paul’s eyes? Cf. Gal 4:15.]

14] And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

It is widely assumed that Paul’s infirmity involved his eyes—and that they were visibly distracting or offensive... yet they overlooked it or spared him any rejection. It is interesting that Paul healed many sick, but never healed himself—three times he prayed, but God’s grace had to be sufficient (cf. 2 Cor 12:9). This is a sobering rebuttal to those “faith healers” who maintain that we all are to be in perfect health or it indicates a lack of faith, or whatever...

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.

They had received Paul with joy, congratulating themselves that the apostle had preached in their midst. Their appreciation knew no limits; they would even have made the sacrifice of their eyes for Paul. *Why*

their eyes? This is the hint that some feel points to the nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh" as a disease of the eyes (cf. 2 Cor 12:7).

(The evidence is not conclusive. This could simply be a bold figure of speech to convey the high esteem the Galatians had had for the apostle—they would have given him their most precious possession.)

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

But now that had all changed. They no longer contemplated his presence among them with "joy." Rather, they now acted as though he had become their enemy, for the simple reason that he had been telling them the truth.

Telling the truth can be alienating. Yet, how fickle were these Galatians! They were turning against the Lord, the gospel of grace, and the messenger who brought them the news of justification by faith.

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

While Paul's attitude toward the Galatians was guileless, the legalists had improper motives. The apostle spoke the truth (v. 16); the Judaizers used flattery. They wanted to alienate (*ekkleisai*, lit., "to lock out") the Galatians from Paul and his teaching so that they would be followers instead of the false teachers and their influence. Paul came in self-denying service; the legalists came seeking to extend their influence.

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

In an interesting double use of the verb "be zealous" Paul said that the Judaizers were zealous to win over the Galatians so that the latter would be zealous for the Judaizers! Acknowledging that it was good for anyone to be sought after, Paul nonetheless insisted that the intention must be honorable, but in the case of the Judaizers it was not.

6) The Allegorical Argument (Gal 4:19–31)

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

The apostle, on the other hand, had always had good motives regarding the Galatians. Addressing them tenderly as my dear born ones (τέκνα μου *tekna mou*, an expression found only here in Paul's epistles), Paul

compared himself to a mother in the throes of birth pangs. He had experienced this once for their salvation; he was in travail again for their deliverance from false teachers.

Paul longed for these believers to be transformed into the image of Christ. This is in fact God's ideal and purpose—for Christ to live His life in, and then through, each believer (cf. Gal 2:20). Yet the apostle was perplexed and frustrated about the Galatians because he felt their spiritual development was being arrested.

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

He had a deep desire to be with them so that he could speak gently, though firmly, concerning his grave concerns. In a masterful stroke the apostle now turns to a Scriptural illustration to conclude his theological defense of justification by faith.

An Old Testament story from the life of Abraham enables Paul to review what he had already declared about contrasts between the Mosaic Law and grace, between works and faith. It also provides an opportunity for him to verbalize the pointed charge to the Galatians that they should cast out the legalizers (cf. v. 30).

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

The Galatians had not yet submitted to the bondage of the Law but they desired to. Paul desperately wanted to stop them and turn them back to a life under grace.

As a transition to what would immediately follow, he challenged the Galatians to be aware of or to understand what the Law really said (cf. Ex 19:16-21; 20:18,19).

The Allegory of Abraham (Gal 4:22-31)

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

By turning again to Abraham, Paul was appealing to the founder of the Jewish nation from whose physical descent all Jews traced their blessings. John the Baptist and Jesus declared that physical descent from Abraham was not enough, however, to guarantee spiritual blessing (Mt 3:9; Jn 8:37-44).

Addressed to justified but immature believers who, under the influence of legalistic teachers, “desire to be under the law” (1 Cor 3:1,2). It has, therefore, no application to a sinner seeking justification. It raises, and answers, for the 5th time in this Epistle, the question, “is the believer under the law?” (Cf. Gal 2:19-21; 3:1-3, 25-26; 4:4-6, 9-31).

The Old Covenant of Law

1. Symbolized by Hagar the slave-girl.
2. Ishmael, a son born after the flesh
3. Represents Jerusalem in Paul’s day, still in spiritual (and political) bondage.

The New Covenant of Grace

1. Symbolized by Sarah, the free woman.
2. Isaac, a son born miraculously by God’s promise.
3. Represents the heavenly Jerusalem which is free and glorious.

Paul reminded his readers that Abraham had two sons (those born later are not important to his illustration), and that they should consider which of the two they were most like.

One son, Isaac, was born of Sarah, the free woman; the other, Ishmael, was born of Hagar, the slave woman. According to ancient law and custom, the status of a mother affected the status of her son.

- 23] But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise.

A second contrast concerned the manner in which the sons were conceived. Ishmael was born in the ordinary way, that is, in the course of nature (the “flesh”) and requiring no miracle and no promise of God. In fact, he was the result of Abraham “trying to help God.” He represents the works of the flesh.

Isaac, on the other hand, was born as the result of a promise or prophecy, thus, faith. Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of childbearing, but God miraculously fulfilled His promise in bringing life out of the deadness of Sarah’s womb (Rom 4:18-21).

Isaac as a Type of Christ

- Supernaturally announced beforehand;
- Named before he was born (Gen 17:19);

- “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen 21:12; Rom 9:7; Heb 11:18);
- Offered as a substitutionary offering (Gen 22);
- Returned to Abraham after 3 days; etc.

In order to emphasize the contrast between Law and Grace Paul next used the historical events above as a type or an allegory, that is, he treated those two mothers figuratively (αλληγορέω). He did not in any sense deny the literal meaning of the story of Abraham, but he declared that that story, especially the matters relating to the conception of the two sons, contained an additional meaning.

Thus he compared the narrative to the conflict between Judaism and Christianity.

I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

Hosea 12:10

Now all these things happened unto them for types [τύπος τύπος]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

1 Cor 10:11

- 24] Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

First, the apostle pointed to two covenants:

1) The **Mosaic**, which had its origin at Mount Sinai. Those under this legal covenant were slaves. As Hagar brought forth a slave, so does the Law. (Greek form of the name Hagar—Agar— is synonymous with the Mosaic Law.)

