

A Study of the Book of Galatians

Fall 2018

Introduction to the Book

Galatians is the least disputed of any of Paul's epistles. Not only does he mention his name twice (1:1; 5:2), most of chapters 1 and 2 harmonize consistently with the events of Paul's life as recorded in Acts.

The epistle was written to *the churches* [body of Christ—Ephesians 1:22-23] of *Galatia*. Galatia is a big area, which is today part of Turkey. Who these people were to whom Paul wrote and where they lived is difficult to pinpoint.

The common view is that Paul wrote to the believers from southern Galatia, in the cities he visited on his first missionary journey. Most likely, Galatians 4:13 refers to the visit described in Acts 14:21, so Paul would have written the epistle from Antioch in A.D. 48, before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 (A.D. 49), shortly after his first missionary journey. Paul also does not mention the decision of the Jerusalem Council, which deals directly with his argument concerning the Judaizers, indicating that the council had not yet taken place.

In the early years of the church, Jewish believers preached to Jews. But when the apostles started preaching to the Gentiles, and Christianity took root there, questions arose regarding a Christian's relationship to the law of Moses and to Judaism as a system. Should a Gentile observe the law of Moses in order to become a Christian? Should a Gentile be circumcised? Was an Orthodox Jew contaminated by fellowship with Gentile believers? Could they eat the same food? These questions were answered at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. But in Galatians, we see what a problem this was. Paul almost singlehandedly withstood this trend and turned the tide. If left alone, Christianity would lose its distinctive character and soon become little more than a minor sect of Judaism.

Paul wrote to try to stop the Judaizing heresy, to which he referred throughout the letter. In every chapter, Paul mentioned those who opposed him (1:6-7; 2:4-5; 3:1; 4:17; 5:7-12; 6:12-13), both in his apostleship and his message.

Most distinctive in this letter is Paul's severity. He wrote it with strong emotion. There is no mention of thankfulness, as is often in the introduction to his letters. Rather, Paul begins right away to express his astonishment at the Galatians' departure from apostolic teaching (1:6-9). He was not dealing with their *behavior*, as in Corinthians, but more about their *belief*, which is, of course, foundational to behavior.

Galatians has been called "the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation." Martin Luther loved it so much that he compared it to his wife: "He paid her the highest tribute when he called St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians 'my Katherine von Bora,' for I am wedded to it." [By the way, to translate Luther's commentary from Latin into English would require 1500 pages!!!]



Galatians is the beginning of the theology that Paul wrote about eight years later (A.D. 57) in the Epistle to the Romans. Galatians has often been called “a short Romans” and Romans has been called an expansion of Galatians. Both are teaching salvation by faith.

There were three charges against Paul made by the Jewish opponents:

The first was against Paul personally. He was an apostle. He had been called by Christ and taught those things given directly to him by revelation from God. The charge was that Paul was not an apostle. He had not lived when Jesus lived, like the “true” apostles had. He was not one of “the twelve,” which is true. Paul answers the accusation by telling the story of his life, especially as related to the other twelve apostles (chapters 1 and 2).

(1) His teaching was not dependent on other human authorities. As an apostle, his teaching came directly from God.

(2) His authority had been acknowledged by the other apostles on each occasion on which they had come in contact.

(3) He had remained firm at Antioch when others, including Peter and Barnabas, had wavered. It’s amazing that he is able to assert his own authority as an apostle without diminishing either the authority or reputation of those who were apostles before him.

The second charge against Paul by the Judaizers was that his gospel was not the true gospel. He taught that the Mosaic Law could be set aside, but they said that was wrong. God’s law should never be set aside. Paul shows that the point is not who keeps the law, but rather the basis on which God reckons a sinful man righteous (chapters 3 and 4). In the case of Abraham (the father of the Jews), God counted him righteous on the basis of faith, not works. So righteousness obviously does not come from either the law or circumcision, which were given many years after that. Paul also wrote later in Romans 3:20 that the purpose of the law was not to make a person righteous, *for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin*. But the Jews turned it into a works’ righteousness.

Third, his opponents charged Paul with teaching a gospel that led to loose living. By stressing the law, Judaism had stressed morality. But Paul said this charge of loose living was not true (chapters 5 and 6). Christianity does not lead people away from the law to nothingness. It leads people to Jesus Christ, who in the person of the Holy Spirit, dwells within the believer, which furnishes a new nature that alone is capable of doing what God desires. The change is internal. It is from within (via the Spirit) rather than without (via law) that the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. True freedom, a freedom to serve God fully, is unencumbered by the shackles of sin or regulations.

Galatians’ central teaching is a proclamation concerning liberty. There are three major revelations:

(1) The *root* of Christianity is God who *provides you with the Spirit* (3:5, 14). One receives new life by receiving the Holy Spirit by faith at conversion. New life comes by *faith alone*. To teach that one must be circumcised, or baptized, or anything else to receive life is to proclaim the worst of heresies. What makes Christians different is God indwelling them.

(2) The *way* each Christian’s Christianity grows is the *desires of the Spirit* who indwells us (5:17). When a Christian has life by faith, we are free from all bondage—to the flesh (sin nature), to rites, and to ceremonies. God’s Spirit enables the Christian to obey His Word. Circumcision or baptism does not make anyone able to obey God.

(3) God's life in us bears the *fruit of the Spirit*. That fruit is the evidence of God's Spirit triumphing over a person's sin nature. Fruit comes from the spiritual life. Works come from ritualism. Whenever we add anything to faith, we will neglect faith. All other religions have rites, ceremonies, and creeds, but with no motivation for righteous living. All kinds of sin results when adding something to the one responsibility of faith.

Galatians is also a protest against legalism, the belief that we can make ourselves acceptable to God by keeping rules or laws. The only thing that makes us acceptable to God is our trust in Christ's good works. He satisfied God's demand for us.

Galatians also protests against preachers of a different gospel (1:8-9), a falsehood which results in the works of the flesh instead of the truth of the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians also protests against the receivers of a different gospel (5:4). To add works to faith is to deny Christ, which is to fall from grace. Simply believing for oneself in Christ's saving work on the cross is all that is needed.

Galatians also protests against those who practice the deeds of the flesh, which result from a false gospel (5:21). This verse describes unbelievers, *those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. These deeds of the flesh should not be practiced by believers.

Galatians warns us against changing horses in midstream. That is, it warns us against trusting in faith for salvation but later concluding the only way to sanctification is to observe rites, ceremonies, or other observances and keeping the Mosaic Law. Having begun by the Spirit, we are not sanctified by the flesh.

Salvation AND sanctification are by God's grace through faith plus nothing.

Chapter 1

I. Introduction (1:1-10)

A. Salutation (1:1-5)

Verse 1—Paul—his Gentile name, Saul was his Hebrew name —**an apostle**—Paul's usual greeting of thanksgiving and praise for the believers (Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 and 2 Thess) is noticeably absent, which shows the extent of their apostasy. Instead, we're immediately plunged into Paul's defending his position of being an apostle. Paul is not one of "the twelve" apostles at the time of Jesus. An "apostle" is a "sent one" (whereas a "disciple" is a "follower").

—**(not sent from men nor through the agency of man)**—Paul's apostleship did not originate with any one man or group of men, not even from the apostles in Jerusalem.

—**but through Jesus Christ and God the Father**—He links the Father and the Son together. His appointment as apostle came from them both, it wasn't Paul's idea. In fact, he was a violent unbeliever, arresting believers. In Acts 9:15, Jesus said, "*he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.*" Jesus chose Paul to be an apostle, just as He chose "the twelve" to be apostles.

—*who raised Him from the dead*)—This is the only direct mention of the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. This emphasized that Paul was not called during the earthly ministry of Jesus but by the resurrected Christ, whereas the “12 apostles” were chosen in the lifetime of Jesus (Acts 1:21-26).

Application—*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins* (1 Cor 15:17). Without the resurrection, we would have no salvation.

Verse 2—*and all the brethren who are with me*—Paul doesn’t mention them by name, as he often does in his other letters. However, this did emphasize that Paul wasn’t the only one believing the message of Galatians, and that the churches of Galatia were not the only believers.

—*To the churches of Galatia*—As mentioned in the introduction, this is probably a circular letter to be passed among the believers in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, the places Paul previously evangelized on his first missionary journey.

Verse 3—*Grace to you*—this is a particularly impactful greeting to a group of believers where the sufficiency of salvation by grace was being questioned and even denied.

—*and peace*—by choosing to live by works, they would lose the peace with God purchased by Christ’s death on the cross.

—*from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*—Paul is stressing the divinity of Jesus.

Verse 4—*who gave Himself for our sins*—affirming the substitutionary death of Jesus and its outcome in the deliverance of believers from sin.

—*so that He might rescue us from* [the power of] *this present evil age*—This is the goal of our salvation, the yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1), from which Jesus has set us free. Obeying the law, rites, rituals, etc. will not set a person free from this present evil age.

—*according to the will of our God and Father*—Salvation begins with God. ...*it does not depend on the man who wills* [wants it] *or the man who runs* [works for it], *but on God who has mercy* (Rom 9:16).

Verse 5—*to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen*—This verse contrasts to *this present evil age* (v. 4) which is passing away. The glory of God will be *forevermore*.

Paul has now drawn the lines of battle: he affirmed his own apostleship and declared that the basis of man’s salvation lies solely in the work of Christ and not in any human works!!

B. The Reason for the Letter (1:6-9)

Verse 6—*I am amazed*—astonishment, speechless, great surprise (here we get a brief glimpse of Paul’s feelings)

—*that you* [believers] *are so quickly*—part of Paul’s amazement is how soon after his last visit to them that the false teachers began their work, and it was successful in turning these believers away from Christ. The word can also mean “easily.”

—*deserting*—the Greek word is used both of a military revolt and of a change in attitude. This is something they each were doing to themselves and were responsible for. For example, a soldier’s desertion is his own personal decision.

—*Him who called you* [believers]—salvation is by the will and call of God the Father (v. 4). They were not simply turning away from a system of theology. They were turning away from God Himself. Embracing legalism means rejecting God.

—*by the grace of Christ*—This is the dominant theme of Galatians. Turning away from grace of Christ to works for sanctification (the spiritual life).

—*for a different gospel*—that is, “another of a different kind,” the false gospel of legalism, which adds works to faith (see Acts 15:24; 20:29-30). They were turning away from the gospel of their salvation.

Verse 7—*which is really not another*—“another of the same kind” because this different “gospel” did not save or sanctify anyone, therefore, it should not even be called a “gospel”

—*only there are some*—Paul now mentions the false teachers for the first time, though not by name.

—*who are disturbing you* [believers]—to cause great emotional distress. Two ways false teaching affects believers—(1) causing great emotional distress and (2) distorting the gospel

—*and want to distort the gospel of Christ*—The Greek word is *metastrepho*, “to change or turn into a different form” (where we get “metamorphous” of a caterpillar into a butterfly), used of the sun *turned* to darkness (Acts 2:20) and laughter *turned* to mourning (James 4:9). This attempt to change the gospel has the very opposite effect of what the gospel really is. It’s turning the light of the gospel into the darkness of the evil present age (v. 4).

Application—The danger is not from religions radically different than Christianity. Hinduism, for example. The danger is in the teachings that are mostly right, but distort it just a little, enough to make it ineffective. Believe in Christ and pray (a work). Believe in Christ and obey the Ten Commandments (a work). Believe in Christ and (works). That all distorts the Gospel. It nullifies grace. It’s like just a drop of poison in a glass of water. It’s now poisoned water.

Verse 8—*But even if we*—a divinely called apostle, or a human source

—*or an angel from heaven*—or a heavenly source. *Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness* (2 Cor 11:14). Satan is the one who wants to take the gospel away from people.

—*should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you*—It’s not the messenger who determines the gospel, but the message itself. If the gospel Paul preached is true, then both the glory of Jesus and the salvation of man are at stake.

—*he is to be accursed!*—lit. *anathema* = “let them be damned.” A future damnation. If men are taught a false gospel, they are being led from the one thing that can save them and are being turned to an eternal destruction.

Verse 9—*As we have said before, so I say again now*—second time for emphasis

—*if any man is preaching to you*—“we or an angel from heaven” is changed to “any man”

—*a gospel contrary to what you received*—here Paul calls the gospel “what you received.” In verse 8, he called it the gospel “we have preached to you.” They are believers.

—*he is to be accursed!*—in verse 8 it was a future “accursed,” but here it is in the present tense, he is now accursed.

Application—All the New Testament books except Philemon warn about false teachers. Paul wrote, “*from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert...*” (Acts 20:30-31)

C. Transition (1:10)

Verse 10—*For am I now seeking the favor of men* [i.e., mankind], *or of God? Or am I striving to please men?* That is, you either please men or you please God. Perhaps they were charging Paul

with “easy believism” because he preached *faith in Christ alone* for salvation. This is a charge brought against believers even today.

—*If I were still trying to please men*—he would have remained a zealous Pharisee and promoter of the Law rather than a bond-servant of Christ. Preachers, even today who want to be popular with people rather than faithful to God.

—*I would not be a bond-servant of Christ*—A bondservant was one who chose to sell himself into slavery to another, because of a loyalty to his master. It’s interesting that Paul uses the word bond-servant in a book about freedom. The true but paradoxical teaching of the gospel is that real freedom is to be found in bondage to Jesus Christ.

Application—We need to continually ask ourselves: Am I doing this to please men or to please God?

II. Paul’s Defense of His Apostleship (1:11–2:21)

A. Paul’s Gospel Received Directly from God (1:11-12)

Verse 11—*For I would have you know* [lit. “make clear”], *brethren* [fellow Christians], *that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man*—man’s idea is to work for salvation (as attested to by all religions). Man comes up with things that affirm human goodness, not human depravity. Man would not come up with the idea of God’s Son dying for His enemies and offering salvation by faith as the gift of God’s grace.

Verse 12—*For I neither received it from man*—as a human source. Paul did not receive it from a man, but for the Galatians and us, Paul wrote, *faith comes from hearing* (Romans 10:12-17). Someone has to tell someone else what the gospel is.

—*nor was I taught it*—as a course of instruction (though that was the way the Galatians received the gospel. Paul had instructed them).

—*but* [contrast] *I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*—Paul received the message of the gospel directly from God Himself. This can never happen to us. But it is because God was the source of the gospel that we believe it as written down by Paul.