2) The reader is expected to understand and supply the implicit reference to the **Abrahamic** Covenant, which was a gracious system represented by Sarah which through its Messianic promise brought forth children who are free.

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

Next, Paul pointed to two Jerusalems. Hagar also stood for the first century city of Jerusalem, a city enslaved to Rome and in slavery to the Law. Jerusalem at that time was the center of legal religion.

The reason the Jews were driven out of Jerusalem over 1900 years ago was because “they knew not the time of their visitation” (Lk 19:44). “We have no king but Caesar” (Jn 19:15). Indeed. “His blood be on us, and our children.” (Mt 27:25). They remain the children of Hagar; but the dark days of the Great Tribulation will bring another day, a day of repentance.

We should urge our Jewish friends to read Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; Psalm 69; Zechariah 12-14; and then read the Epistle to the Hebrews and Gospel of Matthew, and see what the Holy Spirit reveals to them.

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

We have:

- 1) Two women: Hagar and Sarah
- 2) Two sons: Ishmael and Isaac
- 3) Two covenants: law and grace
- 4) Two mountains: Sinai and Calvary
- 5) Two cities: earthly and heavenly Jerusalem

Read Hebrews 12:18-24. (Cf. Ex 19:9-13; 20:18ff.).

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

“...Jerusalem which is above...”: Sarah, on the other hand, corresponded to the New Jerusalem (above), the mother of all the children of grace. This heavenly city, which one day will come to earth (Rev. 21:2) is now the “city of the living God” (Heb 12:22); the home of departed believers of all ages. Paul uses the rabbinical idea that the heavenly Jerusalem corresponds to the one here to illustrate his point without endorsing their ideas (cf. Rev 21:2).

“Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20). Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb 11:10). Are you a citizen of heaven? Is this the citizenship that prioritizes your life?

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.

Isaiah 54:1 (following Isa 53!) prophesied the changing fortunes of Israel, which Paul applied to Sarah’s history. The barrenness of Israel in the Diaspora, having rejected her Messiah... Paul applies Isa 54:1 to the church.

The prophet refers to Sarah’s prolonged barrenness and Paul uses this fact as a figure for the progress and glory of Christianity (the new Jerusalem of freedom) in contrast with the old Jerusalem of bondage (the current Judaism). His thought has moved rapidly, but he does not lose his line.

Israel was prophesied to enter a period in which she was “not my people” (Hos 1, 2ff). Christ announced her subsequent blindness (in Lk 19:44), which Paul indicates will endure until the Church is complete (Rom 11:25). (Some suspect that there will be more saved *after* the rapture than prior.)

Yet, in an ultimate sense, her eventual fruitfulness also portrays her millennial blessings. Paul applied this passage (he did not claim it was fulfilled) in this context to Sarah, who though previously barren, was later blessed with a child, and who would ultimately enjoy a greater progeny than Hagar.

The Personal Application

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

In applying the truth from the Biblical illustration, Paul made three comparisons. **First**, Paul compared the birth of Isaac to that of Christians. As “Isaac” experienced a supernatural birth and was a child by means of a promise, so each believer experiences a supernatural birth (Jn 3:3, 5) and is a recipient of the promise of salvation (Gal 3:9, 22, 29).

“For the law was given to Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Are you a child of the promise? Or of bondage? As children of promise, Christians are in a distinct category and should not live as children of bondage.

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

Second, the apostle now compares Ishmael’s persecution of Isaac to the false teachers’ opposition to believers. Abraham celebrated the weaning of Isaac with a banquet. On that occasion Ishmael mocked Isaac, laughing derisively at the younger boy, since Ishmael was the elder son and assumed he would be heir to his father’s estate (Gen 21:8-9).

That early animosity has been perpetuated in the two peoples which descended from the two sons of Abraham and is seen in the current

Muslim-Israel tensions. [It is also significant to note that, despite the assumptions to the contrary, no Arab can trace his lineage to Ishmael!]

Paul likened the Judaizers to Ishmael as those who were born out of legalistic self-effort; he charged that they continued to persecute the true believers who were born by the power of the Spirit. With few exceptions Paul's persecution came from the Jews, the people in bondage to the Law.

- 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.

Third, Paul compared the action of Abraham to the obligation of the Galatians. When Sarah observed Ishmael mocking Isaac, she asked Abraham to expel the slave woman and her son lest Ishmael become a joint heir with Isaac. And God granted Sarah's request (Gen 21:10, 12). Get rid of your legalism!

This should remind Paul's readers that Law observance brought no inheritance in the family of God, and it also charged them to excommunicate the Judaizers and those who accepted their false doctrines!

A fundamental incompatibility remains between Law and grace, between a religion based on works and a religion based on faith. There are only two kinds. The first becomes the last, the last becomes the first. The barren wife (Sarah) becomes fruitful; the bondwoman (Hagar) is set aside. Grace supersedes the law.

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

In conclusion, Paul affirmed that he and the Galatian believers were not children of the slave woman who was driven away and was denied a share in the inheritance. Rather all believers are children of the free woman, "heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17).

Caveat

This "allegorizing" is a far cry from the practice of "allegorical interpretation"—followed by Origen, Augustine, and many others down through the ages and into the present day—in which the historical facts are relegated to a lower, less significant level and fanciful, hidden meanings unrelated to the text are considered vastly more important.

Paul does not deny the actual historical narrative, but he simply uses it in an allegorical sense to illustrate his point for the benefit of his readers

who are tempted to go under the burden of the law.

He puts a secondary meaning on the narrative, just as he uses τυπικῶς *typikōs* in 1 Cor 10:11 of the narrative. We need not press unduly the difference between allegory and type, for each is used in a variety of ways.

The allegory in one sense is a speaking parable like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, and the Good Shepherd in John 10. But allegory was also used by Philo and by Paul here for a secret meaning not obvious at first, one not in the mind of the writer, like our illustration which throws light on the point.

Paul was familiar with this rabbinical method of exegesis (Rabbi Akiba, for instance, who found a mystical sense in every hook and crook of the Hebrew letters) and makes skilful use of that knowledge here.

Please observe that Paul says here that he is using allegory, not ordinary interpretation. (It is not necessary to say that Paul intended his readers to believe that this allegory was designed by the narrative.) He illustrates his point by it.

Next Session

Study Galatians 5. In the two final chapters of the epistle, Paul deals with the practicalities which should be the result of our salvation: justification, and sanctification by faith.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 7 Chapter 5

Galatians: Liberation Through the Gospel

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4
 - The new relation it effects Gal 3
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- **The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6**
 - **Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15**
 - **Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18**

Four Contrasts: Galatians 5 & 6

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1) Liberty, Not Bondage | Gal 5:1-15 |
| 2) The Spirit, Not the Flesh | Gal 5:16-26 |
| 3) Others, Not Self | Gal 6:1-10 |
| 4) God's Glory, Not Man's Approval | Gal 6:11-18 |

Summary

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| • Free from the law | Rom 8:2 |
| • Dead to the law | Gal 2:19 |
| • Delivered from the law | Rom 7:6 |
| • Christ is the end of the law... | Rom 10:4 |

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

Liberty, Not Bondage

Galatians Chapter 5 opens with practical applications...this verse summarizes Chapter 4, where the theme is bondage and freedom. Paul declared that Christ was the great Liberator who set believers free from bondage. Grace, not law, is the greatest teacher and “controller” in the world (Titus 2:11-12).

...stand fast”: The apostle then appealed to the Galatians to stand firm in that liberty (1 Cor 16:13; Phil 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15), for having been delivered from their slavery to heathenism, they were now in danger of becoming entangled in slavery to the Mosaic Law.

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

It is not that the apostle condemned circumcision in itself, for he had Timothy circumcised (in Galatia) so that the young man would have a wider ministry (Acts 16:1-3). But Paul was strongly opposed to the Judaistic theology which *insisted* that circumcision was necessary for salvation. *Anyone who was circumcised for that reason added works to faith and demonstrated that he had not exercised saving faith in Christ.*

The Law Makes Every Man a Debtor

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

“Circumcision” in vv. 2-3 stands for the entire Mosaic system. People who put themselves under the Law become debtors to the whole system. The Law is a unit, and if a person puts himself under any part of it for justification, he is a “debtor” to the entire code with its requirements and its curse (Heb 3:10; James 2:10).

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Romans 11:6

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Romans 4:4,5

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

Turning to the Law has further dire implications which the Galatians were called on to consider: Anyone seeking justification by Law has been *alienated* (καταργέω render ineffective, nullify, cancel; destroy, abolish, do away with) from Christ, that is, such a person would not be living in a sphere where Christ was operative.

“...fallen from grace”: ἐκπίπτω *ekpipto*: to have been driven off of one's course... (sailing term). The issue here is not the possible loss of salvation, for “grace” is referred to not as salvation itself but as a *method* of salvation (cf. 2:21 where “a Law” route is mentioned as an unworkable way to come to Christ).

If the Galatians accepted circumcision as necessary for salvation, they would be leaving the grace system for the Mosaic Law system. The same error is repeated today when a believer leaves a church that emphasizes salvation by grace through faith and joins one which teaches that salvation depends on any specific rituals or observances.

“Law means I must do something for God; grace means that God does something for me.” How wonderful it is for the Christian to enjoy the liberty of grace! This means moving out of the bondage described in Romans Chapter 7 into the glorious liberty of Romans Chapter 8.

Paul's Sense of Urgency

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any

means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.
1 Corinthians 9:26-27

What was Paul afraid of?

Inheritance vs. Entrance

Entrance and inheriting are not the same thing. Paul's "paranoia" (1 Cor 9:27) was *not* about losing his salvation.

Inheritance (OT & NT) was a reward for faithfulness (e.g., Esau; Reuben; et al.). [Remember, the Prodigal Son never lost his sonship.]

Rewards: See 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11-15.

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

"...wait": ἀπεκδέχομαι *apekdechometha*; eagerly await (used 7X in the New Testament of the return of Christ: Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28)

In contrast with legalists, true believers by faith (not works) eagerly await the consummation of their salvation (Rom 8:18-25). Then the righteousness for which we hope will be fully realized (1 Pet 1:3-4, 13). At the coming of Christ believers will be completely conformed to all the requirements of God's will.

The inward and forensic righteousness which began at justification will be transformed into an outward righteousness at glorification. God will then publicly acknowledge all believers' full acceptability with Him.

Faith Worketh By Love

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

For those in Christ Jesus (the true sphere of salvation), neither circumcision nor the lack of it is of any significance (Gal 3:28; 6:15). What matters is faith expressing itself through love (Gal 5:13).

Love vs. Law: The man who loves his country vs. one who is simply "law abiding"... servant vs. lover; maid vs. wife... Sabbath day: vs. *every* day is a "sabbath"!

Though salvation is by faith apart from works, faith that is genuine does work itself out "through love" (cf. Eph 2:10; James 2:14-18; et

al.). Turning to the Law hinders the progress of believers; Faith works by love.

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

Employing a metaphor he was fond of, Paul described the Galatians' Christian experience as a race (cf. 1 Cor 9:24-26; 2 Tim 4:7). They had *begun* their race well, but someone had cut in on them, causing them to break stride and stumble.

[Though many false teachers were disturbing the Galatians, the singular pronoun ("who") would seem to indicate the leader of the Judaizers was in view here.] The result was that the believers were no longer obeying the truth, but were attempting to complete the race by legalistic self-effort rather than by faith.

- 8] This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

"Persuasion" = better: persuasiveness (gullibility; fickleness). Such false teaching as the Galatians were beginning to embrace did not originate in the God who called them. He called them by and into grace (Gal 1:6). Mixing works of law and grace is not of the Lord. They were now being seduced by other voices into following a false gospel.

- 9] A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Leaven

And lest someone would feel that the apostle was making too much of the problem, he quoted a proverb to the effect that false teaching, like leaven or yeast, spreads and permeates. Its converts may have been few but the believers must be on guard lest the error affect the entire church (Cf. 1 Cor 5:1-8). Leaven is *always* evil (Ex 12:15; 13:7; Mt 16:6, 11, 12; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1).

- 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.

But Paul was optimistic about the outcome. He has not given them up.