Application—Christianity is not simply a religion, it is a Divine revelation. Man makes up religions based on their own goodness, what they think is goodness. Christianity comes from God, comes from holiness as described by God, comes from righteousness provided by God through His Son’s death on the cross.

B. Paul’s Personal History (1:13-24)

1. Paul the Persecutor (1:13-14)

Verse 13—*For you have heard*—these are facts known to the Galatians before Paul’s teaching was questioned, probably even before they converted.

—*of my former manner of life in Judaism*—His former life would make reception of the gospel impossible. Judaism was not just a belief system. It was (and still is) a *manner of life*, which involves all aspects of a person’s life: what they ate, who they could marry, what they did each day, how they prepare food, how they dress, etc. Of course, that meant a hostility to the Gentiles.

—*how I* (notice the “I” in these verses) *used to persecute the church of God* [Jewish at that time] *beyond measure* [“hyperbole,” to an extraordinary degree] *and tried to destroy it*—His only relationship to the church of God was to try to destroy it. He was a fanatic persecutor of it, believing

it was blasphemous heresy. Most famous was the stoning of Stephen, when *Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death and Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison* (Acts 8:1, 3).

Verse 14—*and I was advancing in Judaism*—Paul knew Judaism, probably better than the Judaizers who were influencing the Galatian believers. *as to the Law, a Pharisee* (Phil 3:4-6). —***beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen***—It seems kind of competitive —***being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions***—studying the rabbinical traditions. Paul's zeal was part of his personality. The same zeal that drove him in Judaism now drove him in spreading the gospel.

Application—Paul was saved, not in Judaism, not by Judaism, but from Judaism. The same thing is true today. God saves us from whatever religion we are part of.

2. Paul the Believer (1:15-16b)

Verses 15-16—*But*—a contrast word. In contrast to his persecution of the believers and his advancement in Judaism

—***when God*** (notice it is now “God”)—on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). It was the miraculous intervention in Paul's life by God Himself

—***who had*** (1) ***set me apart even from my mother's womb***—as Jeremiah was (Jer 1:5). It's interesting Paul was set aside from birth, yet he not only lived the first part of his life apart from Jesus, he was a persecuted of those who followed Jesus. He was alive when Jesus had His ministry, but did not know Him. He was living in Tarsus, north of Israel.

—***and*** (2) ***called me through His grace***—It was before he had done anything good or bad, so it was not based on works (especially the works of Judaism). God had taken the initiative, completely *through His grace*.

—(3) ***was pleased to reveal His Son in me***—not just “to” Paul, but “in” Paul.

—***so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles***—God's purpose for Paul—It was done especially on his missionary journeys to the Roman world (Acts 9:15; 13:46-47; 26:20; Rom 11:13; 15:16; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 2:7). He was now a preacher of what he once tried to destroy!!

Application—God *chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4). So God also set us apart for salvation from our mother's womb. God took the initiative, through His grace, to reveal His Son not only to us, but in us. Some are believers most of their lives, some just for a little bit of their lives. But they are all chosen *before the foundation of the world*.

3. Paul the Preacher (1:16c-24)

Verse 16c—*I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood*—Paul did not receive his message from men before or at the time of his conversion, and now he declared that he was free from human influences afterward as well. Everything about his calling and his message was supernatural.

Verse 17—*nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me*—Even the apostles did not have the revelation Paul had. They could not add anything to what he already knew through revelation from God. This is seen in the *great dissension and debate* years later at the Jerusalem Council when they examined Paul's ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 15:2).

—***but I went away to Arabia***—At this time, Arabia covered the territory from down by the Red Sea, east of the Jordan River and west of Mesopotamia. Because of the mention of Damascus, many think

he simply went to somewhere south of Damascus, but still in the north. Personally, I think he went to Mt. Sinai, where Moses received the revelation of the Law from God. Paul received the revelation of the age of grace from God, such as the books of Romans and Ephesians. Also, Paul refers to “Mount Sinai in Arabia” in 4:25. It’s probably mentioned here to stress that there was no apostle to instruct him. He was alone with God.

—*and returned once more to Damascus*—the city on the northwestern edge of Arabia. There were a good number of believers there, as Paul, when an unbeliever, was headed there to imprison the believers (Acts 9:2).

Application—Paul’s ministry of preaching the gospel was without any authorization to do so from any other leaders in the church. The command from Jesus to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20; 2 Cor 5:20) is given to all believers. Christians do not need any authorization from any group of believers to share the gospel or teach God’s Word.

Verse 18—*Then three years later*—Sometimes Jews would count one full year and parts of the previous and later year as three years’ total. Also, is it 3 years from his conversion or 3 years from his return to Damascus? So, it’s hard to know the exact time here.

—*I went up to Jerusalem*—Jerusalem is south of Damascus, but in the Bible, Jerusalem is on Mt. Zion, and is the Mt. of the Temple, so it is considered “up” from everywhere.

—*to become acquainted with Cephas (Peter), and stayed with him fifteen days*—The two great apostles—Paul to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews—became acquainted and most likely they told each other of their times with Jesus. This was a private visit, however, not one to get the approval of Peter.

Verse 19—*But I did not see any other of the apostles*—He did not see the other 11 apostles.

—*except James, the Lord’s brother*—James, the writer of the book of James, was the half-brother of Jesus (Joseph was his father, Mary his mother—Mark 6:3). He was an unbeliever during Christ’s ministry, although he and his siblings often accompanied Jesus. He became a believer after Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor 15:7). He then became the leader of the church in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 12:17).

Verse 20—*(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)*—It seems that Paul is answering specific charges made by Paul’s opponents, regarding his relationship to the apostles, and not to provide a full chronology of the preceding years.

Verse 21—*Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia*—For the next 7 years, Paul did not work near Jerusalem but in Syria and Cilicia. Tarsus, Paul’s hometown, was in Cilicia. According to Acts 11:25, Barnabas went there to get Paul when he needed his help for the work in Antioch. Antioch was the capital of Syria. Paul had a long and fruitful ministry in that area.

Verse 22—*I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ*—They would not physically recognize him.

Verse 23—*but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy”*—but by word of mouth, the news about Paul’s preaching the Gospel spread even to the Jewish believers in Judea (south of Syria).

Verse 24—*And they were glorifying God because of me*—These Jewish believers were rejoicing in the same Gospel the Judaizers were trying to undermine.

Application—This is the goal—whatever God puts in our lives—for God to be glorified, not us.

Chapter 2

C. Paul's Relationship to the Other Apostles (2:1-21)

1. Paul Goes to Jerusalem (2:1-5)

Whereas chapter 1 was focused on Paul's independence from the apostles, in chapter 2, Paul now turns to his relationship with the apostles. There are four differences between the first ten verses of this chapter and the previous verses:

- (1) There is a new subject—not the source of Paul's gospel, but the nature of the gospel itself, centered in the issue of circumcision for Gentiles.
- (2) There is a new aspect of Paul's relationship to the Twelve—not independence from them, as during the early years of his ministry, but harmony and cooperation.
- (3) There is a new period of Paul's ministry and of early church history. Paul leaving his successful ministry in Antioch, Syria.
- (4) There is a new conclusion—that in the essential content of the gospel and of the plan for missionary activity, Paul and the Twelve were one.

Application—This is also the first point historically at which Paul came into sharp conflict with the heresy now troubling the Galatian churches. It seems that no one but Paul saw the importance of the issue at the time. Even today, many believe that compromise should always be sought, and that the value of human works alongside the reality of grace should be recognized (e.g., the Catholics). They don't realize the importance of this issue. The Gospel itself is at stake!

Verse 1—*Then after an interval of fourteen years*—most likely measured from the last time when Paul went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter (1:18). It's hard to know which visit this refers to.

—*I went up again to Jerusalem*— Paul made five visits to Jerusalem after his conversion:

- (1) The visit after he left Damascus (Acts 9:26-30; Gal 1:18-20)
- (2) The famine visit (Acts 11:27-30)
- (3) The visit to attend the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-30)
- (4) The visit at the end of the second missionary journey (Acts 18:22)
- (5) The final visit which resulted in Paul's Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 21:15–23:35)

—*with Barnabas*—a Jewish believer. He was a Levite, of Cyprian birth, who sold some land to give the money to the believers in the early days of the church (Acts 4:36). They renamed him "Barnabas" which means "Son of Encouragement." He has the testimony of being *a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith* (Acts 11:24). He was sent to Antioch by the leadership in Jerusalem, and the ministry was so large there, he went to Tarsus to recruit Paul to come to Antioch (v 26). *And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch* (v 28). He also accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey to the cities of southern Galatia.

—*taking Titus along also*—a Gentile believer (Gal 2:3). Titus was part of Paul's ministry team to the Gentiles (2 Cor 2:13; 8:23; 2 Tim 4:10). And Paul wrote an epistle to Titus, who was the leader of the church in Crete. This trip to Jerusalem is evidently a test case. Will the Jerusalem church leadership accept a Gentile believer? If they accept Titus as a believer, then other Gentile believers could be accepted, too. Then freedom from the law would be confirmed.

Verse 2—It was because of a revelation that I went up—Again, we notice it was not Paul’s idea to go to Jerusalem or to go there with Titus. It was a direct revelation from God that he should do that. Also, it was not that the apostles called him to come up to inspect his ministry.

—and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles—*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works...* (Eph 2:8-9).

—but I did so in private to those who were of reputation—Peter, John, and James (v 9)

—for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain—

- At first, we might think that Paul was afraid the Jerusalem leadership would disapprove of the Gospel Paul had been preaching to the Gentiles. But this cannot be his fear. He already stated that his Gospel came to him by special revelation from God, and was the true Gospel (1:11-12). Also, he had said that he did not need to get it approved by the other apostles (1:16-17).
- Perhaps Paul feared that his critics would undermine his evangelistic work, by pointing out that Paul had no fellowship with the Jerusalem apostles. They might even say that there was no fellowship because there was a difference between the apostles and Paul over what was really the Gospel.
- Also, there was a concern about the unity of the church, separating it into a Jewish Christianity and a Gentile Christianity. We know this dividing up of the church was his concern in 1 Corinthians 1. There was to be only one church.

Verse 3—But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised—This would add circumcision, i.e., works of the Law, to salvation. Paul would never tolerate any presentation of Christianity which regarded it as a form of Judaism. Paul will also deal with this topic later in the book.

Verse 4—But it was because of the false brethren—“false brothers” only used here and in 2 Corinthians 11:26, meaning those who are not Christians, though pretending to be so.

—secretly [lit. “sneaked in alongside”] **brought in**—Peter wrote, *...there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies...* (2 Pet 2:1). Paul also told the Ephesian believers, *...savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert*” (Acts 20:29-30). Jesus called the false prophets *“who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves”* (Matt 7:15). Reminding us of Christ’s description of the Pharisees, who *“are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.... outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness”* (Matt 23:27-28). Paul also wrote, *...such men are false...deceitful...disguising themselves...even Satan disguises himself...it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness* (2 Cor 11:13-15).

—(1) who had sneaked in [“infiltrated”] **to spy out**—to secretly watch, to keep an eye on, with the purpose of gathering information to be used by the enemy. They are traitors.

—our liberty [freedom] **which we have in Christ Jesus**, i.e., to be saved and sanctified by faith, not by works (laws)

—(2) in order to [their purpose] **bring us into bondage**—*some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved”* (Acts 15:1). Laws (even the Mosaic Law) and works put you in bondage to keep those laws and works. You are not free. For example, if I make a law that says I must read my Bible for 15 minutes every day, I am not free to read it 20 minutes or to not read it at all. I am in bondage to the 15 minutes. Laws are no-brainers, you don’t think, you don’t decide. Just obey.

Verse 5—*But we did not yield in subjection to them* [lit. “we did not cave in to their demands”] —*for even an hour*—an expression for a very short period of time. Paul did not yield to their demand of obedience to the law, i.e., circumcising Titus, for even a moment.
—*so that the truth of the gospel*—the demands of the so-called “false brothers” would be a departure from the truth of the gospel. They lie. And Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). The false heresies had the purpose of weakening and ruining the church.
—*would remain with you*—If Titus were to be circumcised, it would deny that salvation was by faith alone and affirm that in addition to faith there must be obedience to the Law to be accepted by God.

2. Paul and the “Pillar” Apostles (2:6-10)

Verse 6—*But from those who were of high reputation*—the leadership of the Jerusalem church, namely Peter, John, and James (v 9). Probably the Judaizers were elevating the “Jewish” apostles.
—*(what they were makes no difference to me*—possibly referring to the apostles having known Jesus in the flesh. Peter’s conduct at Antioch (v 11) shows Paul’s disappointment with the conduct of those who should have been leaders in this crisis of faith.
—*God shows no partiality*)— In 6:3, Paul wrote, *if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself*. Also, in 3:28, Paul wrote, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*.
—*well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me*—they added nothing to his message because the gospel Paul preached was given by revelation from God. How could the apostles possibly add to it or change it?

Application—Jesus said, “*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you*” (Matt 20:25-26). He also said, “*...you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your teacher...your leader...your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven*” (Matt 23:8-10). As Walt Henrichsen pointed out many times, there is no clergy-layman distinction. We are all equally brothers and sisters in Christ. There is leadership in the church, but it is a leadership of serving, responsibility, and stewardship, not authority, titles, and reputation. Glory goes to God, not to humans.

Verse 7—*But on the contrary*—rather than contributing anything to Paul’s ministry (v 6), *recognizing the grace that had been given to me...they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship* (v 9).

—*seeing*—“having seen” or “when they had seen”—it indicates that the twelve had a change of mind after Paul and Barnabas reported on all that God had done through them among the Gentiles (see Acts 15:4).

—*that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised*—i.e., to the Gentiles. *We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles* (Rom 1:5).

—*just as Peter had been to the circumcised*—i.e., to the Jews

Application—The KJV is translated as “the gospel of the uncircumcision” and “the gospel of the circumcision.” There is only one gospel, but it was preached by different apostles to two distinct groups of people, as translated in the NASB.

Verse 8—*(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)*—It was God who “effectually worked,” i.e., who gave success to them both as they preached the gospel and people were saved.

Verse 9—and recognizing—parallel to “seeing” in verse 7.

—*the grace that had been given to me*—i.e., the grace through faith, as opposed to the law

—**James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars**—On Paul’s earlier visit to Jerusalem, he identified James as *the Lord’s brother* (1:19). In those early years, the Apostle James (the Apostle John’s brother) was most likely alive, so he made a distinction of which James he was talking about in 1:19. Now, however, *Herod the king...had James the brother of John put to death with a sword* (Acts 12:1-2). So at this point, there was only one James—the Lord’s brother.

—**gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship**—a pledge of agreement and support. They shook hands in agreement over the gospel.

—**so that we might go to the Gentiles**—The Greek is “into” or “among” the Gentiles, i.e., to Gentile lands (such as Macedonia, Asia Minor, Rome, etc.). Paul *aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man’s foundation; but as it is written, “they who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand”* (Rom 15:20-21). Paul would witness to Jews who were living in Gentile lands. He often went to the synagogues first when going to a Gentile city. So his “assignment” was not only to Gentile people but rather in Gentile territory.

— **and they to the circumcised**—Jewish land, i.e., Israel

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

Paul raised money in Macedonia which he took to the believers in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-3). Paul said, *if the Gentiles shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things* (Rom 15:27). The church in Jerusalem sent Paul to spiritually bring the gospel to the Gentiles, so now the Gentile believers sent money to Jerusalem to help meet their material needs.

Application—The priority in giving should be to other Christians and their ministries. Worldly ministries, like the Red Cross, for example, get money from the many people of the world. Christian ministries, however, only get supported by Christians.

3. Peter Comes to Antioch (2:11-14)

Verse 11—*But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch*—there is no other reference to this visit, so we don’t know exactly when it was.

—**I opposed him to his face**— To take issue with, to disagree, to object to, in contrast to the previous verses, where Peter gave Paul the *right hand of fellowship* (v 9). Paul didn’t just gossip about Peter behind his back. He confronted him face-to-face. Also, though, it was not private (v 14) but *in the presence of all*. The offense was public, so the rebuke also needed to be public. Others were following Peter’s example and being led astray. What Peter did, they all did. So Peter, the leader, had to be confronted.

—**because he stood condemned**—to prove or show the guilt of. This was as much of a threat to the church as the false brothers of verse 4 were. This was actually promoting a Jewish church and a Gentile church. It was causing division and distorting the gospel.

Application—No matter how mature a believer a person is, they are not perfect, and they should be confronted about sin, especially when it’s a sin that would influence other believers.

Verse 12—*For prior to the coming of certain men*—notice, Paul did not call them “brothers.”
—*from James*—the leader of the church in Jerusalem, i.e., the Jewish circumcision party. However, most likely James did not agree with being aloof from Gentile believers, and he did not send these men. They were using his name to gain influence, to give them a certain “prestige.” However, Peter was influenced by their presence and beliefs.
—*he [Peter] used to eat with the Gentiles*—without regard to Jewish dietary laws. Remember Peter’s vision of the sheet with the animals (Acts 10:9-15, 28). This was a great demonstration of the unity of the Jew and Gentile in Christ.
— *but when they came*—the peer pressure of the Jews from Jerusalem
— *he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof*—Peter believed this truth that Jews and Gentiles were one in Christ, but it was not lived out in his behavior.
—*fearing the party of the circumcision*—The same Peter who denied his Lord for fear of a maid-servant, now denied Him again for fear of the circumcision party.

Application—Paul wrote, “*we speak, not as pleasing men but God...nor did we seek glory from men but God, who examines our hearts*” (1 Thess 2:4-5). Check your motives. Are you seeking to please men or to please God?

Application—This is really an example of what Paul was saying at the beginning of chapter 1. It was dividing the believers into Gentiles and Jews. It was adding Jewish laws/behaviors to the gospel. So it was distorting the gospel itself.

Verse 13—*The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy*—like falling dominoes, other Jewish believers followed Peter’s example. Hypocrisy is claiming to have beliefs to which your behavior does not conform.
—*with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy*—Barnabas was a Jewish believer who was teaching that both Gentiles and Jews were one in Christ, but by his conduct, he was denying this truth. By keeping the dietary laws of Judaism, they were separating from the Gentile believers.

Application—It’s hard to measure how great an influence you have as a mature believer in Christ. Others are watching you. What you support, they will support. What you condemn, they will condemn. What you tolerate, they will tolerate. Be aware of this influence in your family.

Application—If you say sanctification is by walking in the Spirit, yet you keep laws, you are a hypocrite. Our tendency is to make laws. We act like it’s the only way to control the sin nature. But the Bible does not say to control the sin nature. *The law is not of faith* (Gal 3:12). It says to walk and live by your new nature in Christ. *Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh* (5:16). The Spirit in our new nature in Christ will produce the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-25). This is the transforming of your mind (Rom 12:1-2).

Verse 14—*But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel*—the truth of the gospel was that they were all one in Christ. There is no “Gentile Christian” and “Jewish Christian.” The truth of the gospel is that there are only “Christians.”
—*I said to Cephas in the presence of all*—because this rebuke was also for *the rest of the Jews who joined him in hypocrisy...even Barnabas*, in addition to Peter.
—*“If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews*—that is, Jewish Peter was eating with the Gentiles, which the Jews would not do

—*how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?*—that is, keep the Jewish traditions, such as how and what to eat, circumcision, and other Jewish traditions and laws.

Application—Peter’s response is not recorded. He stood condemned. He was acting contrary to his own convictions and was betraying Christian liberty. Peter’s behavior made damaging insults to fellow Gentile believers, like they were second-class Christians compared to the “Jewish Christians.” Such behavior needed this severe reprimand.

Application—The gospel is being attacked today. Works are being added to faith (such as “lordship salvation”). What is the truth of the gospel? Your eternal destiny depends on how you answer that question.

4. Justification by Faith Alone (2:15-21)

There’s no way to know if Paul’s reproof of Peter was just the last verse or the rest of this chapter. It’s impossible to say precisely where Paul’s remarks to Peter at Antioch end and Paul’s direct remarks to the Christians of Galatia begin. The statements of justification by faith come out of this situation at Antioch but are also the issue in Galatia. And these next verses are a great transition and introduction to the doctrine of justification by faith, presented in chapters 3 and 4.

Verse 15— *“We [including Paul] are Jews by nature* (natural-born Jews)—For sure, the Jews have great advantages in their belief of God, being the chosen nation and land, the Scriptures, the Messiah Himself being a Jew (Rom 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5). But these advantages will not result in salvation. Even Jews must be saved through faith. So, it’s of no value to attempt to reestablish Judaism as a base for Christianity.

—*and not “sinners” from among the Gentiles*—The Jews viewed the Gentile as “sinners.” But, of course, Paul is being a bit sarcastic because yes, Gentiles are “sinners” [but so are the “Jews”!!]

*****KEY VERSE*****

Verse 16—*nevertheless knowing*—you can know whether you are saved or not

—*that a man [human] is not justified*—It is the opposite of “to condemn.” Don’t confuse this with forgiveness, which is the fruit of justification. It is to be declared righteous before God. Being in a right relationship with God. Illustration: It’s when the official at a wedding announces, “I give you Mr. and Mrs. . . .” It is a declaration that they are married. It is a judicial action of God apart from human merit.

—*by the works of the [Mosaic] Law*—the Law and works are the same thing—not faith

—*but through faith in Christ Jesus*—The opposite of faith is works. Faith is the means, not the source, of justification. Faith is trust. It begins with knowledge of Jesus Christ, so it is not blind.

—*even we [including Paul and Peter] have believed in Christ Jesus*—NO ONE can come to God by works. Only by faith. From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. It’s always by faith.

—*so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law;*

—*since by the works of the Law no flesh [not one single one] will be justified, declared righteous*

Application—Paul also wrote in Romans—*by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin* (Rom 3:20). God did not give the Law to make people righteous by obeying it but to show no one could obey it, i.e., it shows they are sinners. *If a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law* (Gal 3:21). *If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly* (2:21). Yet, the Jews turned the Law into a works’ righteousness. For example, as Paul shows in Romans 7,

he coveted, but he did not know that was sin. When he read the law, “Thou shalt not covet,” he realized his sin. Never coveting would be righteous in God’s sight (in Jesus, for example), but we can’t be righteous by not coveting because we covet. No law will make us righteous because we cannot keep the law. If we could, then Jesus would not have had to die. We could just keep the law to be righteous. But that is impossible. Jesus summed it up well in Matthew 5:48—*“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Only Jesus was perfect, so we need His righteousness. We have none of our own. *There is none righteous, not even one* (Rom 3:10).

Verse 17— *“But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ—*that is, those who accept Christ by faith—*we ourselves have also been found sinners—*Of course, a believer still sins. It seems here that there has been a charge that if a believer does not follow the Law, then there is no moral compass. There is no reason for them to stop sinning. They are free to sin at will.

*—is Christ then a minister of sin?—*Does the fact that a believer continues to sin mean Christ is responsible for an increase of sin in a person’s life? The law-keepers maintain that a mere faith in Christ will encourage sinful behavior because there are no laws about that sinful behavior.

*—May it never be!—*Absolutely not!! Each person is responsible for their own sin.

Application—This is a tough verse. Even in the Greek, there are at least five interpretations. The supporters of the Law maintain that without the Law, there is no moral code for the believer. Faith is an “easy believism.” Even today, this is exactly the argument made by the “lordship salvation” people. They add laws to salvation to add morality, a moral behavior.

Verse 18— *“For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed—*that is, return to the Law as a believer—*I prove myself to be a transgressor—*the Law would just demonstrate that a person was a sinner, it would not produce morality. [They thought the Law did produce morality because the Jews had turned it into a works’ righteousness. But the truth is, the Law doesn’t produce righteousness. The Law points out sin (Rom 3:20).]

Verse 19— *“For through the Law I died to the Law—*The Law demanded death to those who broke it. It destroys all hope for salvation by human works.

*—so that I might live to God—*But Christ paid that death penalty for all sinners, so through Christ we can be made spiritually alive.

Verse 20— *“I have been crucified with Christ—*By being joined to Christ by faith, we have died to the Law as a means of righteousness, upon which our old self, the sin nature, based our hope of righteousness. Paul’s used “crucified” instead of “put to death” or “died” as the one method of dying that a person cannot inflict on himself. God crucified the believer with Christ. We don’t need to try to crucify ourselves. As believers, we “have been crucified” with Christ. It’s a done deal.

*—and it is no longer I who live—*the self-righteous, self-centered person, thinking my good works, my keeping the Law will produce righteousness in God’s view.

*—but Christ lives in me—*The Law was outside of us. Christ is in us. My Spirit-directed life began in me, my new nature in Christ.

*—and the life which I now live in the flesh—*while I am alive, as a believer

*—I live by faith in the Son of God—*I live by faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law. Just as I was saved by faith in Christ, now I live by faith in Christ, not by keeping the Law. [This reminds us of what Peter did by refusing to eat with the Gentile believers when the Jewish believers came to Antioch. He was leaving faith and going back to Judaism law-keeping.]

*—who loved me and gave Himself up for me—*Christ loved me enough to give Himself for me, then He loves me enough to live out His life in me.

Verse 21— *“I do not nullify* [lit. “I do not declare invalid”] *the grace of God*—Paul did not set aside God’s grace and turn back to the Law, but the impression is that Peter and the Galatian believers did do that. You can’t have both. It’s either grace or Law.

—*for if righteousness* [i.e., justification] *comes through the Law, —then Christ died needlessly*—i.e., for no purpose, it was the biggest mistake in the universe. If salvation is our own work, then Christ’s work was unnecessary. A person must either receive God’s offer of salvation or insult Him.

There are five basic Christian doctrines that Peter was denying by separating from the Gentiles: the unity of the church (v 14), justification by faith (vv 15-16), freedom from the law (vv 17-18), the very gospel itself (vv 19-20), and the grace of God (v 21).

Chapter 3

II. Paul’s Defense of the Gospel (3:1–4:31)

A. The Doctrinal Issue: Faith or Works (3:1-5)

Verse 1—*You foolish*—not the typical word for someone who is mentally deficient. Rather, it’s a Greek word that suggests the actions of one who can think but fails to use his powers of perception. —*Galatians*—until now, Paul has been defending the gospel of grace from his own experience, but now he is talking directly to the Galatians. In 1:11, he called them “believers” but here it’s a more formal address, showing the seriousness of what he is about to say. It’s like a parent who affectionately says “Johnnie” in 1:11, and now says, “Jonathan Jeffrey...!”

—*who has bewitched you*—It’s so hard for Paul to believe they’ve done this, he says they must have been cast under some evil spell, to turn away from the cross to the Law. It’s so unbelievable to Paul, it almost appears that they were under the control of a spell.

Application—It is possible for a true believer to come under the influence of some false system, some unscriptural line of teaching. And when people do come under such an influence, it’s often almost impossible to deliver them. They seem to be under the control of a spell.

—*before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed* [lit. “to write for public reading” as the posting of a public announcement] *as crucified?*—that is, it was clearly preached to them, like a billboard on the side of the highway. So they were without excuse.

Verse 2—*This is the only thing I want to find out from you*—Paul asks them four questions: (1) *did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*—When they were saved and received the Holy Spirit, was it by faith or on the basis of works? (Of course, they were essentially a Gentile church, so they did not possess the Mosaic Law anyway.) Obviously, they became Christians only through faith, through believing what they heard about Jesus. Works vs. hearing. The law vs. faith.

Verse 3—(2) *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected* [sanctified] *by the flesh?*—In the Old Testament, those who kept the Law had no concept of the Holy Spirit or His work of sanctification. But from Pentecost on, the Christians emphasized the importance of the Holy Spirit for Christian living, for sanctification. It was foolish to think one could begin the Christian life in one way (by faith) and move on to spiritual maturity I another way (by works). The flesh vs the Spirit.

Application—For example, obeying the law results in one act, say, of kindness. But walking by the Spirit has the fruit of changing you into a kind person (Gal 5:22-23).

Verse 4—(3) *Did you suffer so many things in vain* [empty, for nothing] — *if indeed it was in vain?* In Galatia, Paul himself was stoned and left for dead, and Paul told the believers there they would also suffer many tribulations (Acts 14:21-22). Did they suffer these tribulations for nothing?

Verse 5—(4) *So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit*—unique to church age — *and works miracles among you*—*signs and wonders be done by their hands*, and a man lame from birth walked (Acts 14:3, 8-11).

—*do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*—Paul here appealed to the fact that miracles accompanied his preaching to the Galatians, whereas they did not accompany the preaching of the Judaizers, who were promoting obeying the Law.