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

Apparently, Paul was charged with still preaching circumcision. Certainly before his conversion he zealously proclaimed circumcision and the

Law, and it is easy to see how the apostle's attitude could be interpreted as being in favor of circumcision.

Paul countered with a simple question: How is it that he was still being persecuted by Judaizers if he preached the same message they did? If Paul were preaching circumcision, the offense (σκάνδαλον *skandalon*, "stumbling block") of the Cross would have ceased to exist in his ministry (cf. 1 Cor 1:23).

But it had not because people still found the gospel message, which proclaims man's total inability to contribute anything to his salvation, offensive. Thus the Cross marked the end of the Law system and rendered circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law unnecessary.

Some regard the incident in Acts 21 as a lapse in Paul behavior: They feel that he shouldn't have even been there; that he succumbed to an act of sponsorship which denies his Galatian epistle! However, this was not a compromise on Paul's part; he knew that these ceremonial observances had no value as far as salvation was concerned but were instructive symbols of expressing dedication. He was always ready to meet people on their ground if no compromise of the Gospel was involved (1 Cor 9:20-23).

- 12] I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Don't miss what Paul was really saying here! Paul wished that the Judaizers, who were so enthusiastic about circumcision, would go the whole way and castrate themselves! (As did the pagan priests of the cult of Cybele in Asia Minor). [Perhaps the resulting physical impotence thus implied reflected Paul's desire that they also be unable to produce new converts!]

While circumcision had once been the sign of the covenant in Israel, it now had no more religious meaning than any other ritual of cutting and marking practiced by ancient pagans.

A Life Apart From License

- 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.

In verse 1 Paul spoke of the Christian's freedom and warned against the danger of lapsing into slavery. Here the apostle again reminded believers of their freedom in Christ and warned liberty is not license (Rom 13:8-10).

"...flesh": σάρξ *sarx*, used by Paul for "sinful nature," seven times (Gal 5:13, 16-17 (3X), 19, 24; 6:8). Specifically, Paul charged the Galatians not to use their liberty as a basis for sin to gain a foothold. Rather than liberty being used for lust, the real goal should be love.

Rather than being in bondage to the Law or to the sinful nature, they were to be in bondage to one another. What law caused Jesus to wash the disciples' feet? (Jn 13:14).

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

Having discouraged two forms of slavery as burdensome and terrible, he commended another form that was beneficial—a slavery of mutual love. In support, Paul quoted Leviticus 19:18 and stated that the entire Law was summarized in this single command to *love* their neighbors.

Jesus affirmed the same truth (Mt 22:39; Lk 10:25-28), but Paul also wanted to show that Christian love is the "fulfillment" or "the carrying out" of the Law (Rom 13:8-10)

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

That such love needed to be mutually expressed in the Galatian churches is made clear here. As a result of the inroads of the false teachers, the church was divided and engaged in bitter strife. The followers of the legalists and those who remained steadfast were biting and devouring each other.

This was far from the Biblical ideal of believers dwelling together in a loving unity, and threatened the churches with destruction; that is, the loss of their individual and corporate testimonies. Have you ever noticed that church strife—in fact, even split-ups—have their roots in some form of legalism?

Four Contrasts: Chapters 5 & 6

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Liberty, Not Bondage | Gal 5:1-15 |
| 2) The Spirit, Not the Flesh | Gal 5:16-26 |
| 3) Others, Not Self | Gal 6:1-10 |
| 4) God's Glory, Not Man's Approval | Gal 6:11-18 |

The words “flesh” and “Spirit” are each found ten times in Chapters 5-6.

The Promise for Victory Over Sin

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

The answer to these abuses is to walk (live) by the Spirit. The verb περιπατεῖτε, *peripateite*, is present imperative active: literally, “keep on walking.” As a believer walks through life he should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and power. But the Spirit does not operate automatically in a believer’s heart. He waits to be depended on. There is no mention in Scripture of the sanctification of the old nature.

Our heart is never cleansed: it is replaced with a new one. Thus, while no believer will ever be entirely free in this life from the evil desires that stem from his fallen human nature, he need not *capitulate* to them, but may experience victory by the Spirit’s help.

When a Christian does yield to the Spirit’s control, the promise is that he will not in anywise (the double negative οὐ μὴ is, in Greek, emphatic) gratify (τελέσητέ “complete, fulfill” in outward action) the desires of the sinful nature.

- 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.

Each Christian has two natures, a sinful nature received at birth, a genetic defect inherited from fallen Adam, and a new nature received at regeneration when said Christian became a participant in the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4).

Both natures have desires, the one for evil and the other for holiness. Thus they are in conflict with each other, and the result can be that they keep a believer from doing what he otherwise would.

The last phrase in v.17 does not teach that the believer cannot get victory. The phrase should be translated, “so that you may not do what you would.” Mere determination on the part of the Christian will never control the flesh or produce the fruit of the Spirit. Paul amplifies this theme in Romans 7, where he shows that the believer’s determined attempts to please God in his own strength are destined to fail.

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

It was important for the Galatians to know that just as justification is not possible by works, so sanctification cannot be achieved by human effort. The response of faith is necessary—faith in Christ to save and in the Holy Spirit to sanctify.

Since a Christian has the same sinful nature he possessed before salvation, he may fall prey to the sins that nature produces if he does not live by means of the Spirit.

Works of the Flesh

- 19] Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
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.

The listed sins are commonly seen to fall into four categories. First, four sexual sins are mentioned.

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

“**Adultery,**” μοιχεία *moicheia*.

“**Fornication,**” πορνεία *porneia*: sexual morality; illicit sexual intercourse; adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc. ; sexual intercourse with close relatives (Lev 18); sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman (Mk 10:11,12); From this word comes the term “pornography.”

[Also, metaphorically, the worship of idols; of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols.]

“**Uncleanness,**” ἀκαθαρσία *akatharsia*, impurity; a broad term referring to moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed (cf. Eph 5:3-4).

“**Lasciviousness,**” ἀσέλγεια *aselgeia*, unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence; debauchery; connotes an open, shameless, brazen display of these evils (cf. 2 Cor. 12:21 where the same words occur; *aselgeia* is included in Rom 13:13).

20] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

“Idolatry” involved the worship of pagan gods by bowing to idols, and because of its mention just after the listing of sexual sins it probably includes the male and female prostitution so often a part of heathen religions. However, idolatry is anything that we put in the place of the Living God.

“Witchcraft” is the translation of the Greek word *φαρμακεία phar-makeia*, from which the term “pharmacy” comes. In ancient times the worship of evil powers was accompanied by the use of drugs to create trances. This vice will also be prominent in the Tribulation period (cf. Rev 9:21; 18:23).

Eight societal evils are then listed (the last one in Gal 5:21).

“Hatred” (*ἐχθραὶ echthrai*) is in the plural form, denoting primarily a feeling of enmity or ill will between groups.

“Variance” (discord) (*ἐρις eris*) is the natural result of “hatred” and no doubt a problem in the Galatian church.

“Emulations” (jealousy) (*ζήλος zelos*) refers not to the godly form but to the sinful and self-centered type. (These two words, *eris* and *zelos*, are also listed in Rom 13:13.)

“Wrath” (anger, fits of rage) (*θυμοί, thymoi*) or outbursts of temper, often come as a final eruption of smoldering jealousy.

“Strife” (selfish ambition) (*ἐριθείαι eritheiai*) is a self-aggrandizing attitude which shows itself in working to get ahead at other’s expense (cf. Phil 2:3).

“Seditions” (dissensions) (*διχοστασίαι dichostasiai*) and heresies (factions) (*αἵρεσεις haireseis*) describe what happens when people quarrel over issues or personalities, causing hurtful divisions.

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.

“Envy” (*προλέγω phthonoi*) is an evil feeling, a wrongful desire to possess what belongs to someone else. Thus the sinful nature is seen to be responsible for the breakdown of interpersonal relationships in homes, churches, and in public society.

Two sins associated with alcohol fall in a fourth category of evils. **“Drunkenness”** (*μέθη methai*) refers to excessive use of strong drink by individuals, and **“Revellings, orgies”** (*κῶμος komos*) probably refers to the drunken carousings commonly associated with such things as the worship of Bacchus, the god of wine.

Finally, to show that this long list was only representative and not exhaustive, Paul added the words **“and such like.”**

The apostle then solemnly warned the Galatians, as he had done when he was in their midst, that those who live like this (NIV), who habitually indulge in these fleshly sins will not inherit the future kingdom of God. Remember, entrance and inheriting are not the same thing. Inheritance (OT & NT) was a reward for faithfulness: Esau; Reuben; et al. The Prodigal Son never lost his sonship.

Rewards (cf. 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11-15).

Paul’s Style

People who have studied the style have determined that, within the structure of the letters to the Romans, Hebrews, and Galatians, there is a similar style. In Galatians 5:19-21 there is a list of 17 things. In Romans 8:35-39, Paul lists a number of things that cannot separate you from the love of Christ:

He lists	7 things
and then	10 more = 17 total

In Hebrews 12:18-24 we find a similar list: Again,	
there are	7 things
and then	10 more = 17 total

In Contrast: The Fruit of the Spirit

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

23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Notice the contrast: the “works” of the flesh (Gal 5:19) vs. the “fruit” of the spirit (Gal 5:22). The word “fruit” is singular, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 1:21).

It is important to observe that the fruit here described is not produced by the believer, but by the Holy Spirit working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. Jn 15:1-8). [Have you ever seen a tree *straining* to bear fruit?]

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Personal fruit: | love, joy, peace; |
| 2) Outreaching fruit: | longsuffering, gentleness, goodness; |
| 3) Up-reaching fruit: | faith, meekness, temperance. |

1) Personal Fruit

“**Love**” (ἀγάπη *agape*) is listed first because it is the foundation of the other graces. God is love and loves the world (1 Jn 4:8; Jn 3:16).

“**Joy**” (χαρά, *chara*) is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. Jn 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God’s sovereign control of all things (cf. Rom. 8:28). “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10).

“**Peace**” (εἰρήνη, *eirene*) is again a gift of Christ (cf. Jn 14:27). It is an inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding (cf. Phil 4:7).

2) Outreaching Fruit

The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by love, joy, and peace.

“**Longsuffering**” (μακροθυμία, *makrothymia*) is the quality of forbearance under provocation (2 Cor 6:6; Col 1:11; 3:12). It entertains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated.

“**Gentleness, kindness**” (χρηστότης, *chrestotes*) is benevolence in action such as God demonstrated toward men. Since God is kind toward sinners (cf. Rom 2:4; Eph 2:7), a Christian should display the same virtue (cf. 2 Cor 6:6; Col 3:12).

“**Goodness**” (ἀγαθωσύνη, *agathosynē*) may be thought of both as an uprightness of soul and as an action reaching out to others to do good even when it is not deserved.

3) Up-Reaching Fruit

The final three graces guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit.

“**Faithfulness**” (πίστις, *pistis*) is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant (Lk 16:10-12). Study the commentary on Hebrews 11 for more detail.

“**Meekness, gentleness**” (πραΰτης *prautes*) marks a person who is submissive to God’s Word (James 1:21) and who is considerate of others when discipline is needed

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| – “gently” | Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:25 |
| – “gentle” | 1 Cor 4:21; Eph 4:2 |
| – “gentleness” | Col 3:12; 1 Pet 3:16 |

“**Temperance, self-control**” (ἐγκράτειά *enkrateia*): this noun is used in the NT only here and in Acts 24:25 2 Peter 1:6 denotes self-mastery and primarily relates to curbing the fleshly impulses just described.

As a final summary statement, in a *litotes* (understatement) Paul asserted that obviously no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

Christian Character

This is not mere moral or legal correctness. It is the possession and manifestation of the graces listed in Gal 5:22-23.

“Not I, but Christ”: the fruit [cf. Jn 15:1-8; “fruit,” singular, vs. “works” (v.19). Unified in purpose and direction vs. the flesh’s inner conflicts and frustrations.] This is due to the believer’s vital union with Christ (Jn 15:5; 1 Cor 12:12,13).