B. The Doctrinal Argument (3:6-4:7)

1. Sons of Abraham (3:6-9)

The doctrine of justification by faith positively presented—

Verse 6—*Even so Abraham*—The Judaizers went back to Moses and the Law for a defense, but here Paul goes back to Abraham, who lived 500 years BEFORE the Law!! Abraham was the father of the Jews. The first person of the chosen Jewish race. The obligation to become “sons” of Abraham through circumcision was the central argument of the Judaizers’ teaching.

—*believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*—Quoting Genesis 15:6, When God appeared to Abraham in a vision and re-stated the Abrahamic Covenant, *Then he* [Abraham] *believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness*. Abraham had faith in God’s ability to perform what He promised, and God accepted that as righteousness, so he was justified BEFORE he was circumcised (Gen 17:24)—and before the Law. So how can the Judaizers insist that circumcision and obeying the Law were essential to being accepted by God?

—The best commentary on Galatians 3 is Romans 4.

Verse 7—*Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham*—those who are of faith are the spiritual sons of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles. These are contrasted with men of works or men of circumcision. *Of faith* stresses that Abraham’s faith was of the same kind as Christian faith.

Verse 8—*The Scripture*—*All Scripture is inspired by God* (2 Tim 3:16; see 2 Pet 1:20-21). “*The*” article (in Greek) stresses the point that there is only one true Scripture.

—*foreseeing* [announced the gospel in advance to Abraham] *that God would justify the Gentiles by faith*—The blessing promised to Abraham by God was from the beginning intended to include the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

Application—It was not the Scripture (which did not exist at the time of Abraham, not being written until Moses, 500 years later) that spoke these words to Abraham, but God Himself in His own person. In the mind of Paul, the text of Scripture with God as speaking, it became natural to use the term “Scripture says,” when what was really intended was “God, as recorded in Scripture, said...”

—*preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham*—The gospel promise preceded everything else in God’s dealings with His people, including circumcision and the giving of the Law (see v 17).

—saying, “*All the nations will be blessed in You*”—quoting Genesis 12:3 and 18:18. Provision by God was made for “all nations.”

Verse 9—*So then those who are of faith*—But, it is only those *who are of faith who receive* justification. If Gentiles were to be accepted in any other way than faith (such as circumcision), it would involve them ceasing to be Gentiles.

—*are blessed with Abraham, the believer*—There are two aspects to the discussion with the Judaizers. One is salvation by faith, not the works of Judaism such as circumcision, and the other is sanctification by faith, not the works of Judaism. The Judaizers may have allowed that someone could become a believer by faith, but then they said they needed to be circumcised to be sanctified.

2. The Law's Curse (3:10-14)

The impossibility of justification by the Law is presented—rather than producing a blessing, it actually brings a curse—

Verse 10—(1) *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them”*—quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26. The Law demanded perfection, and failure to keep any part of it resulted in a curse. Of course, no one can keep the Law. Therefore, all are under the curse. The Law cannot bring life. Its purpose is to condemn and by condemning to point man in his desperation to the Savior.

—For example, the Law is similar to a chain. Every link must be secure. If even one link is weak or breaks, the whole thing collapses. Breaking one law one time makes you a lawbreaker.

—Another example—if you drive the speed limit on the highway, there is not a policeman at the end of the highway to reward you. The law does not reward you. The law only penalizes you when you break it.

Verse 11—(2) *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident*—Paul is not saying there is no value in the Law. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul wrote that *all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*. For example, we learn what sin is. We learn that God made a distinction between what is holy and what is unclean. But the Law never results in justification or sanctification of anyone, whether Jew or Gentile.

—*for, “the righteous man shall live by faith”*—quoting Habakkuk 2:4, the prophetic section of the Old Testament. A person can only be righteous and live if it's by faith.

Verse 12—(3) *However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them”*—quoting Leviticus 18:5. You cannot have both law and faith. They are mutually exclusive. They are as different as apples and elephants. The Law requires works, but the gospel calls for faith.

Verse 13—*Christ redeemed* (by paying the price) *us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us*—i.e., instead of us. We break the Law, but Jesus, who never broke the Law, took the penalty of our breaking the Law in our stead.

—*for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”*—quoting Deuteronomy 21:23. God did not curse Christ because He hung on a tree, but Christ hung on a tree because God had cursed Him.

Verse 14—*in order that* [2 purposes] *in Christ Jesus* [1] *the blessing of Abraham* [righteousness through faith] *might come to the Gentiles*, [2] *so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit* [sanctification] *through faith*.

3. The Seed of Abraham (3:15-18)

Verse 15—*Brethren*—a reminder that he is addressing Christians in this book (1:11)
 —*I speak in terms of human relations*—i.e., an analogy of how men function, i.e., “let me take an example from everyday life”
 —*even though it is only a man’s covenant*—or will or contract (i.e., not involving God)
 —*yet when it has been ratified*—by signing it in the presence of a notary, for example
 —*no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it*—one of the signers cannot arbitrarily make changes in it or cancel it after it is signed.

Verse 16—*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed*—promises by God to Abraham and to his descendants (Gen 15; Heb 6:13-15). In ancient times, an oath was sometimes made by killing an animal and the parties walking between the parts of the animal. In Abraham’s case, only God walked between the parts. So it was a continual binding promise by God because God does not die. It’s also binding because there was shed blood at the time of the promise.

Application—If a human will or contract cannot be added to or annulled (he is not even thinking of the possibility of altering a contract by mutual consent, since two parties are not involved in the Abrahamic covenant), how much less can there be an alteration in the promises made to Abraham and his seed by the living God, the only one who “signed” the covenant!!

—*He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many*—Paul believes that every word and every letter and every stroke of a letter (“jot and tittle” [KJV]) are inspired by God (Matt 5:18). He is here making his argument based on the singular word rather than a plural word.

Application—Not only can one letter change a word, a part of a letter can change a word. Look at this example: Fun, Pun, Run, Bun. In the original languages of the Bible (OT Hebrew, NT Greek), the letters of a word, or accent marks are crucial to the understanding of the word.

—*but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ*—quoting Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 24:7. the blessings of the promise made to Abraham would come through a single individual, that is, Christ, the Messiah (Matt 1:1).

THE FOUR SEEDS OF ABRAHAM IN SCRIPTURE
<p>Natural Seed All physical descendants of Abraham Genesis 12:1-3, 7; et al.</p>
<p>Natural-Spiritual Seed Believing physical descendants of Abraham Isaiah 41:8; Romans 9:6, 8; Galatians 6:16</p>
<p>Spiritual Seed Believing non-physical descendants of Abraham Galatians 3:6-9, 29</p>
<p>Ultimate Seed Jesus Christ Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 2:16-17</p>

Application—If the promises made to Abraham were made only to Abraham and his immediate descendants, they might be considered fulfilled even before the giving of the Law. BUT the promises were not fulfilled during the time before the giving of the Law. In fact, to this day, the promises have not been fulfilled. It's still a future prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom, when Christ is on the throne, and will bring the promised blessings to Israel.

Verse 17—*What I am saying is this*—What does the signing of the contract, and the singular word for “seed” mean?

— *the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later* (Ex 12:40)—the Law, given to Moses (~1500 B.C.) was 430 years after the promise God made to Abraham (~2000 B.C.).

—*does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God so as to nullify the promise*—The Law could not change or eliminate the promise in any way.

Verse 18—*For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise*—The Law and the promise are different in nature. They do not co-mingle, they cannot be combined.

—*but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise*—Notice the word “granted.” The promise was a gift of God’s grace to Abraham.

4. The Law versus Covenant (3:19-22)

Verses 19-20—*Why the Law then?*—If it is all about the promise God made to Abraham, why even have the Law? If the Law has no place in salvation, and is actually opposed to it, why does it exist?

—(1) *It was added because of transgressions*—The Law was not given to save man but rather to make sin known and to restrain sin by showing that disobeying God’s Law would bring about His wrath (Rom 3:20; 1 Tim 1:8-11), and therefore, showed the need for a Savior, but it did not provide a Savior. It turned sin into a transgression of the Law and therefore, it increased the sin and its consequences.

Application—For example, why have speed limit signs? To show I am speeding. I was speeding without the sign, but now that I have the sign, I know I am speeding. So now I can also suffer the consequences of speeding because now I am also breaking the Law (Rom 4:15). *Until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses* (Rom 5:13-14). Death was the consequence of sin. Even before the Law said it was sin. Christ’s death paid the penalty of that sin, even without the Law. For example, if my child stays out until midnight on a school night, I might think that’s wrong. But I cannot discipline him or her for doing what they did not know was wrong (although, here the conscience should kick in to use common sense to figure it out!!). However, once I make a law, say, you must be home by 10:00 on a school night, then if they stay out later, they are breaking a law. Their “sin” has increased. Of course, the purpose of the law and the consequences of breaking the law should restrain a person to not sin. But the problem is—we cannot not sin!! We cannot perfectly keep the law. This is both its strength (it restrains sin) and its weakness (but not always).

—Romans 13:4 says that laws and governments are *a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil*. What a radical concept!!

—(2) *having been ordained through angels*—Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Acts 7:53; Heb 2:2

—*by the agency of a mediator*—i.e., Moses, who brought the Law to the Israelites, whereas the promise was made directly from God to Abraham (Gen 15:18), which shows the inferiority of the Law, with a mediator, to the promise, which had no mediator.

—(3) ***until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made***—the Law was temporary, until the Seed (Messiah) came, after which, the Law was no longer needed.

—***Now a mediator is not for one party only***—a mediator is needed when there is more than one person making the contract. For example, you may need a notary or a lawyer, or witnesses for a wedding certificate. The Law, which came through a mediator, had responsibilities to both parties—the Israelites were to obey the Law, and God would bless them. And if they lived in disobedience to the Law, God would curse them (Deut 27–30).

—***whereas God is only one***, i.e., it was God alone, without a mediator, who made the promises to Abraham (v 16). He alone has responsibilities under this covenant.

Verse 21—*Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God?* —The first question was “Why the Law?” in verse 19. Now the second question. “Is the Law contrary to the promises of God?”

—***May it never be!***—God gave both the Law and the promises, but for different purposes. It was not the purpose of the Law to give life (a works’ righteousness). It was to reveal sin. *The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good* (Rom 7:12). Back to our example, is the speed limit sign evil? No, it’s good. It reveals sin, with the goal to restrain sin, to control speed of cars, to prevent accidents, etc. The Law is a mirror to help us see our dirty faces (James 1:22-25), but you do not wash your face with a mirror!

Application—I can’t help but point out how many people think laws are evil if they try to restrain sin. It’s the lie Satan told Eve. “*You surely not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it...you will be like God* (Gen 3:4-5). That’s the point. People want to be “god” of their own lives. They don’t want God telling them what is right and wrong. How dare He?!? Imagine a world where everyone got to decide for themselves what the speed limit should be!!

Application—I think most people look at the Law as the Jews did—turning it into a works’ righteousness, to give life. For example, as soon as you say that there is a sacrifice system in the Millennial Temple, this is usually the comment, thinking the sacrifices give life (a works’ righteousness). However, *But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins* (Heb 10:3-4). The sacrifice system of the Law was to remind them, make them aware of, their sins, not to pay for their sins.

—***For if a law had been given which was able to impart life***—There was no law that could give righteousness, i.e., life. The Law did not give a person the power to overcome the temptations to do evil. For example, an x-ray can show you have cancer, but the x-ray has no power to overcome the cancer.

—***then righteousness would indeed have been based on law***—as Paul said in 2:21, *If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.*

Verse 22—*But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin*—*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Rom 3:23). A person should realize from the Law that they cannot keep the Law. They are sinners. Even the Law comes from God’s grace because it prepares men and women to receive Christ. It shows them their need for a Savior.

—***so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe***—God’s purpose from the beginning, through the promise to Abraham, was to promise life to those who believe in Jesus Christ by faith, not by works.

5. Heirs with Abraham (3:23-29)

Verse 23— *But before* [lit. “the”] *faith came*—before the faith in Christ came. The Law was the dispensation before Christ. Now there is a new dispensation after Christ. Abraham had faith, but faith now is different because it’s specifically related to the revelation of Christ and faith in Him. The Law was intended to function only during the 1500-year period from Moses to Christ.

—*we were kept in custody* [“disciplinarian” or “custodian” or “guide”] *under the law*—the Law guarded the Israelites from the evils of other societies and gave them moral training. The Law did not give life to Israel, it regulated life.

—*being shut up* [“locking us up” or “confining us”] *to the faith which was later to be revealed*—in the context of the next verse, where the Law is described as a tutor. The job of the tutor was a “child-custodian” or “child-attendant.” He was not a teacher, as we use the word. He was a slave who was responsible for the child’s behavior, to morally train him, wherever he went. It’s in that sense that the Law governed, or locked up, the behavior of the Israelites to the righteousness of God, which was later revealed in Christ Jesus.

Verse 24—*Therefore the Law has become our tutor*—a guardian or custodian —*to lead us to Christ*—in the sense that it prepared them for the coming of Christ by showing them that human righteousness was inadequate, and they needed a righteousness that only God could supply.

—*so that we may be justified by faith*—The Law served its purpose, but now, we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus. In the example, it’s like we are now adults, not children needing a tutor.

Verse 25—*But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor*—The time element—the time of the Law is ended. The reign of Law has ended for faith in Christ has delivered believers from the protective custody of the prison and the harsh discipline of the tutor/Law. It has nothing to do with the maturity of the person, it has to do with God’s timing. Law done. Now, faith in Christ.

Verse 26—(1) *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*—the tutor of the Law was a supervision where Israel was regarded as children. Now that Christ has come, the Galatian believers are regarded as adult sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. It’s not that they have matured in their thinking, it’s a time thing—the Law is over, now is the time of faith in Christ. Why should they try to revert to their inferior child-status, where they needed the tutor of the Law?

Application—When a Roman male child reached “son” status, his father exchanged his *toga praetexta* [“bordered toga”] for the *toga virilis* [“manly toga”] that identified him as a responsible citizen. Many cultures have rites of passage from a child to an adult. Paul seems to have that idea in mind. The time of the Law was the time of being a child with a tutor, but now the time of Christ is the time of an adult, meaning they don’t need the tutor (Law) any more.

Verse 27—(2) *For all of you who were baptized into Christ*—This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which unites all believers into Christ’s body (1 Cor 12:12-13).

—(3) *have clothed yourselves with Christ*—The Galatian believers have laid aside the old filthy (sinful) garments of the Law and put on Christ’s righteousness. Why would they want to put on their old filthy garments again?

Verse 28—*There is neither Jew nor Greek* [race distinctions], *there is neither slave nor free man* [economic distinctions], *there is neither male nor female* [gender distinctions]—All these

distinctions were emphasized under the Law. But now, within the body of Christ, all are of equal spiritual value.

Application—Of course, this statement does not mean that all male-female distinctions have been done away with in Christ. This is a theological, not a practical, statement. How this truth is worked out in social relationships cannot be discerned from Galatians 3:28. We need to look to other passages for that information. Feminists cannot use this statement to do away with male headship, for example (1 Cor 11:3), or women not teaching men (1 Tim 2:12). A question: Should there be a group called “Messianic Jews”?

—(4) *for you are all one in Christ Jesus*—No one is spiritually superior over another, i.e., a believing Jew is not more privileged before God than a believing Greek (Gentile). There are no spiritual distinctions in the body of Christ.

Application—This is one of the things I really like about Communion. There are no distinctions. We all equally come before Christ in remembering His death which paid for our sins.

Application—There are distinctions of spiritual gifts, and areas of service (1 Cor 12:12-27). It’s the quality of our service, not what our service is, to God that will be judged (1 Cor 3:10-15). But we will all be equally saved.

Verse 29—*And if you belong to Christ*—i.e., you are a believer

—(5) *then you are Abraham’s descendants*—“seed.” The Judaizers were trying to get the Gentile believers to become physical seeds of Abraham through circumcision. But Paul has now laid out his case that Christ is the “seed” of Abraham, and as believers in Christ, the Galatian believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham by faith.

—*heirs according to promise*—not of the Law but of the promise of the spiritual seed

Chapter 4

Whereas Paul dealt mainly with justification (salvation) in chapter 3, now in chapter 4 his emphasis is primarily sanctification (the spiritual life).

6. Heirs of God (4:1-7)

Verse 1—*Now I say, as long as the heir is a child*—the Greek word for “small child,” probably not an infant but perhaps 3-5 years old

—*he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything*—the child is too young to take any responsibility for the management of his assets, he could not make any decisions regarding the estate, even though one day he will be the owner of everything.

Verse 2—*but he is under guardians and managers*—in fact, the child is under guardians (different than the word for “tutor” in 3:24-25), who are trustees, protecting his estate.

—*until the date set by the father*—there is no set date of maturity under the Romans, a father decides. At that time, a son changes wearing a child *toga praetexta* to an adult *toga virilis*. The father, at that time, would sort of “adopt” the child as an adult son. The Jews have a Bar and Bat Mitzvah day at 13 years old. Catholics have their “First Communion.” Sometimes people put ages in their wills, such as 21 or 30, before they can get their inheritances. The point here is that until that day, the inheritance is managed by a bank trustee or a lawyer, etc.

Verse 3—*So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world*—“elemental things” is the Greek word used for things in a row, like the ABCs. The letters of the alphabet were regarded as “elemental,” i.e., from which words and sentences are made up of. [Probably where we get the idea and word for “elementary education” in English.] For the Jew, it would be the Mosaic Law. For the Gentile, it would be the teachings of pagan religions.

Verse 4—*But when the fullness of the time came*—in the context of verses 1-3. The point being that there was a specific time when everything changed. That time was when Christ was born. However, it’s not to say that Christ’s coming was dependent on certain conditions. Rather, the appearance of Jesus brought about the fullness of time. His coming brought about the end of the Law.

Application—This idea is interesting with respect to the Rapture and Second Coming of Christ. Jesus is not waiting in heaven for the events of the world to be a certain way and then He will come (as the covenants teach). Rather, it’s His coming that makes the events be a certain way. As John wrote, *even now, many antichrist have arisen* (1 John 2:18). Since the ascension of Christ, Satan has had an antichrist ready because he does not know the time. When Jesus comes in the Rapture, then “the fullness of the time” will have come. It’s governed by what Jesus does, not what mankind does.

—**God sent forth His Son**—the 100% Deity of Christ, the Son of God (John 1:1-5; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15). It was God the Father’s idea. His initiative. His timing. Just as Jesus said about the Second Coming, *of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone* (Matt 24:36).

—**born of a woman**—Christ’s 100% humanity (Matt 1:18)

—**born under the Law**—as a Jew (remember, though, the Law had been here 1500 years)

Verse 5—*so that*—“in order that,” “for the purpose”

—**He might redeem**—why God sent His Son. This is not the redemption from the curse of the Law as in 3:13, but here it is freedom from the slavery to the entire Mosaic system to elevate them to the status of sons

—**those who were under the Law**—i.e., the Jews

Application—Christ came to set the Jews free from their slavery to the Law. Why would the Gentile converts choose to go into that slavery to the Law?

—**that we might receive the adoption as sons**—As in his example in 4:1, Paul sees the Jews (and Gentiles) as young children who need the Law. But once they are believers in Jesus Christ, they are “adopted” as sons, with the full rights of an adult son. Why would they want to go back to being a child with a trustee (the Law), when they now have the freedom of being an adult son? It’s like—you now drive a car, why would you want to go back to riding on a wagon pulled by horses?

Verse 6—*Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts*—Here is another distinction of our dispensation—the Spirit of God is in our hearts. Not true of the Jews in the Old Testament. There is no “second blessing” or anything else we can do to get the Spirit. He comes into our heart as part of the adoption as sons’ process.

Application—Note the emphasis on the Trinity: God the Father’s plan and initiative, Jesus the Son who was sent and provided redemption, and the Spirit living in our hearts.

—*crying, “Abba!”*—this is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word (*’abba’*) meaning “my father”. It’s a word of intimacy. It’s a cry from the heart. Perhaps like you may make to your dying father. Jesus used this in His agony of prayer to the Father in the garden the night of His arrest (Mark 14:36).

—*Father!*—no longer the giver of the Law but now the Father of the sons of righteousness

Application—The point here is that because He has adopted us as His child, we can call God “Father, Father.” It’s a new relationship, totally foreign to Jews under the Law. In the beginning of the Bible, God was known as “Elohim,” i.e., God Almighty, the Creator. But when He chose Israel to be His people, He was called “Yhwh” Jehovah Lord. Now in the church age, He is called “Father.” Each dispensation draws mankind nearer to God. In the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will be on earth, in the midst of the people. In the eternal state, He will dwell with us in the New Jerusalem.

Verse 7—*Therefore you* [singular] *are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God*—This heirship is not because of anything we do, it’s simply because we are the adopted sons of God. It’s our position in Christ. *Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ* (Rom 8:17).

Application—Here is another distinction. The Law was for the nation of Israel (all the Jews for 1500 years). Now, it’s you, the individual, who is the child of God.

C. Paul’s Appeal to the Galatians (4:8-31)

1. A Return to Bondage (4:8-11)

Verse 8—*However at that time, when you did not know* [lit. “to know intimately and on a personal level”] *God*—i.e., before they were believers, in their ignorance of the true God —*you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods*—like the false Greek “gods” Zeus and Hermes. Think of people today who are slaves to Hinduism, Islam, Mormonism, etc.

Verse 9—*But now*—things are different now. There’s been a change, a contrast. They are no longer people who in ignorance were worshipping non-gods.

—*that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God*—Though Christ, as believers, we have a personal favor and recognition by God. It’s not simply us knowing Him, but Him knowing us.

—*how is it*—it’s incomprehensible to Paul. He is astonished!!

—*that you turn back again*—[1] This is all happening after they had actually come to “know” God in a real way [Gk *ginosko*, “to know intimately and on a personal level” as in verse 8]

— *to the weak and worthless* [“useless”] *elemental things*—the elementary things he referred to in verse 3—I like what one man said: “They were ‘dropping out’ of the school of grace and enrolling in the kindergarten of Law!” A useless thing to do. No value in it.

—[2] They were going back to what they had already been through—that is, not to a new error but to an old one! One that had earlier rejected when they became believers.

— *to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?* —[3] They were turning from reality (the true living God) to nonreality (non-gods).

Verse 10—*You observe days and months and seasons and years*—Most likely influenced by the Judaizers, they had begun to follow the Jewish calendar of days (Sabbaths), months (new moons), and seasons (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles), and years (sabbatical and jubilee years). The issue here is that they thought there was spiritual merit in doing these physical things. They were adding

works to sanctification. Judaism speaks of itself as being Torah-centered, but Christianity declares itself to be Christ-centered.

Application—Of course, this is the belief of all false religions. But it also creeps into Christianity. Some Christians create legalistic rules which they think have spiritual value to God. #1 has got to be going to church. The Roman Catholics, for example, make going to mass a law, which will then give you spiritual credit with God (so they say). Paul himself participated in going to the temple, but it was to evangelize (1 Cor 9:20-22). He did not do it to gain acceptance from God. What do you do that you think impresses God? God said, “*To this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My Word*” (Isaiah 66:2).

Verse 11—*I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored* [lit. “to the point of exhaustion”] *over you in vain* [“for nothing,” same word as used in 3:4]. Of course, he is not saying they can lose their salvation. Nevertheless, their wavering and turning to legalism is inexcusable. It’s not what Paul had taught them.

Application—The Law is good, it’s from God. But even the Law, when distorted into a way of trying to earn salvation or sanctification, can be used by Satan to increase man’s bondage. In this section, Paul seems to consider the Jewish observances in the same context as the pagan festivals. It shows the intensity of the deadly character of legalism. How can we tell when we’ve made a law about something? Should we be examining ourselves (without making a law about examining ourselves!!)?

2. Their Past and Present Relationships (4:12-20)

Verse 12—*I beg of you, brethren*—notice again that Paul is speaking to believers—*become as I am* [free from the Law], *for I also have become as you are* [as Gentiles, they were never under the Law]—the irony was that the Galatian Gentiles were putting themselves under the Law after their conversions!

—*You have done me no wrong*—this phrase belongs with verse 13. They treated Paul well, though he was ill while he was with them.

Verse 13—*but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time*—It seems like it was because of this illness that he had visited Galatia in the first place. There are only guesses as to what this *bodily illness* was. However, in spite of this illness, Paul was still able to preach the gospel to them.

Verse 14—*and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition*—some suggestions are that Paul got malaria from the mosquito-infested coast and left for the highlands to recuperate. Others think he suffered from the physical abuse at Lystra (Acts 14:19; 2 Tim 3:11). Some link Paul’s illness to his “thorn in the flesh” [which we don’t know what it was] (2 Cor 12:7). However, all we can say for sure is that there was some form of unpleasant illness causing Paul’s first visit to the Galatians.

—*you did not despise or loathe*—whatever this illness was, he thinks they could have despised or loathed him because of it, possibly his appearance or his weakness.

—*but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself*—i.e., as a true apostle with the Gospel message.

Application—How often are preachers/teachers of the Word of God received or not based on their appearance or possible disabilities. Or on the flip side, how many are accepted because they look good or sound good? What needs to be evaluated is the message itself. We need to be like the Bereans who *received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so* (Acts 17:11).

Verse 15—*Where then is that sense of blessing you had?*—the attitude of the Galatians toward Paul has drastically changed, from positive to negative.

—*For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me*—Some think this indicates Paul had a disease of the eyes (his “thorn” in the flesh of 2 Cor 12:7), but there is no real evidence for it. Besides, the context seems like this is a short-term illness, not an on-going situation which he would have in all this epistles.

—Rather, it seems more like a vivid figure of speech. The Galatians were so thankful for Paul and his message of salvation, to them it was worth their most precious possession—their eyes.

Verse 16—*So have I become your enemy*—their attitude was of blessing and thankfulness, but now they were seeing him as an enemy

—*by telling you the truth?*—Jesus said, “*Sanctify [set apart] them in the truth; Thy Word is truth*” (John 17:17) and He went on to say, “*I do not ask in behalf of these alone [His disciples] but for those also who believe in Me through their word*” (v 20). That’s us!! Truth is an attribute of God. We must value truth in what we think, what we do, what we hear, what we say. It’s our watershed—the turning point of our thinking and actions.

Application—Two points: (1) most likely you will not be appreciated for telling the truth, especially because it usually makes the other person look bad—in front of other people. (2) How do you respond when someone tells you the truth? Are you glad? Do you see that this is helpful to you? Or do you act negatively to that person? Jesus *is the truth* (John 14:6). Satan *is a liar, and the father of lies* (John 8:44). Pray that the truth will matter more to you than lies. Do you want others to know that the truth is what matters to you or defending and justifying lies?

Verse 17—*They eagerly seek you*—The legalizers had a zeal for their own cause, for their own glory, to alienate the Galatians from both Paul and Christ. This Greek word is used to describe a seducer who would alienate an engaged woman from her fiancé or a bride from her husband (2 Cor 11:2).

—*not commendably*—their intention was not something good, deserving of praise

—*but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them*—It’s a kind of paradox. The legalists’ message is freedom from Christ and Paul’s message, but false teachers end up putting a person in some form of bondage. You will always have to go to that false teacher. You can’t think outside of the box of that teacher. You are in bondage to them.

Verse 18—*But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner* [Gk “but it is always good to be zealous in good”]—In talking about the Jews, Paul wrote in Romans 10:1, *they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge*.

Application—Having zeal or being sincere are good ONLY if they are according to the truth. A person can be sincerely wrong. A person can have a zeal for something that is not true. Sincerity and zeal need to be based on the truth, or else they mean nothing. For example, there are many women who are very sincere and zealous about a woman’s right to choose to abort her baby or not. But is

that true? Does a woman have a right to choose to abort her baby? Just being sincere and zealous does not make it right.

—and not only when I am present with you—As a traveling missionary myself, I understand, I think, what Paul is talking about here. When Paul was present with the Galatians, they accepted his teaching about Christ with joy. But he had to leave. When he is gone, the false teachers come in and try to lead the believers away from the truth of God’s Word. So Paul writes letters to them, to encourage them to be faithful to God’s Word, to turn away from the false teachers and grow in Christ. The next best thing to actually being there with them.

Verse 19—My children—Paul’s great affection for the Galatians. He is their spiritual father.
—with whom I am again in labor—there is a labor of giving birth, then there is the labor of children growing up. Paul went through the first labor with the Galatians in bringing them salvation. Now he is again in labor with them for their sanctification. His concern and labor for their maturity in Christ matches the concern and labor he had to bring them to salvation.

Application—There seems to be more interest in evangelism than in discipleship. So often people respond to the Gospel, but then are just left to fend for themselves. Then when a person falls back into a sinful lifestyle, we say, “they were never saved in the first place.” We would not give birth to a baby and let them lay there, saying they have to grow up by themselves. Birth is step one. Parenting (discipleship) is step two.