- 24] And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

It is a settled thing (Gal 2:20); lit., “those who are of Christ Jesus” need not be responsive to the sinful nature because they have crucified it. This does not refer to self-crucifixion or self-mortification. Rather, it refers to the fact that by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Christians were identified with Christ in His death and resurrection.

“...crucified the flesh”: Paul declared that this had been his experience (cf. Gal 2:20) and that of all believers (cf. Rom 6:1-6; Col 2:11; 3:9). This does not mean that their sin nature is then eradicated or even rendered inactive but that it has been judged, a fact believers should reckon to be true (cf. Rom 6:11-12).

So, victory over the sinful nature's passions and desires has been provided by Christ in His death. Faith must continually lay hold of this truth or a believer will be tempted to try to secure victory by self-effort.

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

The works of the old nature must be overcome by: walking in the Spirit (v.16); being led of the Spirit (v.18) and living in the Spirit (v.25). We are saved by grace, justified by grace, kept by grace, and in the end, will be saved by grace.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
Romans 10:4

In addition to a divine *judgment* of the sinful nature there is a divine *enablement* in the person of the Holy Spirit. He made the believer alive by regeneration (Jn 3:5-6), so each believer is exhorted to “walk,” keep in step (στοιχωμεν, *stoichomen*, translated “follow” in Gal 6:16) with the Spirit. Step by step, one's Christian walk should conform to the Spirit's direction and enablement, lest believers become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

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

The latter traits would be true of a walk in the flesh (cf. Gal 5:19-21) and may point to divisions in the Galatian churches occasioned by the Judaizing error (cf. v.15). The proverbial question: “Is it OK to _____?” (Fill in the blank with whatever)... Rather: Is _____ honoring to God? What are its fruits?

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12-13

In Closing

Note that Paul uses three pleas as he beseeches these Christians to live lives of holiness by the grace of God: 1) God the Father has called them (v.13); 2) God the Son has died for them (v.4); and 3) God the Holy Spirit indwells them (vv.16–23). *Each Person of the Trinity is assisting us in our battle against the flesh.*

Next Session

Read Galatians Chapter 6.

The Epistle to the Galatians Session 8 Chapter 6

Galatians: Liberation Through the Gospel

- Authenticity of the Gospel Gal 1, 2
 - Genuine as to its origin Gal 1
 - Genuine as to its nature Gal 2
- Superiority of the Gospel Gal 3, 4
 - The new relation it effects Gal 3
 - The privileges it releases Gal 4
- **The True Liberty of the Gospel Gal 5, 6**
 - Love-service ends Law-bondage Gal 5:1-15
 - **Spirit ends flesh-bondage Gal 5:16-6:18**

Four Contrasts: Galatians 5 & 6

- 1) Liberty, Not Bondage Gal 5:1-15
- 2) The Spirit, Not the Flesh Gal 5:16-26
- 3) **Others, Not Self Gal 6:1-10**
- 4) **God's Glory, Not Man's Approval Gal 6:11-18**

Sacrificial Service

A believer is free from the Law of Moses and possesses *liberty* in the Spirit, but he must fulfill the law of Christ, and this can only be done in the *power* of the Spirit. Such a life involves sacrificial service directed toward:

- 1) sinning Christians;
- 2) burdened Christians;
- 3) the pastor-teachers; and
- 4) all people.

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.

“...overtaken”: Paul deals with a case of a Christian who is caught in a sin, or “caught by a sin.” προλημφθη verb subjective, aorist, passive,

third person singular, from προλαμβάνω *prolambano* (aor. προέλαβον ; aor. pass. subj. προλημθῶ.do (something) ahead of time; begin (eating) before (others do); catch (in sin).

The thought is that of someone running from sin but sin, being faster, overtakes and catches him.

“...restore”: καταρτίζω *katartizo*: a medical term used for the setting of a broken bone.

Restoration

Two passages show how the legalists responded to such (Jn 8:3-5; Acts 21:27-29). The task of restoration is not to be undertaken by fledglings in the faith but by those who are spiritual; that is, believers who walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16) and who are mature in the faith (1 Cor 2:15; Heb 5:13-14).

Furthermore, this delicate work must be done *gently*: πραότης *praotes* gentleness, humility (Gal 5:22) and with the consciousness that no one is immune from falling into sin (1 Cor 10:12).

- Christian cannibalism: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal 5:15).
- “In my flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Rom 7:18).
- The backslider needs help more than criticism (Rom 14:1).
- Adulteress: “go and sin no more...” (Jn 8:11).

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

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

“...burdens”: βάρος *baros*: burden; weight, fullness (1 Thess 2:7). A serving Christian lends a helping hand with heavy loads (cf. v.5).

Though the principle would apply to all burdens, the context has special reference to the heavy and oppressive weight of temptation and spiritual failure. This, wrote Paul, will fulfill the law of Christ, that is, the principle of love (cf. Gal 5:14; Jn 13:34).

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

Something must be laid aside if a believer is to be a burden-bearer and that is conceit, an attitude that breeds intolerance of error in others and causes one to think he is above failure. The remedy for self-conceit is found in verse 4...

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

“...prove”: Everyone is told to test (δοκιμάζω *dokimazo*) his own actions (cf. 1 Pet 1:7). This means that rather than comparing himself with others he should step back and take an objective look at himself and his accomplishments. Then he can take comfort in what God has done in and through his life (cf. Rom 12:3).

- 5] For every man shall bear his own burden.

The Christian does in fact test himself by carrying his own load. This does not contradict verse 2 because the reference there is to heavy, crushing, loads (βάρος)—more than a man could carry without help. In this verse a different Greek word (φορτίον *phortion*) is used to designate the pack usually carried by a marching soldier. It is the “burden” Jesus assigns to His followers (cf. Mt 11:30; cf. Rom 15:1; 1 Jn 3:16,17).

But do not neglect your personal responsibilities (Rom 12:6-8). Christians are members of Christ's body, and a Christian in sin weakens the body. If a person does not submit to restoration, then the measures of discipline outlined in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 must be considered.