—until Christ is formed in you—this is sanctification. As we will see when we move through Galatians, laws can only appeal to the outside of a person. Christ and His Spirit are in a person.

Application—Christians often quote Romans 8:28, *we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God* but you don’t often hear the rest, *to those who are called according to His purpose...to be conformed to the image of His Son*. “Good” is defined as whatever will conform you to the image of Christ, that Christ is formed in you.

Verse 20—but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone—If he could be with them, ask them questions, etc. he could take more time and maybe be gentle in confronting them about his concerns of the danger they were in. But now in this short letter, that’s not possible.
—for I am perplexed about you—Gk. “serious anxiety,” at a loss, uncertain, in doubt

3. An Appeal from Allegory (4:21-31)

Verse 21—Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen [“comprehend] **to the law?**—Though Abraham did not live under the Law, he is considered close to the Law because the Law and the life of Abraham were written by Moses at the time of the giving of the Law. Also, because Abraham was a Jew and was circumcised, he is usually thought of along with the Law.

Verse 22—For it is written—appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures. It’s interesting that Paul is making a point about the Law, but he is actually going outside of the Law to Abraham to make that point.

—that Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac

—one by the bondwoman [Ishmael by Hagar] **and one by the free woman** [Isaac by Sarah]

Verse 23—*But the son by the bondwoman [Ishmael] was born according to the flesh* [it was Sarah’s idea for Abraham to have a son with Hagar because Sarah was not getting pregnant], *and the son by the free woman through the promise* [God had appeared to Abraham and had promised him that he would have a son through Sarah, through whom the whole world would be blessed]

- The differences in Ishmael and Isaac: they were born to different mothers. One was a free woman, the other was a slave. This affected their sons’ status. They had different conceptions. Ishmael’s was entirely by natural means, even though Abraham was about 86 at the time (though later he had more children). Isaac’s conception was a miracle. Abraham was 99, but it was Sarah who was long past the age of conceiving. It was a supernatural miracle that God produced an egg in Sarah and re-jumped her whole reproductive organs to have Isaac.

Hagar	Sarah
Slave	Free Woman
Natural Conception	Supernatural Conception
Ishmael	Isaac

Application—Paul here has their full attention. I’m sure they are thinking the Jews are the superior ones, the ones born of the promise. Paul has lured them in. Now for the strike!!

Verse 24—*This is allegorically speaking*—Paul has referenced Abraham already in the book, so he continues that example here. It seems like he may be using the argument of the legalizers (the superiority of Judaism) but will be turning it against them. He’s telling them up front that this is an illustration.

Application—I just want to remind you of some terms—

- Allegorical interpretation is always wrong. It’s spiritualizing Scripture. It says the interpretation is in the mind of the reader [“what does it mean to you?”], rather than in the mind of the author. Rather, a literal interpretation looks for the author’s intended meaning in the context of the words.
- An allegory, however, is a story or symbol used by the author to illustrate his point. Here in Galatians is a perfect example. Paul is telling us up front that what he is saying about Isaac and Ishmael is an illustration of his point. He does not change the literal interpretation/meaning of the events of Isaac and Ishmael. Paul is simply applying their stories as good illustrations of his point. In fact, his application depends on a literal meaning of the real events of Ishmael and Isaac.

—*for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.*

Hagar	Sarah
Slave	Free Woman
Natural Conception	Supernatural Conception
Ishmael	Isaac
Covenant from Mt. Sinai	Promise

Verse 25—*Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.*

Verse 26—*But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother*—that is, believers in Christ.

Hagar	Sarah
<u>Slave</u>	<u>Free Woman</u>
Natural (<u>flesh</u>) Conception	<u>Supernatural</u> Conception
Ishmael	Isaac
Covenant from Mt. Sinai	Promise to Abraham
Slaves to Law Present Jerusalem	Jerusalem above (free) Heavenly Jerusalem
“Of flesh” persecuted Isaac	“supernatural” was Persecuted
Judaizers persecute Christians	Christians persecuted
Hagar and Ishmael were cast out	Cast out Judaizers

Verse 27—*For it is written, “Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor; For more numerous are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband”*—This is a quote from Isaiah 54:1, where Israel before the Babylonian Captivity was described as a woman with a husband. The barren woman was Israel in Captivity. The woman bearing more children could be Israel restored to the land after the Exile, but more likely it refers to the Millennial Kingdom.

—But how is Paul using this verse in this context? Generally, the verse describes a beginning that is barren and an end with numerous children. So perhaps he is comparing the Jews who were few pre-exilic and will be numerous in the kingdom with Christianity, which started with a few, but will be in greater number (possibly, though not likely, more than there are Jews).

Verse 28—*And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise*—Yay! Easier to understand. Still talking to Christians, who like Isaac, have a supernatural spiritual birth, and everything about Christianity is based on promises made by God.

Verse 29—*But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh [Ishmael] persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit [lit. “the one born by the Spirit’s power” i.e., Isaac], so it is now also*—The Judaizers are persecuting the Christians.

Application—Consider false teachers and teaching as persecution against us and the truth of the Word of God. They are attacking our faith and freedom.

Verse 30—*But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman”*—The Jews probably looked at this as support for the Jews casting away Christians, but Paul’s says it’s exactly the opposite. Rather than embracing the Judaizers with their laws, the believers were to cast them away. Don’t listen to them. Don’t follow them. Don’t believe them. Don’t obey them.

Verse 31—*So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman [law], but of the free woman.*

Chapter 5

II. The Call to Godly Living (5:1–6:10)

A. Summary and Transition (5:1)

A charge brought against the Christians was that if they were “lawless” then they would be “godless,” i.e., live a life of license to practice all kinds of sin. But Paul argues that liberty leads to mature responsibility and holiness before God through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Verse 1 is the key verse of the whole book.

Verse 1—*It was for freedom that Christ set us free*—Christ’s purpose in saving us. We didn’t free ourselves, He saved us and then He set us free. Free from what? *Indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind* (Eph 2:1-4) and freedom from living under the Law. But we’re not alone. We have the Holy Spirit in us and God’s Word to direct us.

Application—It’s amazing how many people think the Holy Spirit is not enough. He can’t handle it. We need laws to govern behavior and then control it by guilt. I experienced this growing up in my legalistic church. I was often in trouble and “disciplined” for not obeying their laws. The Roman Catholics use guilt in the extreme—threaten you with purgatory if you don’t bow to their laws.

—***therefore keep standing firm***—“keep standing firm” in that purpose of freedom. It’s something you need to fight for, in yourselves as well as in other believers.

—***and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery***—that would be you in one noose and the Law or legalism in the other noose. You can only move where the Law is allowing you to move. One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer backwards, away from Christ.



Application—In what sense has God liberated us from the “yoke of slavery,” i.e., the Mosaic Law? There were two purposes of the Law: regulatory (to control what man does) and revelatory (to reveal God’s character). Its regulatory value has ended, but its revelatory value continues. So we read the law as inspired by God and profitable for being adequate and equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). We read it to learn about God, not as laws to be obeyed.

Calvin and many reformed theologians divided the Law up into ceremonial laws (animal sacrifices, etc.), which are no longer binding, and moral laws (the Ten Commandments), which are still binding. However, the text does not make those distinctions. Some (like the Westminster Confession) say Sabbath worship is continued on Sunday. But, of course, the Sabbath and Sunday are completely different things. Actually, they allegorize the Law to fit their modern concepts of the local institutional church model.

Sad to say, there are some people who feel very insecure with liberty. They would rather be under the tyranny of some leader than to make their own decisions freely. For example, when Communism fell in Eastern Europe, we heard many times of the older people who did not know how to live in freedom. They begged for Communism to return (and, shocking to us freedom-lovers, voted for it). There are some believers who are frightened by the liberty they have in God’s grace, so they seek out a fellowship that is legalistic and dictatorial, where they can let others make their decisions for them. This is comparable to an adult climbing back into the crib! It’s a kind of a self-perpetuating thing. If someone is raised under that legalism, it is very difficult to escape it without feeling guilty, and so it’s easier to stay in the system and let them be “responsible” for your spirituality. But, hey!

God says YOU (without them) will stand before the Bema Seat of Christ, to test what you have done in this body (1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

B. The Danger of Falling from Grace (5:2-12)

Verse 2—Behold—an exclamation to get your attention.

—**I, Paul, say to you that if you receive** [if you “let yourselves be,” but evidently had not yet done it] **circumcision**—Paul is not condemning the practice of circumcision itself. In fact, he had Timothy circumcised so he would have a wider ministry (Acts 16:1-3). And in verse 6, Paul says that *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything*. What, then, is he condemning? It is the theology of circumcision—the theology that makes works necessary for salvation and/or that makes conformity to some external standards of behavior as a mark of spirituality (sanctification).

—**Christ will be of no benefit to you**—This is the contrast Paul will bring up over and over in this chapter. If you look to laws for spiritual benefit, then Christ will not be of any spiritual benefit to you. “Benefit” is profit, advantage, spiritual value, either in salvation or in sanctification.

Application—I’m sure we all know Christians like this. If you point out a Biblical NT moral, say, about lying, their response is they have a law that somehow makes it okay to lie. For example, believing in Santa Claus. They go along with the lie because it’s not their child they are lying to. So Christ and the Bible, and the conviction of the Spirit about lying, is of no benefit to this person in this instance because they live by this law which already said this particular lying was ok.

Application—Paul is not condemning Jews who were circumcised in the past but are now believers. In 1 Corinthians 7:17-20, Paul said that a person should remain as they are. If they are circumcised, stay circumcised. If not circumcised, don’t get circumcised. In that chapter, he says the same thing about many situations, such as single vs. married, being married to an unbeliever, etc. His point is simply that Christian living is to be practiced in whatever situation you are in. Don’t think if you just change your situation, then you can practice Christianity. That is not even suggested or encouraged.

Verse 3—And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision—i.e., a confidence in their own ability to earn salvation and sanctification by obeying the Law by getting circumcised.

—**that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law**—The Law is a unit. Obedience to it cannot be selective. By receiving circumcision as spiritual value, you not only ruin grace (v 2), you now have an entirely new obligation—to keep the whole Law with its curse (James 2:10).

Verse 4—You have been severed [“to cause to cease to exist, to put an end to”] **from Christ**—You have abandoned the grace system for the Mosaic Law system. Rather than circumcision (and law-keeping) gaining acceptance with God, it is the very thing that would separate them from Christ. Perhaps a simple example, it’s like you can fly a plane to Dallas, but they are abandoning the method of flying to Dallas in favor of the method of crawling to Dallas, which will not actually get them to Dallas. The point here is the method of salvation and sanctification.

—**you who are seeking** [lit. “trying to be”] **to be justified by law**—which, of course, they cannot be justified by the Law because righteousness cannot come from the Law. Paul already said, *if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law* (3:21), and *if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly* (2:21).

—**you have fallen** [to detach, to drop away, to perish] **from grace**—not meaning salvation itself but as a method of salvation (2:21).

Application—One of the many verses taken out of context to try to prove a person loses their salvation. But if you study the context, it is not what Paul is talking about at all. He refers to the people who are doing this as “brothers” nine times in the book, as well as using the pronoun “we.” By seeking to keep the Law as a method of salvation and sanctification, they have abandoned the grace (gift) of God as the method of salvation and sanctification. Keeping the Law is works. By definition, works and grace (faith) cannot coexist!! With works, spirituality would be something you earn and should be paid for (Rom 4:4). But salvation and sanctification are a gift from God’s grace (Eph 2:8-9), not of works.

Verse 5—*For we through the Spirit* [not through the Law], *by faith* [not works]— When you live by grace, you depend on the power of the Spirit, but under Law, you must depend on yourself and your own efforts.

—*are waiting* [not working] *for the hope* [certain but not yet fully realized] *of righteousness*—the final glorification in eternity that began at justification, that is now experienced in sanctification (Rom 8:18-25; 1 Pet 1:3-4). This is not something we work for—we wait for it by faith.

Verse 6—*For in Christ Jesus*—It’s our position in Christ as a gift from God, through faith —*neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything*—i.e. they both are of no spiritual value. It’s interesting that these Greek words are not opposites, like they are in English. *Circumcision* means “to have a foreskin.” *Uncircumcision* means “to cut around,” used usually in reference to the foreskin.

Application—Maybe we can easily see that doing some physical thing does not have spiritual value, but the opposite is also true. Don’t think not doing some physical thing has spiritual value. For example, some Christians think that not drinking alcohol has spiritual value, although the Bible says don’t get drunk (Eph 5:18), it says nothing about not drinking any alcohol at all. So they have created a supposedly spiritual value where none exists. They sincerely believe Christ will reward them for what they have not done. Actually, they often seem to define their whole Christian life by what they have not done.

—*but faith working through love*—love (as well as the other fruit of the Spirit in 5:22) is the result or fruit of the faith, it is not a substitute in place of faith.

Verse 7—*You were running well*—they were growing spiritually by faith —*who hindered* [a military term used for setting up an obstacle or breaking up the road] *you from obeying* [being persuaded of] *the truth?*—Judaizers who were teaching them to “grow” by legalistic self-effort rather than by faith, who were removing their freedom in Christ (v 1). What is the origin of this false teaching? Paul lists three things:

Verse 8—[1] *This persuasion* [false teaching] *did not come from Him* [God] *who calls you* [v 1:6]. It reminds me of the description of the teaching of the false prophets in Jeremiah 23:36, *For you will no longer remember the oracle of the Lord, because every man’s own word will become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the Living God.*

Verse 9—[2] *A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough*—leaven spreads to others and permeates, i.e. saturates. Paul could be saying that right now there are only a few who are following the false teacher, but soon there would be others until the whole Galatian church gets affected. OR he may be saying that circumcision may seem like a small deviation from faith, but that’s only the beginning. If they accept that, soon false teaching will permeate throughout other doctrines, too.

Application—I think this is a misunderstanding many Christians have. I hear comments like, “well, yes, there are a few wrong teachings, but the rest of the teaching is good.” Therefore, they sit under that teaching, thinking it doesn’t affect them. But Paul says false teaching is like leaven. It seems like a little deviation at first, but it will end up saturating what you believe. Count on it!

Verse 10—*I have confidence* [the same Gk word as “obey” in v. 7, “persuasion” in v. 8] *in you in the Lord*

— *that you will adopt no other view*—that the Galatian believers will not be persuaded to follow this false teaching.

—[3] *but the one who is disturbing you*—causing this confusion in their understanding of sanctification

— *will bear his judgment*—i.e., “must pay the penalty.” They will, in the end, be judged by God.

—*whoever* [he thinks] *he is*—evidently the leader of these Judaizers (in the plural in v 12), someone impressive to the Galatians, rather than expressing Paul’s ignorance about his identity.

Verse 11—*But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision*—It seems like some were saying that at times Paul was preaching that a believer should be circumcised. Perhaps because he had Timothy be circumcised (Acts 16:3), they may have thought he flip-flopped.

—*why am I still persecuted?*—If it was true that he was teaching that, then why was he being persecuted by the Judaizers, who were promoting circumcision?

—*Then the stumbling block of the cross*—Salvation by faith in the gift of God’s grace by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross, was a stumbling block to those who said you must keep the Law, specifically, circumcision. The cross strips away any false idea of spiritual achievement.

—*has been abolished*—So if Paul was still teaching circumcision, then his whole message in the book of Galatians should be abolished, thrown away.

Verse 12—*I wish that those who are troubling* [“inciting”] *you*—It could be that his opponents are inciting the Galatians to rebel against Paul’s teaching about circumcision and the Law.

—*would even mutilate* [lit. “make eunuchs of”] *themselves*—It seems a sarcastic comment—if these Judaizers were so interested in circumcision, they should go the whole way and castrate themselves, don’t just cut a little off, cut it all off!—a condition which would keep them from Temple worship under the Law (Deut 23:1).

C. Live in the Spirit (5:13-26)

1. Liberty Is Not License (5:13-18)

Verse 13—*For you were called to freedom*—freedom from laws and freedom from your sin nature, both of which want to enslave you. Paul has been talking about freedom in this book, but he has not yet defined it. We can see what slavery looks like, but what does freedom look like?

—*brethren*—one of nine times that Paul calls them brothers in Christ. They are believers.

—*only do not turn*—Obviously, to turn is possible or else Paul would not warn us not to do it.

—*your freedom into an opportunity* [a set of circumstances favorable for a particular activity or endeavor] *for the flesh* [the sin nature]—the very danger that was the charge of these false teachers who wanted to enslave the believers to laws. They saw freedom as a license to sin. For example, there is no law against how much time to spend on the computer, yet many believing men have turned that into an opportunity for the flesh (pornography). However, the Christian is not a person who has become free to sin but a person, by the grace of God, who has become free not to sin!

—*but through love serve one another*—In verse 6 he called it *but faith working through love*. There is no external entity that can enable us to love one another, but the Holy Spirit can produce that love

within us. This is the fruit of freedom in Christ, which Paul will talk more about in verses 22-23. It's a paradox—don't be a slave to laws but be a slave to love in serving one another.

Application—You are born as a slave to your sin nature. Slavery to law is by choice and is foolish and a burden. But a voluntary slavery through love in serving one another is a joy that is possible only because you are then walking in the Spirit, and God said that will be joy (v 22).

Verse 14—*For the whole Law is fulfilled* [“to make happen”]—Paul has repeatedly said that the Law is not a works system resulting in spiritual growth. But the Law is good (Rom 7:12) and reflects the character of God. And God is love. It was God's love that sent Jesus to die for our sins (John 3:16). Telling us what is sinful (the Law) is a loving act. For example, when your child starts to drive, it's loving to tell them as much about the law as you can.

—*in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”*—This is a quote from Leviticus 19:18. Without the Spirit of God living in them, OT Israelites had to have an external law to govern their actions. They had to be told to not steal, lie, etc. But now, with the Spirit living in us, this love in serving others sums up everything the Law intended. If you love and serve another believer, you don't steal from them, you don't lie to them, etc.

—*as yourself*—Paul wrote, *No one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it* (Eph 5:29). He's not advocating loving yourself but that it's just human to practice self-preservation. You feed yourself and cherish (protect it from harm). You don't stick your hand in a fire.

Verse 15—*But if you* [lit. “continuously”] *bite* [harm] *and devour* [eat up] *one another*—it's a kind of process—they continue to hurt one another, over and over, more and more. We are not told what the conflict was exactly.

—*take care that you are not consumed* [“to destroy, with the possible implication of something being used up, to cause to die”] *by one another*—This attacking one another has only one outcome, to destroy one another. The intensity of the verbs show the process to the end. It's the opposite of in love serving one another.

Verse 16—*But I say*—a contrast

—[lit. keep on walking] *walk*—how one conducts one's life or how one behaves. It's a command with present results. It's a metaphor that means a person is going somewhere. It's movement.

—*by the Spirit*—not by laws. But, of course, those who are devouring one another are not walking by the Spirit either. The Spirit will lead us, but will we follow, i.e., walk by the Spirit? Paul also wrote, *do not grieve the Holy Spirit* (Eph 4:30) and *do not quench the Spirit* (1 Thess 5:19).

—*and you will not* [double negative for emphasis] *carry out*—Walking by the Spirit is what your new nature in Christ does. It does not carry out the desires of the sin nature. In fact, it's guaranteed. If you walk by the Spirit, you will not carry out the desires of your sin nature.

—*the desire of the flesh*—You will have the sin nature until you die. It is not done away with, it is not reformed, it's always 100%. The flesh is incapable of knowing God apart from special revelation and the redemption that removes the barrier of sin. There is no spiritual technique or second blessing that can move a believer onto a higher plane of Christian living where this battle must no longer be fought. Peter wrote that at salvation, *God...has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness* (2 Pet 1:3). And we have the complete Scriptures. You already have everything you need.

Application—The flesh and laws are close allies. They both move in outward and material things. The Law is no safeguard against the flesh but rather provokes it (Rom 7). If you renounce the flesh, you must renounce living by the Law also.

Application—In verses 19-21, Paul will describe the deeds of the flesh. When you are in a situation, just ask yourself, am I making a decision giving in to the deeds of the flesh or am I going to obey the Spirit of God? The Spirit urges you to obey the moral will of God as revealed in the Bible. The more you mature in your spiritual life by learning the Bible and obeying it, the more you will walk by the Spirit.

Verse 17—*For the flesh* [sin nature] *sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*—This does not mean the redeemed believer escapes the need to struggle against sin. But victory is possible for the believer to the degree that the believer “lives” and “walks” by the Spirit. —*for these are in* [hostile toward] *to one another*—inside of you, your new nature in Christ is at war with your sin nature. It is the “normal” Christian life (Rom 7). —*so that you may not do the things that you please*, i.e., what your sin nature pleases

Verse 18—*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law*—We might have expected Paul to write since we are led by the Spirit we are not “under the flesh” but instead he says “under the Law.” The point is, you cannot overcome the desires of the flesh by remaining under the Law. The Judaizers were claiming submission to the Law as the way to overcome the flesh, but Paul said it was by submission to the Spirit. The Law the Judaizers were promoting had exactly the opposite result as they promised.

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

Verse 19—*Now the deeds of the flesh* [the sin nature] *are evident*—i.e., easily discerned, obvious, not that they are committed publicly where they may be seen, but it’s obvious they originate in the sin nature and not in the new nature we receive in Christ.

Sexual sins:

—*which are: immorality*—Gk *porenia*, where English gets “pornography.” It usually refers to any and all forms of illicit sexual relationships. Often it is translated “fornication” (sex before marriage).

—*impurity*—*do not let...any impurity...even be named among you...there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting* (Eph 5:3-4). It’s uncleanness in thought, word, and deed. A man once said: “I cannot help it if a bird alights on top of my head, but I can help it if he builds his nest in my hair!” You may not be able to help if evil thoughts come into your mind, but you can help indulging in those thoughts (see 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

—*sensuality*—immodesty, indecency, promiscuity, shameless display of breasts and/or genitals. In Dallas, it’s common to see low-cut tops and short, short skirts—even in church. One pastor, after preaching against it to no avail, started making the AC so cold, they had to cover up!!

Religious sins against God:

Verse 20—*idolatry*—bowing down to pagan gods (TV news have shown “Christian” political leaders from U.S. bowing down on prayer rugs in Islamic temples and mosques).

—*sorcery*—witchcraft, horoscopes, mediums, spells, voodoo (dolls sold in airports)

Social sins against people:

—*enmities*—hatred and quarrels

—*strife*—natural result of hatred, antagonism, rivalry, resentment, ill will, bad blood

—*jealousy*—distrustful, resentful, suspicion of someone’s unfaithfulness, self-centered animosity

—*outbursts of anger*—often following jealousy, temper eruptions

—*disputes*—working to get ahead at someone else’s expense

—*dissensions*—disagreement, infighting, over issues or personalities

—**factions**—organized conflicts within a company or a family, cliques, schisms

Verse 21—

—**envying**—a wrongful desire to possess what belongs to someone else. Someone has said, “I once felt bad and complained because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet.”

Two sins associated with alcohol/drugs

—**drunkenness**—breaking the specific command, *do not get drunk* (Eph 5:18), that is, be controlled by the substance. Today, we must include opiates, whether prescribed or bought somewhere else. Not meaning aspirin or Advil for pain, for example, but substances which control your mind and behavior.

—**carousing**—orgies, parties involving excessive drinking and/or eating

—**and things like these**—although this list seems long, it’s only representative and not exhaustive

—**of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you**—being warned means that you cannot claim ignorance. You know of this danger.

—**that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**—not that a Christian would lose their salvation if they fall into these sins, but the person who lives continually at such a level of corruption in all areas of their lives give evidence of not being a child of God.

Application—This was the danger the legalists were trying to avoid with their laws. That Christians would look and behave like the world. But, as Paul demonstrated, laws will not control this behavior, only the Spirit of God can do that. Can a Christian fall into these sins? Absolutely! We still have 100% of our sin nature. That’s why in verse 16 Paul makes the point that if you walk by the Spirit, then your life will not be characterized by these sins.

3. The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-26)

Verse 22—**But the fruit of the Spirit is**—First, notice he called the actions of the flesh “deeds,” whereas now the result of walking by the Spirit is “fruit.” Deeds are what you do. Fruit is what happens when you walk by the Spirit. The Spirit produces that fruit in your life. It becomes a characteristic, rather than a deed. For example, you can do a kind deed, or you can become a kind person.

—Also, notice these are not “fruits,” i.e. plural. They are all a unit. In other words, the Spirit won’t produce kindness in you but not joy. He will produce all of them.

—Also, you don’t produce a fruit by your effort. For example, you can’t say, “I’m going to try to be a more patient person.” You need to be in the Word (John 15:1-11), growing (1 Pet 2:2), maturing (Heb 6:1), and the Holy Spirit will produce kindness. What you can do is not the deeds of the flesh. Don’t get drunk. Don’t envy, etc.

God-ward Qualities

—**love**—*agape*, giving, expecting nothing in return (1 John 4:8; 1 Cor 13:13; Rom 8:35-39)

—**joy**—deep-seated gladness regardless of circumstances (John 15:11)

—**peace**—Hebrew “shalom.” It’s inner quietness regardless of circumstances (Rom 8:28, John 14:27). Most important, it’s peace with God. “Peace” occurs 80 times and in every book of the NT.

Others-ward Qualities

—**patience**—self-control even under provocation (2 Cor 6:6; Col 1:11; 3:12).

—**kindness**—well-meaning and graciousness to others

—**goodness**—to do good even when it is not deserved, often springs from kindness

Self-ward Qualities

—**faithfulness**—reliable, trustworthy, someone on whom others can rely

Verse 23—**gentleness**—considerate of others, the opposite of quarrels and disputes

—**self-control**—ability to master oneself, to curb the fleshly impulses just described, to be able to live and walk in the world, yet to keep his garments unspotted from the world

—**against such things there is no law**—Laws are given to restrain evil, but these qualities do not need to be restrained, therefore, no law opposes them. Even those who make laws of seemingly everything, would not make a law against these fruits of the Spirit. You won't see a law that says "Do not be patient."

Verse 24—**Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have** [already] **crucified the flesh with its passions** [Gk. strong physical desires, especially sexual desires] **and desires**—When you became a believer, God broke the domination of the sin nature, and you became indwelt with the Holy Spirit. The deeds of the flesh (sin nature) do not need to be practiced. We are free from obeying the flesh. It's inconsistent for us to return to the flesh. Picture trying to interact with a dead body.

Verse 25—**If** [Gk. "since," it's a condition true to reality] **we live by the Spirit**—our salvation —**let us** [a command] **also walk** ["keep in step," like a soldier] **by the Spirit**—our sanctification, our daily spiritual life. The Holy Spirit is leading us to be Christlike (Rom 8:29). It's true. Count on it. But will you "quench" (1 Thess 5:19) or "grieve" (Eph 4:30) the Spirit? It's your choice. This will be judged at the Bema Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). There can only be judgment if there is real choice. [Of course, this is a judgment for rewards, obeying the Spirit, not for condemnation, sins of the flesh which were paid for on the cross (Rom 8:1).]

Application—As humans, our free will, will exist for eternity. It's one of the things that make us human. We have the ability to choose. When we become believers, we have an additional free will to choose to obey the Holy Spirit (unbelievers can only choose between evil things). For example, if I became a runner (use your imagination here!!!), then I would have new free will choices—what race to be in, how far to run, where to run, when to run, etc. etc.

—In heaven, without our sin nature, we will be like the angels, with our new nature, always able to choose what is right in God's sight. In the lake of fire, unbelievers, with only their sin natures, will always choose what is not right in God's sight, e.g. "gnashing of teeth" (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50).

Verse 26—**Let us not become boastful** [Gk. "falsely proud"], **challenging** [Gk. "irritating"] **one another, envying** [one of the deeds of the flesh mentioned in verse 21] **one another**—all these things indicate a person doing the deeds of the flesh, not in faith walking by the Spirit. [Since the verses divisions are not inspired, some question whether this verse is a summary of chapter 5 or the beginning of chapter 6.]

Chapter 6

D. Two Practical Exhortations (6:1-10)

1. Bearing One Another's Burdens (6:1-5)

Verse 1—**Brethren**—one of nine times Paul calls the Galatian brothers in Christ.

—*even if anyone is caught in any trespass*—better, “caught by a sin.” This happens to believers. A good example is Peter. He was overtaken by a temptation in the courtyard of the high priest, and before he realized what he was doing, he had sinned.