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

“...communicate”: κοινωνέω *koinoneo*, to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer, be made a partner. One responsibility of each believer is to shoulder the financial support of the pastor-teachers in the fellowship (Rom 15:27). Perhaps the Judaizers had influenced some of the believers to slack off in their support of the teachers, a special group who were giving their full time to this ministry and who were reimbursed for their labors (1 Cor 9:7-14).

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 admonition is clear that as a teacher shares the good things of the Word of God, a believer is to reciprocate by sharing all good things with his instructor.

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

These verses elaborate on the previous exhortation: First, a solemn warning is sounded that God cannot be mocked. No man can snub (μυκτηρίζω *mukterizo*; lit., “turn up the nose at”) God, whose rule—“a man reaps what he sows”—is immutable. *Each sower decides what his harvest will be.*

- 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.

If a person sows to please his sinful nature, that is, if he spends his money to indulge the flesh, he will reap a harvest that will fade into oblivion. Even worse, he will develop appetites that will prove ever more difficult to control...

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Matthew 7:16,17

Sow the wind, and you reap the whirlwind.

Hosea 8:7

Men who sow wickedness, reap the same.

(Eliphaz) Job 4:8

On the other hand, if he uses his funds to support the Lord’s work, or sows to please the Spirit, and promotes his own spiritual growth, he will reap a harvest that will last forever.

Though a broader application of the principle is legitimate, it seems clear that Paul was dealing primarily with the question of financial support of Christian workers in the Galatian churches.

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

But Christians may become discouraged with spiritual sowing because the harvest is often long in coming. In the face of this reality, the apostle charged the Galatians not to become weary or give up because the ultimate harvest is certain.

“We”: Paul included himself as he no doubt contemplated his frustrating labors on behalf of the Galatian Christians! The reaping will come at God’s proper time, which may be only in part in this life and in full in the life to come at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10).

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

Christians have a measure of responsibility to *all* people to do good, when the occasions arise. (When Jesus fed the 5,000, both saved and unsaved participated.) The benevolence of Christians should not be restricted, *but believers are to have the priority*. As in a home, family needs are met first, then those of the neighbors (1 Tim 5:8). This passage then speaks clearly about Christian social responsibility, but it should be noted that it is addressed to individual believers (cf. Rom. 12:17-21).

Conclusion

As Paul brought the Galatian letter to a close, he again emphasized some of the great issues discussed throughout the epistle. His conclusion contains both a summary and final statement of the issues the apostle felt so strongly about.

Four Contrasts: Galatians 5 & 6

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1) Liberty, Not Bondage | Gal 5:1-15 |
| 2) The Spirit, Not the Flesh | Gal 5:16-26 |
| 3) Others, Not Self | Gal 6:1-10 |
| 4) God’s Glory, Not Man’s Approval | Gal 6:11-18 |

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

At this point Paul took the pen from his scribe and wrote the rest of the letter himself, a practice he often followed (cf. 1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). [This probably did not refer to the length of the epistle, but to the size of the letters he inscribed. He may have been afflicted with ophthalmia; cf. 4:13-15; 2 Cor 12:7; Acts 23:2-5.]

- 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.

The Judaizers who insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation (cf. Acts 15:1):

- 1) were only men-pleasers (cf. Gal. 1:10), seeking to make a good impression outwardly;
- 2) were afraid of persecution (Gal 6:12b);
- 3) wanted to boast about the number of Galatians they hoped to win over to circumcision as a religious and merit-earning rite (Gal 6:13).

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

The legalists knew the offense of the Cross would be softened if they openly proclaimed justification by faith *and works* (i.e., circumcision), and if they could claim conversions to that position in Galatia.

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.

The contrast is vivid as Paul declared his boasting to be *in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. For the Judaizers, the Cross was an object of shame; for Paul it was the object of glorying. They gloried in the flesh; he gloried in the Savior.

The “Cross” speaks of the atonement of Christ, with which Paul was identified (Gal 2:20) and by which the world was crucified to Paul and he to the world.

The world system with all its allurements, fleshly displays, and religions of human effort was cast aside by Paul. He looked at the world as if it were on a cross—and the world looked at Paul as though he were on a cross.

Three Crucifixions

- 1) The crucifixion of Christ: the basis
- 2) The crucifixion of the world: the result
- 3) The crucifixion of self: the victory

By the cross of Christ, we are reckoned dead:

- 1) to the Law;
- 2) the world;
- 3) to self...

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

In view of the Cross of Christ and a believer’s new position with respect to the world, no outward religious symbol or lack of it means anything as a way of salvation (cf. Gal 5:6). The only thing that matters is to be a part of the new creation by the new birth (2 Cor 5:17).

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

This reference has been the source of much misunderstanding. This is [the only] passage produced by the “Covenant” theologians to support the view that the Church is “spiritual Israel,” or that Gentile believers become spiritual Jews.

Their tenacity seems derived from their attempt to support their Amillennial eschatology.

“Israel of God”

While some believe that “Israel of God” is the church, the evidence does not support such a conclusion.

- 1) The repetition of the preposition (ἐπὶ, *epi* “upon” or “to”) indicates two groups are in view. This blessing is pronounced on believing Galatians *and* on believing Jews.
- 2) All the 74 other occurrences of the term “Israel” in the New Testament refers to Jews and national Israel. It would thus be strange for Paul to use “Israel” here to mean Gentile Christians. The NIV errs in translating “even to the Israel of God” rather than “and upon the Israel of God” as in the NASB.)
- 3) Paul elsewhere referred to two kinds of Israelites—believing Jews and unbelieving Jews: “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom 9:6).

The two Israels in Romans 9-11 are not physical Israel and the Church, but physical Israel and spiritual Israel. Physical Israel includes all Jews, but spiritual Israel is only those Jews *who are believers*. Spiritual Israel is the same as the “Remnant,” and the “Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16.

The Book of Galatians is concerned with Gentiles who were attempting to attain their salvation through the law. The ones deceiving them were

Judaizers, who were Jews demanding adherence to the Law of Moses. To them, a Gentile convert had to convert to Judaism before he qualified for salvation through Christ.

In verse 15, Paul states that the important thing for salvation is faith, resulting in the new man. He also mentions two elements: circumcision and uncircumcision. (These two groups—Jews and Gentiles—were already mentioned by these very terms in Gal 2:7-9.)

In verse 16, Paul now pronounces a blessing on members of the two groups who would follow this rule of salvation through faith alone.

- The first group is “*them*”—the *uncircumcision*, the Gentile Christians to, and of whom, he has devoted most of this epistle.
- The second group is the “*Israel of God*”—the *circumcision*—the Jewish believers who, in contrast with the Judaizers, followed the rule of salvation *by grace through faith alone*.

Peace and mercy from God are available to those who walk according to this rule; that is, according to the message of salvation by grace through faith alone. This blessing is pronounced on believing Galatians and on believing Jews. The Covenant theologians, in order to make them both the same group, have to ignore the primary meaning of the Greek *καὶ kai*, a conjunction which separates the two groups.

[For a definitive study of this subject, see the 1000-page analysis: Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Ariel Ministries Press, Tustin CA 1993.]

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

“...marks of the Lord Jesus”: Paul’s calling as an apostle and the message he preached had been challenged by the Judaizers. He asked for an end to such trouble, and he offered as a final proof to his critics the marks of Jesus on his body. These “marks” (στίγματα *stigmata*) meant signs of ownership such as were branded on slaves and cattle.

Paul referred to the scars on his body, which were caused by persecution for Christ’s sake (cf. 1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 4:10-11; 6:5, 9; 11:24-25) because they demonstrated he was a slave of Christ and not just a people-pleaser.

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

To the Galatians written from Rome.

Note: Paul closes without any personal salutations. However, he ended as he began, expressing his heartfelt desire that the grace of God would be their abiding portion (cf. Gal 1:3).

“...brethren”: And, uniquely among all of Paul’s epistles, he ends with a reminder of his love for them, calling them brothers...

Conclusion(s)

- Justification: eternally secure.
- Sanctification: not by keeping the Law.
- Rewards: for faithfulness—behavior matters! (Gal 2:20).
- Cf. Epistle to the Romans and Epistle to the Hebrews (Hab 2:4).

The Law: Reprise

- The Law is perfect:
 - *that is why imperfect men cannot keep it.*
- The Law is holy:
 - *that is why sinners are condemned by it.*
- The Law is just:
 - *therefore cannot show mercy to the guilty.*
- The Law prohibits;
 - Grace *invites* and *gives*.
- The Law condemns the sinner;
 - Grace *redeems* the sinner.
- The Law reveals sin;
 - Grace *atones* for sin.
- By the Law is the knowledge of sin;
 - By Grace is *redemption* from sin.
- The Law was given by Moses;
 - Grace and truth came *by Jesus Christ*.
- The Law demands obedience;
 - Grace *bestows and gives power to obey*.
- The Law says do and do not;
 - Grace says “*It is done.*”
- The Law says, Continue to be holy;
 - Grace says, “*It is finished.*”
- The Law curses;
 - Grace *blesses*.
- The Law slays the sinner;
 - Grace makes the sinner *alive*.

- The Law shuts every mouth before God;
 - Grace opens the mouth to praise God.
- The Law condemns the best man;
 - Grace *saves* the worst man.
- The Law says, pay what you owe;
 - Grace says, *I freely forgive you all.*
- The Law says “The wages of sin is death”;
 - Grace says, “*The gift of God is eternal life.*”
- The Law says, “The soul that sinneth it shall die”;
 - Grace says, “*Believe and live.*”
- The Law was done away in Christ;
 - Grace abides *forever*.
- The Law puts us under bondage;
 - Grace sets us in the *liberty* of the sons of God (Rom 12:1).

Next Session?

That’s up to you: If you haven’t yet studied the other two pillars of this foundational Trilogy (*the two most comprehensive epistles* in the New Testament), then you may want to explore the Epistle to the Romans or the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Your Action Plan?

How many of you are in the full time ministry? What is God calling *YOU* to do? “Raise the bar” on your personal walk with Him: Join (or start) a Small Study Group, commit to a systematic program to really learn your Bible, and respond to His calling...*NOW!*

Koinonia Institute: A “Think-Tank” for Christians

- Internet (www.studycenter.com)
- Unfathomable resources
- Fellowship without Borders
 - No Geographic borders (20 countries!)
 - Non-denominational, but fundamental
 - On your own clock
 - University credit available

How Can *You* Get Involved?

- Undertake a personal life-long learning program of Biblical studies
- Volunteer to serve as:
 - Teaching Assistants
 - Area Representatives
 - Research Assistants
- Sponsor special programs
 - Student prizes and incentives
 - Practicums and Internships
 - Endowments for course development, etc.

Bibliography

- Boice, James Montgomery, "Galatians," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976.
- Bruce, F.F. *The Epistle to the Galatians, The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1982.
- Bullinger, E.W., *The Companion Bible*, Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1958.
- Burton, Ernest DeWitt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, The International Critical Commentary*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1921.
- Cole, R.A. *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1965.
- DeHaan, M.R., *Galatians*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1960.
- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Ariel Ministries Press, Tustin, CA 1993
- Gromacki, Robert G., *Stand Fast in Liberty: An Exposition of Galatians*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979.
- Harris, Ralph W., et al, *The New Testament Study Bible: Galatians - Philemon*, World Library Press, Inc., Springfield, MO, 1995.
- Henry, Matthew and Thomas Scott, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishing Company, NY, 1979.
- Ironside, H. A., *Expository Messages on the Epistle to the Galatians*, Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ, 1941.
- Jamieson, Robert, Fausset, A. R. and Brown, David, *Critical, Experimental and Practical Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI 1948.
- Lightfoot, J.B. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, Reprint. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1957.
- Luther, Martin. *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. Reprint. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979.
- Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1997.
- Stott, John R.W. *The Message of Galatians*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1968.
- Strauss, Lehman. *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, Loizeaux Brothers, New York, 1957.
- Tenney, Merrill C. *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*, Revised. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1960.
- Vos, Howard F. *Galatians: A Call to Christian Liberty*, Moody Press, Chicago, IL 1970.
- Wuest, Kenneth S. *Galatians in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1944.

About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



Koinonia House

P.O. Box D

Coeur d'Alene Idaho

83816-0347

(208) 773-6310

www.khouse.org

ISBN:1-57821-045-3