Application—For example, when I was a teenager, a man and woman in the choir at my church would make eyes at each other—you know what I mean. Everyone knew it and were gossiping about it, but no one confronted them about it. They said, “Well, they haven’t done anything ‘wrong’ yet.” Sure enough. They had an affair, and both divorced their spouses and then they got married. Breaking up two families. Often you can tell when a person is on the path to sin by the choices they make. Maybe they don’t even realize it. If you confront them then they won’t be acting in ignorance.

—*you who are spiritual*—Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual Christian instead of a carnal (fleshly) Christian? Here is a way to test it. Restoring a brother/sister is the kind of thing that a spiritual Christian does.

—*restore* [used for mending fishing nets and setting broken bones] *such a one*—this is the first motivation. How to get the person away from the sin and back on his spiritual walk with God. This is what discipline is—getting the person back on the right track—not punishment. This is not to be neglected or exposed openly. Be like Jesus who restored Peter after his sin in the courtyard.

Application—Here’s a simple example of the difference between discipline and punishment: as a parent, you tell your child to be home by 10:00. Several times they come home at 10:30. As a parent, my question should be: How can I get them to come home at 10:00? NOT punish them for coming home at 10:30. [From the child’s perspective, they may think it is punishment, but it goes to your motivation. Do you do it in a spirit of gentleness or in outbursts of anger?]

—*in a spirit of gentleness*—as the fruit of the Spirit (5:23) in action

—*each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted*—This is one reason it should be done by more mature believers who won’t be as likely to be tempted to the sin or to harshness

Verse 2—*Bear* (to care a heavy object) *one another’s burdens*—In English, “burden” and “load” can be similar. But the word “burden” in Gk is very different than a “load” in verse 5. Burden has the idea of a hardship that is very great and hard to carry by yourself.

Application—What kinds of things are these? When does a “load” become a “burden”? Perhaps a minor surgery is a load, but major surgery or an accident might be a burden. Fixing meals every day may be a “load,” but if a person is sick or injured, it could become a “burden.” Also, consider that you can and should let other believers know when your load has become a burden. “...*stimulate one another to love and good deeds*” (Heb 10:24). You are giving others an opportunity to love one another in the body of Christ, as He intended.

What to do when you perceive something is a burden to a person? Well, that depends. Whatever you can do to help them carry it. Perhaps your spiritual gift will help define that. If you have mercy, if you have helps, if you have administration. Each gift and personality may determine what you do. Actually, your spiritual gift may be the way you become aware of their burden.

Sometimes you are struggling to bear a burden, and someone needs to help you. Other times, someone else is struggling to bear a burden, and you help them. It’s like if your eye cannot see, your ears, taste, and touch kick in to help. The members of the body of Christ are like that. When one is suffering, the others kick in to help (1 Cor 6). That’s what the parts of the body do.

—*and thereby fulfill* (Gk. “to cause to happen”) *the law of Christ*—Jesus said, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another*” (John 13:34). The laws of Christ are the fruit of the Spirit, i.e., the result of following Christ (love, kindness, goodness, etc.). The laws we’ve been looking at earlier in the book are different because rather than the result, they are perceived as the cause of salvation and/or sanctification—you do it because you think somehow God will “count” it toward your sanctification. But as a fruit, it’s God’s love given through you to another believer.

—Paul does not mean there is no law under grace, any more than he meant that there was no grace under the Mosaic Law. The motivation for keeping the Mosaic Law was external. The motivation for keeping the “law of Christ” is internal, coming from the Holy Spirit.

Verse 3—(1) *For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing*—This can happen to both people. The one needing help can think they are above needing help with their burden and too prideful to ask for help. Also, it can be someone is above helping others with their burdens, thinking they should be able to help themselves, or to think, “Who am I? I’m not able to do anything. Everyone else is much better.” Both of these people are thinking too highly of themselves, when they are nothing—but receivers of the grace of God (Rom 12:3).

—*he deceives himself*—to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth

Verse 4—(2) *But each one must examine his own work*—It almost seems like a contrast and the opposite of verse 3, where he says to not think you are something when you are not. But now he says to examine your own work.

—*and then he will have reason for boasting* [to glory or rejoice] *in regard to himself alone*—you are responsible to God for what you do or don’t do, not what others do or not do.

Application—This word “boasting” is used almost exclusively in the NT (34x) by Paul. Whether the verb describes a positive or negative activity depends on the object of the boasting. Paul uses it generally in a positive sense when he or someone else boasts or rejoices in the Lord. For example, “*no man should boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, ...let him who boasts, boast in the Lord*” (1 Cor 1:29-31). This verb indicates the negative sense of bragging or prideful boasting when it describes those who boast not in God but in themselves or their own ability (Rom 2:17, 23; 1 Cor 4:7). The clearest contrast of these two meanings is here in Galatians 6:13, where the Judaizers *...desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh*, your own abilities and works. “Look what I have done!” But in verse 14, Paul says, *But may it never be that I would boast* [to glory or rejoice], *except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

—*and not in regard to another*—here seems to be the answer. In verse 3 the person thinks they are something because they are comparing themselves to others. But in verse 4, he says to examine your own work before God, not comparing yourself to others, and rejoice in what God has done for you and what He is doing in your life.

Verse 5—*For each one will bear* [carry] *his own load*—Jesus said, “*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*” (Luke 9:23). What is “his own load”? Your life situation. Jesus said that every day, you need to deny yourself, and take up [lift up, carry] this load, this cross of your life situation, and follow Him. These life situations are opportunities for the fruit of the Spirit to be shown. You cannot be patient unless you have an impatient situation. Kindness needs unkind situations. Etc. Virtues are practiced in non-virtuous situations.

2. The Use of Money (6:6-10)

Verse 6—*The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him*—There is no tithe (10%) in our age. Tithing was part of the Law. If someone tells you to tithe, it's like the Judaizers in Galatians who told the believers to become circumcised. The law of tithing severs you from grace, that is, from being led by the Spirit to give. Giving is not a law. And it's not the teacher's duty to request it, it's the learner's privilege to give it.

—At first, Paul worked as a tentmaker to just have money to survive. But then, he began to be supported by the believers wherever he went (Acts 18:3-5). He wrote quite a bit about that in 1 Corinthians 9:1-18. There seems to be two points: (1) *the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel* [practically speaking, a person cannot study, drive, produce materials, etc. and work another job, too, no time or energy] and (2) *that, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge*. So those who can give, give, so those who cannot give can also receive (1 Tim 5:17-18).

—In the Old Testament, the Jews tithed twice a year (Lev 27:30-33). They were taxed for the support of their priests and Levites who performed service in the tabernacle and temple (Deut 13:22-27). Then every third year they were to do an extra 10% (Num 18:24; Deut 14:28-29), which amounts to 23 1/3% a year. Then, *every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given to you* (Ex 25:2; Deut 12:5-6; 16:17). As a government and religion, the tax supported the temple workers. But giving was very similar to today, as a person is able and according to that which God has given to them.

—The word “tithe” occurs 10 times in the New Testament. None of them command us to tithe (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12; Heb 7:1-10). The danger is thinking God has His 10%, so the other 90% is ours to spend. But all our money belongs to God. We are stewards of ALL of it.

—Today, that 23% or so is a tax that still goes to the operating of the government! For ministry, *Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7). And *it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have* (2 Cor 8:12). Make as sure as you can that whoever you are giving to is using the money responsibly (2 Cor 8:19-21). [Side note: someone in ministry gets a salary, just like others who work. The ministry must handle their money responsibly, but what a person does privately with their salary is up to them. They are as accountable to God to give as anyone else with a salary is.]

Verse 7—*Do not be deceived*—Who is telling the truth? God or Satan and your sin nature? For example, do I really believe that reading this book or eating this ice cream, or having this person as a friend, etc. will not be bad for me? Jeremiah wrote, *“The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick”* (Jer 17:9). Our sin nature is pushing us to believe a lie!!!

—***God is not mocked***—to ridicule, to not respect as telling the truth. This was Satan's words to Eve. “You surely shall not die!” He was mocking God. Accusing God of lying. And God said, *“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds”* (Jer 17:10). You cannot hide from God. He knows the truth.

—***for whatever a man sows***—if a person sows to the deeds of the flesh or if a person sows to walking by the Spirit—Every day, everything you do, you are sowing. You are never ever not sowing. You are creating your character, who you are.

—***this he will also reap***—This is immutable (unchanging). Don't wake up one morning and ask, “How did I get here?” You made the sowing decisions that led you there.

Application—You choose your community, but choose carefully, because you will become like your community, you will believe what they believe, do what they do, think what they think. You are deceived if you believe your particular community won't affect you.

Verse 8—*For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption*—Because Paul has been talking about our life here and now, he is still talking about that. “Corruption” means disintegration, decay, ruin, destruction. As a believer, if you are sowing to your flesh (sin nature), you will ruin your spiritual life. This is not about salvation. You would still be saved. But instead of maturing as a believer, you are decaying as a believer.

—***but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life***—again, he is not talking about eternity future (although that would certainly also be the case), he’s talking about sowing your life to abiding in Christ, walking in the Spirit—you will be reaping eternal life, starting now.

Verse 9—*Let us not lose heart [discouraged] in doing good*—

—***for in due time we will reap***—some things take longer to reap than other things. Some things take a shorter time to reap. But *in due time, we will reap*. It may not be until eternity. It’s a promise of rewards, or lack of rewards, in heaven, too.

—***if we do not grow weary*** [if we do not give up]—for the believer, the opposition they meet is constant and the good they are trying to do is hard to accomplish. How much does it take to break a habit? One time. How much does it take to make a habit? Weeks or months? A long time. It seems like anything good takes much longer than anything bad.

Verse 10—*So then, while we have opportunity*—you can’t count on this opportunity coming along again. Maybe it’s only today. Maybe it’s only now. Maybe it’s only here. There’s not only virtues, there are opportunities for virtues. You can’t count on your own situation being the same. Maybe you can do something today that you will not be able to do in the future. And the future may be tomorrow or an hour from now, or even less.

—***let us do good to all people***—sowing good to everyone when you have the opportunity

—***and especially to those who are of the household of the faith***—Other Christians are a priority. “A Christian has a far stronger claim on my feelings, my labors, and my property. He or she is my brother or sister, equally interested as myself in the blood and love of the Redeemer. I expect to spend an eternity with him or her in heaven. He or she is the representative of my unseen Savior, and considers everything done as done to Christ.”

Conclusion (6:11-18)

Verse 11—*See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand*—probably his letter was dictated to a scribe, and here Paul writes his closing remarks himself (1 Cor 16:21; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17). (Some think his writing with large letters indicates an illness with his eyes [Gal 4:15].) It’s most likely he wrote with his own hand to give a final emphatic thrust to his message.

Verse 12—*Those who desire to make a good showing* [Gk implies insincerity] ***in the flesh***—their motivation is externally impressing people. Whereas Paul’s motivation was that the Galatians grow in Christ (4:19).

—***try to compel you to be circumcised***—but why did the Judaizers believe so strongly in this?

—(1)***simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ***—Being Jews, they had a zeal for Judaism (Rom 10:2). The same zeal that had previously driven Paul, as an unbelieving Jew, to arrest Christians (Gal 1:13-14). Those who chose to follow Christ were going to be persecuted by the Jews.

Verse 13—*For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves*—They have a bankrupt system. The Jews themselves were not able to keep the Law. There was much more to the Law than just circumcision.

—*but they desire to have you circumcised*—It was able to be measured physically. Someone compared it to David who boasted in the 200 foreskins he took from the Philistines (1 Sam 18:27).

—(2) *so that they may boast in your flesh*—Taking pride in “circumcision conversions.”

Application—Beware of counting and valuing numbers. It is boasting in the flesh. It is what the world does.

Verse 14—*But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our [believers] Lord Jesus Christ, through which [Gk “whom”] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*—the world system had lost its appeal to Paul. He was once like these Judaizers, ruled by externals. But now, in its place came Christ alone—Christ, who is everything. He said, “*I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*” (Phil 3:3-6).

Verse 15—*For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision*—physical marks or lack of them have no spiritual value

—*but a new creation*—the thing of value is being a new creation in Christ. *Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come* (2 Cor 5:17).

Verse 16—*And those who will walk by this rule* [Gk. “straight rod”]—i.e., faith apart from works —*peace and mercy be upon them*—as he said in his greeting (1:3). Peace and mercy come only through being rightly related to God, through faith.

—*and upon the Israel of God*—All 65 other occurrences of “Israel” in the New Testament refer to Jews. In Romans 9:6 Paul referred to believing and unbelieving Jews. Perhaps he thought this letter would appear to be anti-Semitic, so he shows here his love and concern for the true Israel, that is, Jews who had come to Christ.

—*From now on let no one cause trouble for me*—His message of faith apart from works was being challenged in the lives of the Galatian believers. They were about to turn away from faith to works. This was deeply troubling to him. He hopes his message now will impact the Galatians for justification and sanctification through faith, rather than the works of circumcision.

—*for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus*—Paul had been beaten many times as a believer (1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 4:10-11; 6:5, 9; 11:24-25). These marks of persecution on his body contrast with the ritualistic and now meaningless mark of circumcision the legalizers wished to impose on the Galatians.

Verse 18—*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*—with circumcision, they had nothing. But by faith, they have the grace of our Lord Jesus with our spirit.

—*brethren*—Their salvation was never in jeopardy. Nine times in the book he called them “brothers” in Christ.

—*Amen*—So be it.

Examine the chart on page 44 for an overview comparison of the differences between grace and law.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GRACE AND LAW	
"Grace . . .	Law . . .
• is based on faith (2:16).	• is based on works (2:16).
• justifies sinful men (2:16, 17).	• is incapable of resulting in justification (2:16; 3:11).
• begins and ends with Christ (2:20).	• makes Christ nothing (5:2-4).
• is the way of the Spirit (3:2, 3, 14).	• is the way of the flesh (3:3).
• is a 'blessing' (3:14).	• is a 'curse' (3:13).
• is God's desired end for His people (3:23-25).	• was intended to be only a means to an end (3:23-25).
• results in intimacy with Christ (3:27).	• results in estrangement from Christ (5:4).
• makes one a son of God and an heir of Christ (4:6, 7).	• keeps one a slave (4:7).
• brings liberty (5:1).	• results in bondage (5:1).
• depends on the power of the Holy Spirit (5:16-18, 22, 23).	• depends on human effort (5:19-21).
• is motivated by love (5:13, 14).	• is motivated by pride (6:3, 13, 14).
• centers on the cross of Christ (6:12-14).	• centered on circumcision (5:11; 6:12-15)." ³⁸⁴